

# 24,746 Females Have been Killed in Syria since March 2011

The Syrian Woman.... A Society's  
Shattered Half

**SNHR**

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.



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## I. Introduction and Methodology

In times of war, civilians suffer a wide range of violations at rates that are typically higher and more frequent than outside of conflicts. Therefore, we have tried to work, within whatever resources we have, on focusing more on these crimes and violations, such as killing, sexual violence, enforced-disappearance, torture, siege, and forced displacement, than discussing what could be amended in the personal status law or paragraphs in the constitution or the reservations on the local laws and how they don't consist with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. That is not to say that these matters are not vital and are not worthy of being analyzed and debated, as we have talked in a number of reports and statements about the violations to the international human rights law by the parties to the conflict, considering that it still valid in times of war. However, SNHR's main area of focus remains the heinous violations and shedding light on their magnitude, frequency, patterns, and the targeting of women and girls because of their sex, and the imperativeness of protecting civilians – especially women and children. For example, killing, torture, enforced-disappearance, and sexual violence are considered among the most atrocious and brutal crimes,



and Syria is one of the world's worst countries, if not the absolute worst, in terms of rates of women' and girls' murders and enforced-disappearances. The Syrian regime vastly and incomparably tops all other parties in perpetrating violations in Syria, including the terrorist group ISIS, as the following charts illustrates. Despite these heinous violations that amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes, no forms of international protections have been considered for them, as the Security Council has failed to fulfill its role in providing safety and security, and all the rounds of negotiations are yet to reveal the fate of one missing woman.

The Syrian regime has, deliberately and systemically, perpetrated the majority of these violations since 2011. Its barbarian practices has torn its ratification to CEDAW and Geneva Conventions, which means that all of the ratifying states should intervene and put an end to these practices in accordance with Article 1 of Geneva Conventions, which requires that not only the states are to respect the conventions, but also should ensure respect for the Conventions, as well as CIDAW and Security Council Resolution 1352 which binds the state parties -most of the states of the world- to ensure holding the perpetrators of violations to the agreement and the Resolution accountable no matter who they are (the Syrian and Russian regimes, Kurdish forces, extremist groups, armed opposition, international coalition forces). Also, these instruments demand that state parties provide support for women's medical, psychological, social, and economic needs, and ensure their involvement in peace talks.

**Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, says:**

“In many cases, the Syrian woman and the Syrian girl have been the subject of various types of violations. Many of these cumulative violations haven't been remedied, nor met with their due consideration and care on the various political and social levels, or in the media and in the United Nations. The state parties to The CEDAW treaty need to help the Syrian woman, and stand up to perpetrators of violations against women in light of the Security Council's failure to do so.”

Women and the international law

It is not due to a flaw or a deficiency in the international humanitarian law that women and girls haven't been afforded security and peace in Syria, as the international humanitarian law assigns a special protection for women in the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977. There are around 45 articles addressing women in particular. However, the international law didn't address women in this manner as a result of some structural inadequacy but in light of physical characteristics and special needs that should always be taken into consideration. For instance, the fourth Geneva Convention



states that pregnant women should be specially respected and protected, and in the event of women's detention, they are to be assigned separate sleeping places and health facilities dedicated to them. Also, a woman can only be inspected by another woman.

## **II. Most Notable Violations Recorded by SNHR against Women and Girls in 2017**

- Killing females continue at steady rates– primarily by the way of indiscriminate or deliberate aerial bombardment, and mainly by Syrian regime forces and their Russian allies, in addition to international coalition warplanes' airstrikes in ISIS's areas of control.
- We recorded incidents of mass arrests made against women by Syrian regime forces at inspection points that are set between the Syrian regime's areas of control and armed opposition factions' areas of control, as these women are subsequently used in prisoner exchange deals with opposition factions. Such occurrences were mostly in Daraa and Aleppo governorates.
- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham has enforced a restrictive policy on women in its areas of control that involved requiring women to wear a specific outfit – especially female students and working women. Also, women were prohibited from working in certain practices or studying certain majors. Additionally, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham imposed certain conditions for women who wish to seek a university education, such as separating males from females and assigning special places of education for them. Lastly, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham pursued the women who took part in demonstrations against it.
- Rates of abductions and arrests of women in the Kurdish Self-Management forces' areas of control have increased, whether it was for the purpose of conscription or on account of them being related to wanted individuals as a way to pressure those individuals into surrendering themselves.
- We recorded new incidents of women dying due to torture and poor medical care inside Syrian regime detention centers, which implies that women are still being subjected to torture and health care negligence at these facilities.
- Armed opposition factions are still detaining women who were abducted in military operations that were mainly carried out in Syrian regime-held areas. Most of these women are now deemed forcibly-disappeared.
- ISIS had carried out mass abductions in attacks on the areas that are outside its control in the suburbs of Homs and Hama governorates.



## **Methodology**

The report outlines the toll of violations against women by the parties to the conflict from March 2011 to September 2017.

The report also sheds light on the most notable violations that took place after our last report [Living in Deprivation](#) was released – between November 25, 2016 and November 25, 2017, in addition to some incidents that occurred in 2015 and 2016, but weren't included in our past reports.

The report draws upon the ongoing monitoring of news and incidents by SNHR team through an extensive network of relations with various sources that have been built over the course of our work in the past years. When we receive information, or hear some news about a violation via the internet or media outlets, we work on following-up on this news and try to verify and collect evidences and data. In some cases, the researcher is able to visit the incident location at the soonest. However, this is a rarity in light of the incredibly high security risks, and given the frequency of daily incidents and the human and material resources. Therefore, the possibility to access evidences vary from one case to another, and, hence, the degree of its classification. Usually, what we do, at SNHR, in such cases is relying on accounts from survivors who experienced the violation firsthand, where we try to access those directly, and, to a second degree, who saw or filmed the violation.

All of the attacks included in this report and were perpetrated by the parties to the conflict in Syria have targeted civilian areas. We didn't document any military presence or weapon warehouses during or even before these attacks. Also, the attacking forces didn't alert the civilians prior to the attack as the international humanitarian law requires.

SNHR has analyzed the videos and pictures that were posted online or were sent to SNHR team by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media. Some pictures showed female victims.

Another important point to note is the challenges encountered by SNHR team in the course of documenting violations against women – especially documenting incidents of sexual violence and imprisonment experiences, which are two of the most complex types of violations for their social and psychological aspects that are related to the victim herself and the community. In most cases, the victim refuses to talk about the violations out of fear of social stigmatization, isolation, or even killing in case she reveals what happens, not to mention the unimaginable agony to recalling and talking about what happened.

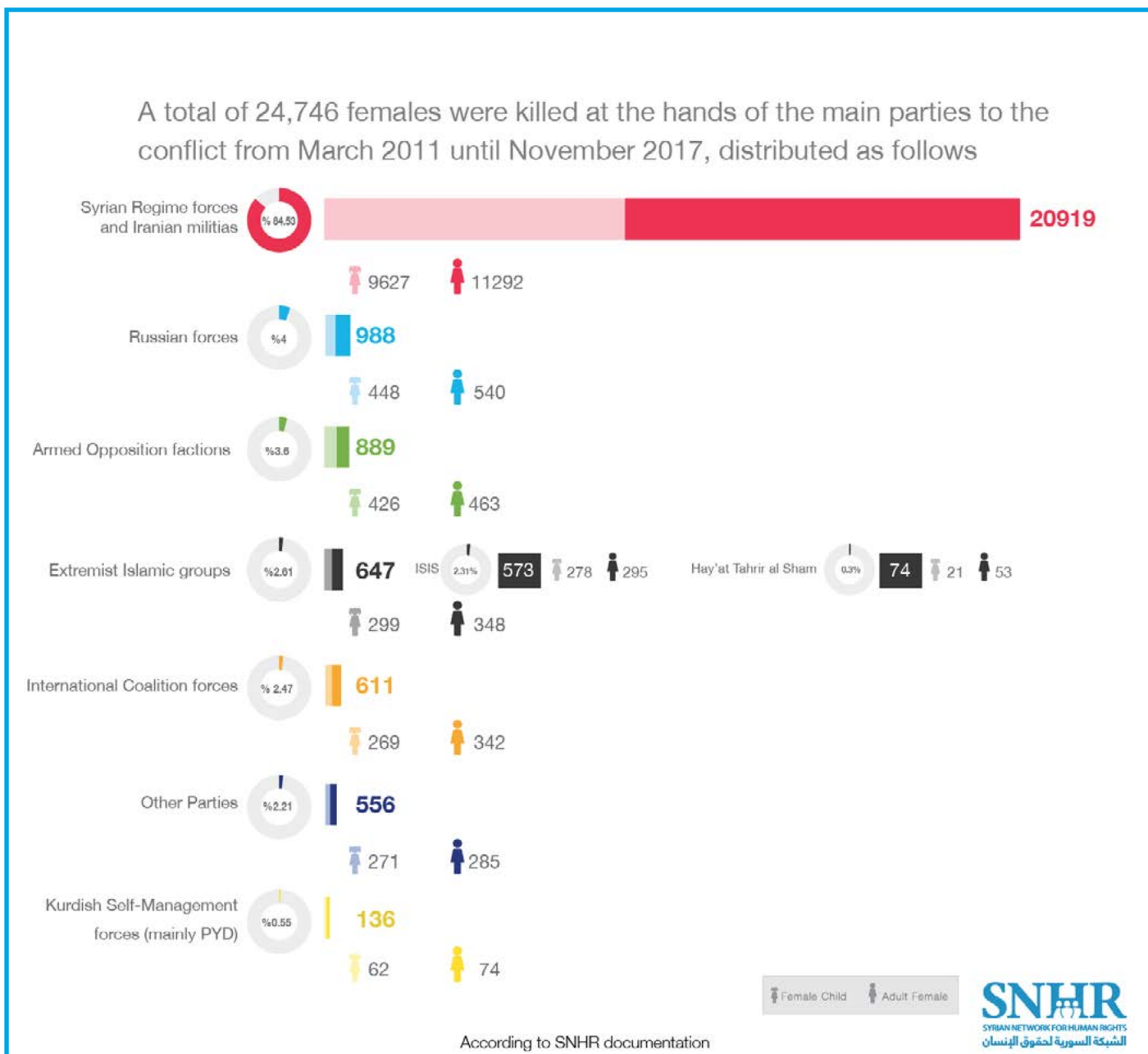


The report contains seven accounts that were collected by speaking directly to witnesses, and not from open sources. We have explained the purpose of these interviews for the witnesses who gave us their permission to use the information they provided without offering or giving them any incentives. Also, SNHR has tried to spare the witnesses the agony of remembering the violations, and we gave insurances to conceal the identity of any witnesses who preferred to use an alias.

### III. Executive Summary

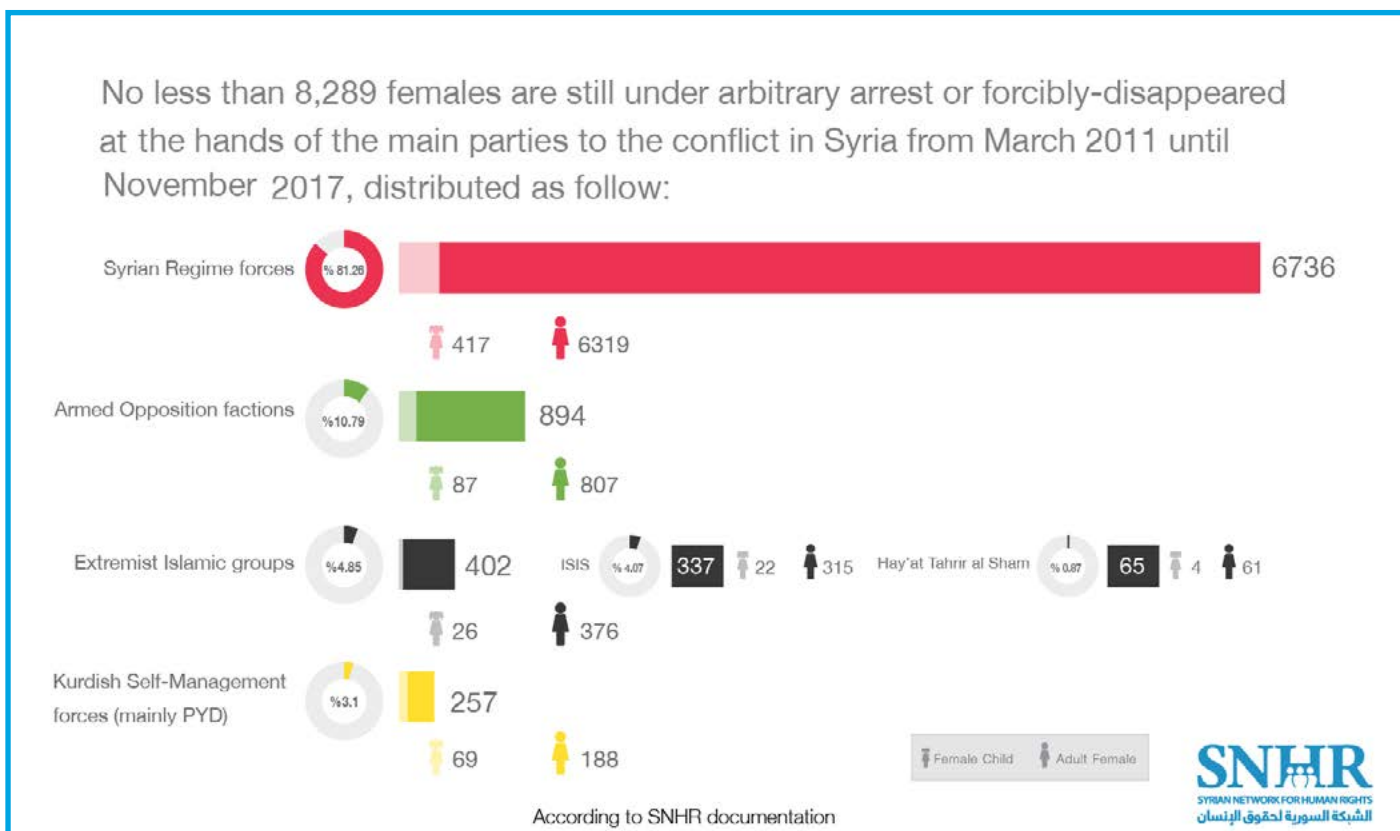
#### Extrajudicial killing

We have recorded the killing of 24,746 females at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria from March 2011 to November 2017, as follows



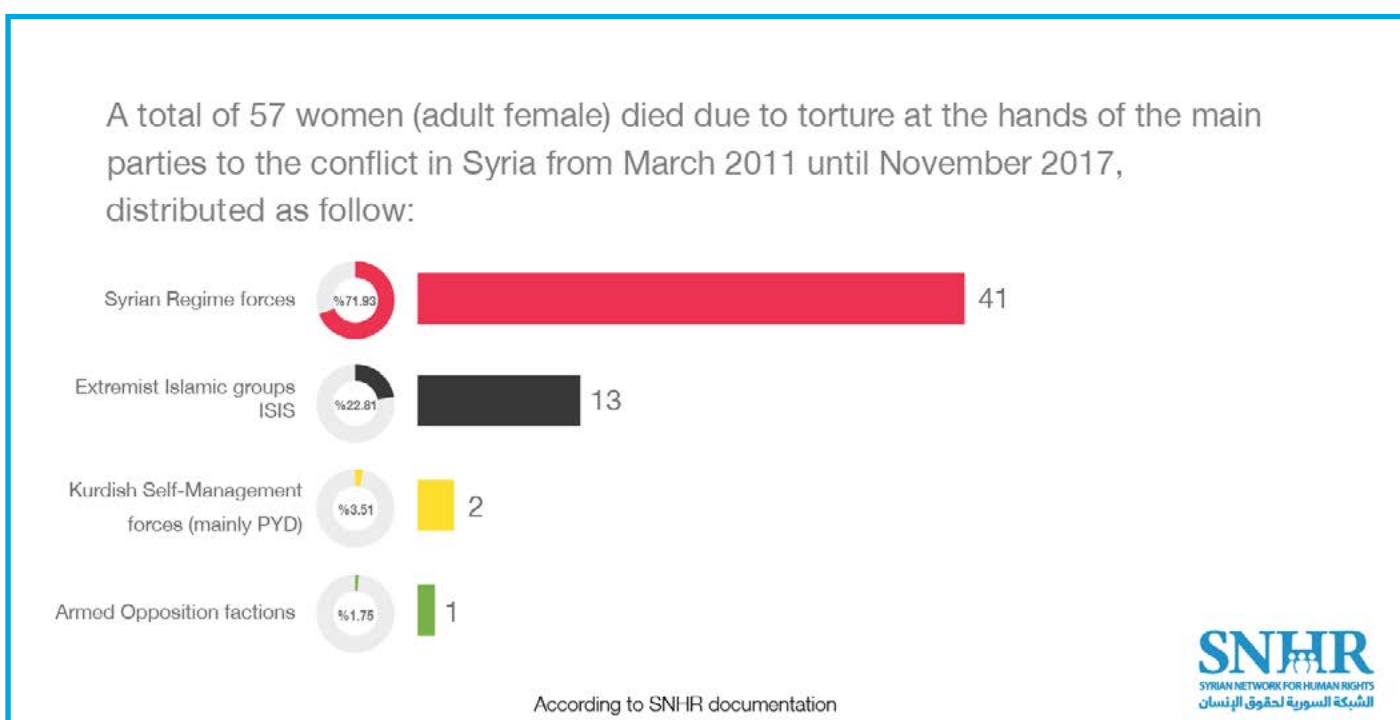
## Arbitrary arrest and enforced-disappearance

SNHR has documented that no less than 8,289 females are still under arbitrary arrest or forcibly-disappeared at the hands of the parties to the conflict between March 2011 and November 2017, as follows:



## Torture

We have recorded that 57 women (adult female) have died due to torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict from March 2011 to November 2017, as follows:



## IV. Violations against Syrian Women by the Parties to the Conflict

### A. Violations by the Syrian regime

#### 1- Extrajudicial killing

Deadly weapons have been the most commonly used since the first day of the popular uprising in March 2011. Syrian regime forces resorted to indiscriminate killing in a systematic and a daily manner, as civilians were killed in houses, markets, and streets through indiscriminate shooting and indiscriminate shelling using missiles, artillery, cluster munitions, and barrel bombs. Further, adult and children females were sniped and slaughtered using knives or shot to death during raids and massacres in the areas that are outside the control of the Syrian regime throughout Syria. Females also starved to death and died due to deprivation of medical care in the areas that are still living under a suffocating siege imposed by Syrian regime forces.

Even though civilians, males and females, have both fallen victims to the crime of extrajudicial killing, these crimes affect females particularly given their familial and social roles, while they are under a greater risk, seeing that they are easier to target during combat operations because of their vulnerable physical nature. Actually, the Syrian regime has deliberately targeted women to weaken the society and spread fear by sending a message that everyone who opposes it will be punished even women.

We have recorded the killing of 20,919 females, divided into 11,292 adult females and 9,627 female children at the hands of Syrian regime forces from March 2011 to November 2017, whereas the Syrian regime is responsible for 84.53% of all women's deaths compared to the rest of the parties to the conflict. Out of the overall death toll, over 9% are women, which is a high percentage that suggests that civilians were deliberately targeted by Syrian regime forces.

More unfortunately, many of the killing cases we recorded were mothers who were killed along with their daughters or sons, or pregnant women. Most of the killing incidents were of women who were inside their homes and were killed in indiscriminate shelling operations. The Fourth Geneva Convention has greatly emphasized protecting motherhood, as the fourth Convention was devoted to pregnant women and mothers with children who depend on their mothers. This segment is at risk more than any other, because of their children's dependence on them, and they have a priority with regard to protection, medical care, and evacuating besieged areas.





Friday, December 23, 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Hatla village, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of five civilians at once (two children and three women). The village is under the control of ISIS.

Saturday, March 25, 2017, around 09:40, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired four missiles at Hamouriya town, [Eastern Ghouta](#), eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of [17 individuals](#), including three children and seven women, while about 70 others were wounded. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Victims killed in a bombing by fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes on Hamouriya town, Eastern Ghouta – March 25, 2017

Tuesday, August 1, 2017, Syrian regime forces fired a number of Pheel rockets at [Ein Tarma](#) town, [Eastern Ghouta](#), eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of five individuals at once, including one child and three women, while about 13 others were wounded. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.





Victims killed in a shelling by Syrian regime forces that targeted Ein Tarma town with Pheel rockets, Ein Tarma, Eastern Ghouta – August 1, 2017

Monday, September 4, 2017, around 23:05, pro-Syrian regime militias raided al Hwat Farm, which is administratively a part of [Ma'rzaf town](#), northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate, and [killed 16 civilians](#) by slaughter or [shooting to death](#) (what has been documented as of this writing) including five children and five women. The area in which the farm is located was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

Qatna Ali al Khazam, woman, from al Mre'iya town, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. She was killed on Sunday, September 17, 2017, in a bombing by fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes that fired missiles in Mouhasan city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate.

Friday, September 29, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes (Su-24) fired [12 missiles](#) at [a residential neighborhood](#) in southeastern [Armanaz village](#), western suburbs of [Idlib governorate](#), which resulted in the killing of 39 individuals, including [nine children](#) and [11 women](#). Additionally, about 15 houses were [heavily destroyed](#). The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Dead bodies in the aftermath of a massacre by pro-Syrian regime militias who raided al Hwat Farm, northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate – September 4, 2017





Victims being pulled out in the aftermath of a bombing by fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes in Armanaz village, western suburbs of Idlib governorate – September 29, 2017

Eman Jasim al Hmoud al Suliman, woman, from Mouhasan city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. She was killed on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, in Mheimda village, western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate by a Syrian regime sniper who was stationed in al Qalb Hospital in al Joura neighborhood, northwestern Deir Ez-Zour city.

Na'esa Ahmad al Hwyou, woman, 65-year-old. She was killed on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, in an artillery shelling by Syrian regime forces who fired a number of shells at al Latamena town, northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate.

Sama, Lana and Layan al Rayyes, three female children. They were killed with their mother Eman al Sraiwel on Friday, November 17, 2017, in an artillery shelling by Syrian regime forces who fired a number of shells at Douma city, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate.





Dead bodies of Sama, Lana, and Layan al Rayyes who were killed in a Syrian regime artillery shelling, Douma – November 11, 2017

Saturday, November 18, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Madyara village, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of six civilians at once, including three women. The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

**As a civilian individual who is not engaged in combat operations, the woman benefits from under the general protections and special protection that were both stated in the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Additional Two Protocols, and has all the stated rights, including the right to life, the right to physical and mental health. The practices of systematic killing by Syrian regime forces which have been carried out in a widespread manner throughout Syria constitute crimes against humanity. Further, the ongoing, daily indiscriminate shelling constitute war crimes.**

## **2- Arbitrary arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture**

Since the popular uprising for freedom started, Syrian regime forces have been deliberately arresting females, whether those who took part in activities protesting the regime, or in relief and humanitarian activities such as tending to the wounded and IDPs, or the women who are related to individuals in the Syrian opposition as a way to force those individuals to surrender themselves in return for her release, or those who are from the areas that are outside the control of the Syrian regime, or even women who weren't involved in any activities in order to submit the opposition of the people and warn them about the consequence of their movement, considering that imprisoning and detaining a woman is something that deeply affects the stature and dignity of the family in the eyes of the Syrian people.



The Syrian regime didn't distinguish between adult females and female children in their arrest. We recorded many incidents where mothers were arrested along with their daughters either as a way to extract confessions from the mother herself through the leverage of threatening her daughter, or to use them as hostages in prisoner exchange deals that the Syrian regime strike with the other parties to the conflict, particularly armed opposition factions. We also recorded cases where pregnant women were arrested and gave birth to their children inside detention centers under severely poor conditions in light of a negligent health care for the mother and her newborn who are deprived of the most basic of needs.

No less than 6,736 females, 6,319 adult females and 417 female children, are still under arbitrary arrest or forcibly-disappeared inside the official and non-official Syrian regime detention centers as of November 2017. The Syrian regime is responsible for 81.26% of the overall toll of arbitrary arrest and enforced-disappearance cases involving females compared to the rest of the parties to the conflict.

Arbitrary arrest turns into enforced-disappearance in most cases. Syrian authorities deny having the detainees despite all the families' accounts that confirm that Syrian regime forces were the one who made the arrest, either by raiding their location or at their checkpoints. Moreover, releases further confirm that they were held at detention centers for the Syrian regime, whereas these releases are usually part of prisoner exchange deals between the Syrian regime and armed opposition factions or part of reconciliation and settlements, where the Syrian regime release detainees through it in accordance with non-judicial security resolutions. We also recorded release cases where women were released by the Terrorism Court in Damascus after they had served their sentence, which had been ruled by security branches, or through paying a sum of cash.

Nawar Abdul Karim Idrees, woman, nurse. from Homs city, 31-year-old. She was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint in suburbs of Homs governorate on Sunday, October 30, 2016. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Wedad al Hamwi, woman, from al Arba'ieen neighborhood, eastern Hama city, wife of an armed opposition fighter who lives in Ma'aret al Nu'man city. She was arrested by Syrian regime forces on February 18, 2017, at a checkpoint in Kafr Ra town, eastern suburbs of Hama governorate. She was released on May 5, 2017. Wedad was subjected to severe torture during her imprisonment that led to the death of her fetus.



Wedad<sup>1</sup> told us that a checkpoint stopped the bus she was in which was heading for Hama city from Ma'aret al Nu'man: **“three security members walked to the bus, and asked the driver for the I.D.’s of all the passengers. Three minutes later, they came back and asked for me by name, and asked me to get down. They took me to a small room where I found two other detainees. About five minutes later, the three of us were taken to a small bus, and they put bags made out of sackcloth over our heads and handcuffed me.”** Wedad said that they arrived at the Military Security branch -as she found out later- 30 minutes later. There, they wrote down her information and took her purse, her gold jewelry, and mobile phone, before leaving her in solitary confinement: **“Nearly 10 hours later, I was called by the officer for interrogation, and he started asking me about my husband. I didn’t give him any information because I didn’t know anything, so a security member subjected me to al Shabah “Ghost” torture method, and started beating me with a water pipe for an hour, before they took me back to solitary confinement. They repeated the same thing a few times, and in the fourth time I told the officer that I was ready to confess to whatever he wants, but he kicked me in the bottom of my belly. A few minutes later, I felt a great pain in my insides with interrupted bleeding. They transferred me to Hama National Hospital, and I stayed there for two hours where I had an abortion.”** Wedad added that she remained in the Military Security branch for nearly two weeks, and then another 15 days in branch 215 in Damascus, before she was transferred to Adra Central Prison, where she spent the remainder of her imprisonment, before the Terrorism Court released her.

Aisha Ismail al Jabawi, woman, from Nawa city, western suburbs of Daraa governorate. On Friday, August 12, 2017, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint on the road between Nawa city and Damascus governorate. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Sabah al Thahouri, woman, resides in al Jarjama neighborhood, northwestern Hama city. On Monday, September 4, 2017, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces along with her sister and husband from al Jarjama neighborhood. Their fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as their family.

Amina al Thahouri, woman, resides in al Jarajma neighborhood, northwestern Hama city. On Monday, September 4, 2017, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces along with her sister Sabah from al Jarajma neighborhood. Their fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as their family.

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<sup>1</sup> In a personal visit at her place of residence in Ma'aret al Nu'man city, Idlib suburbs



Sahar Aqqad, woman, from al Aydeen Camp in the middle of Homs city, works as a nurse for Bisan Hospital, which is affiliated to the Palestinian Red Crescent. She was arrested by Syrian regime forces from al Aydeen Camp on Thursday, September 28, 2017, and was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Fatin Shmali, woman, from al Tabeyat neighborhood, southern Latakia city, born in 1987, Arabic teacher. On August 1, 2017, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint near Tishreen University in Latakia city. She was taken to the Military Security branch in the city, and was released on August 22, 2017. Fatin<sup>2</sup> told us that she was stopped by a military checkpoint at the entrance of the university as she was heading for the student affairs department. The checkpoint asked for her I.D.: **“I gave him my I.D. and he asked why I am here. I told him that I need to do some paperwork. When he inspected me, he found in my bag a University I.D. for my nephew Mohammad who was a mechatronic engineering student at Tishreen University. Mohammad was formerly detained and he lives now in Turkey, and I wanted to finish his graduation paperwork. The officer in charge of the checkpoint talked to someone on his wireless communication device, before a white Peugeot came, and inside were security members wearing civilian clothes. They headed directly for the guard house and took me with them. One of them took my purse, and hit me brutally on the head while directing the most horrible insults at me, as he promised to teach me a lesson. We arrived at the Military Security branch less than 30 minutes later – and during that I was slapped several times and heard sectarian slurs. At the branch, I was inspected in a degrading manner – first they took off my Hijab by force and I was kicked by a security member, named Ismail, before he dragged me from the head to a solitary cell.”** Fatin told us that she was imprisoned for three weeks, and during that time she was beaten and insulted, adding that she was interrogated only twice every three days: **“They didn’t seem interested in interrogating me, and only asked me about my nephew a few times. It seems that they were just beating me for revenge and fun. I was released after my family paid a large sum of money to an officer at the branch.”**

Madiha al Aboud, woman, from Aleppo city, 55-year-old, she was released by Syrian regime forces on Tuesday, November 7, 2017, in a prisoner exchange deal between Syrian regime forces and Ahrar al Sham Islamic Movement which is an armed opposition faction.

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<sup>2</sup> Contacted via Skype



Madiha<sup>3</sup> told us that security members at a Syrian regime forces checkpoint arrested her as she was on her way from al Atareb city to Aleppo city. She was taken to the Air Force Intelligence branch in the city: **“I was arrested over a security report written up by an informant in the neighborhood I live in, in Aleppo city. During the interrogation, I was accused of transferring weapons to the armed groups, and was beaten with a stick all over my body.”** Madiha added that she remained two days at the Air Force Intelligence in Aleppo, and then six hours at the Air Force Intelligence in Homs city, before she was transferred to the Air Force Intelligence in Damascus city: **“There, they told me I will be released as a part of a prisoner exchange deals in a few days. I saw a seven-year-old girl inside that branch that they arrested to pressure on her father to surrender himself. I saw women with their children. They would only feed us twice a day, a light meal in the morning, and another meal at noon, and then we would have to wait to the next day to eat again.”** Madiha described the health situation as extremely dire, adding that most of the detainees were suffering from chest illnesses. She also told us that most of the female detainees who were with her were arrested because of their husbands’ activities with factions from the armed opposition: **“I stayed for a month in the Air Force Intelligence in Damascus, and then they transferred me along with young men and women to Qal’at al Madiq where a prisoner exchange deal was struck, and that is how I was released. During my imprisonment, the Syrian regime didn’t release any of the women who were with me, and some of them have been arrested for years without ever appearing before a court.”**

Methods of torture are mostly the same between men and women. An extensive report released by SNHR monitors [46 torture methods](#) that are largely used by Syrian regime forces in their detention centers. The Systematic torture starts from the moment the arrest is made, as the torture continues on the way to the detention center, but torture is mainly used during interrogation. Also, the female detainee sees various forms of degrading such as shaving her head and verbal assaults. It is also uncommon that female detainees are denied their most basic health needs, and their imprisonment is overseen by men, as it is a rarity for female police or military officers to be present at detention centers.

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<sup>3</sup> In a personal visit in al Atareb city, Aleppo suburbs





We have recorded that no less than 41 women (adult female) have died due to torture at Syrian regime detention centers from March 2011 to November 2017. The Syrian regime is responsible for 71.93% of death-due-to-torture cases involving females.

Syrian regime resorts to daily, systematic torture not only to extract confessions, but also to spread fear and panic among them. The torture is not limited to the physical torture for women, as psychological torture is also used by denying the woman her children in addition to death and rape threats, and having her see detainees being tortured in front of her, not to mention the fear that haunts her in light of the prevailing ideas in the society about the sexual violence women are subjected to at the hands of Syrian regime forces, which could be a threat to her future. We have recorded many cases of divorce that followed release, and also cases of violence by families against their female members who were detained. Consequently, the woman finds herself in a very difficult situation, realizing that she might not be able to escape “shame”, which drove someone to commit suicide.

Amal Abdul Karim, woman, from Hama city, born in 1994. In April 2015, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint on the road between Qal’at al Madiq in northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate and Hama city. On Monday, September 11, 2017, we received information that she died due to torture inside Palestine branch – a detention center located in Damascus.

Fatima al Shaghri, woman, from Jesr al Shoghour city, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. In 2015, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces from Latakia city. On Monday, September 11, 2017, we received information that she died due to torture inside Palestine branch – a detention center located in Damascus.

### **3- Sexual violence**

Syrian regime forces used sexual violence as a method of warfare and a strategic weapon to submit the will of the Syrian people and terrorize them. In most cases, sexual violence goes hand-in-hand with raid, killing, abduction, and arbitrary arrest, as Syrian regime forces deliberately used this strategy in a widespread and systematic manner, knowing what follows these crimes including stigmatization to the victim herself and her community in light of a prevalent perception about lost honor and purity. In this light, sexual violence is a collective punishment practiced by the Syrian regime to tear the social fabric.



Many sexual violence incidents, particularly rape, have been committed in a sectarian context and out of retaliation, mainly during raids on the areas that are outside the control of the Syrian regime and raiding and inspecting houses in neighborhoods that are known for their opposition. Additionally, sexual violence usually follows abductions that were carried out by pro-Syrian regime militias in non-official detention centers, as the crime of rape ends with killing the victim in most cases. On the other hand, sexual violence crimes in official detention centers are mostly during inspections, where women are forced to undress and are molested under the pretext of inspection. During interrogation, women are subjected to verbal sexual violence, and are accused of sleeping with fighters from armed opposition - what the Syrian regime call “sex jihad”. SNHR recorded that the Syrian government has forced 11 females, including girls who are younger than 18 years of age, to appear on the government’s official TV channel and confess to sleeping with fighters from opposition factions as per their families’ request. Most of these girls have become forcibly-disappeared after appearing on TV.

Moreover, the female detainee’s needs can be sexually exploited in case, for example, she wanted new clothes or to have her family visit her, or make a call. We recorded a limited number of rape incidents, most of which were in 2012 and 2013, and we noticed particular circumstances to each case that pertain to the female detainee’s sectarian and geographical background, or being related to fighters from the armed opposition.

Women don’t reveal to us if they were subjected to sexual violence, as revealing so is a reason for stigmatization in the Syrian culture. Therefore, most women tend to abstain from revealing such things, so they won’t be renounced by their families or communities, or receive death threats. We recorded cases where women who have been victims of sexual violence were brutalized and beaten by their families, and we recorded one case where the victim was killed. SNHR estimates that Syrian regime forces have been responsible for 7,691 crimes of sexual violence, including nearly 846 incidents inside detention centers, and no less than 432 sexual violence cases that involved girls who are younger than 18 years of age.

Ibtisam L, woman, from Homs city, 35-year-old, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces at al Dabousiya border crossing with Lebanon in early-2017. She was released three months later in late-March 2017. Ibtisam<sup>4</sup> told us that a security patrol arrested her on the Syrian side of al Dabousiya crossing after an officer told her to wait at the crossing on account of a passport issue: **“After waiting for half an hour, the patrol came and took me to the Mili-**

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<sup>4</sup> Contacted via WhatsApp



tary Security branch in Homs city, where I was molested by an assistant at the branch during inspection. He forced me to take off my hijab, and started stripping me of my clothes, when I pushed him away and asked to see the investigator to know why I was being arrested. He then beat me and dragged me to solitary cell, where I stayed for two days, before I was called for interrogation regarding a phone call. He threatened to beat me and electrocute me, and verbally insulted my dignity and honor.” Ibtisam L. added that she was only interrogated once, before she was transferred to a joint cell with three other female detainees. She was released directly from the Military Security branch in Homs.

**Government forces have practiced sexual violence as an effective weapon to deter the people, as it has become a phenomenon with dire consequences particularly on women and girls and their families and their communities. Nonetheless, many incidents remain undocumented, as victims are afraid to reveal what happened in most cases out of fear of retaliation, feeling shame, or stigmatization.**

#### **4- Use of prohibited weapons (chemical weapons)**

SNHR has documented that no less than 310 females, 244 adult females and 66 female children, have suffocated to death as a result of nearly 207 attacks using chemical weapons since they were first used on December 23, 2012.

Tuesday, April 4, 2017, around 06:46, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces Su-22 warplanes fired four missiles. One of the missiles was loaded with a poison gas -believed to be a nerve agent. The missile landed in al Shamali neighborhood in Khan Sheikhoun city. SNHR team was able to document the killing of 91 civilians who suffocated to death, including 42 females divided into 23 women (adult female) and 19 female children. All of them suffocated to death as a result of inhaling poison gases.

We had released an extensive [report](#) documenting the details of Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack



## **B. Violations by Russian forces**

Since Russia has declared it will be siding with the Syrian regime in the Syrian conflict on September 30, 2015, its forces have carried out a number of attacks in multiple areas in Homs, Idlib, and Latakia governorates. These attacks resulted, since the first day, in killing civilian victims, including females. Russian forces concentrated in their attacks on places crowded with civilians and vital facilities which were deliberately targeted. Further, Russian forces used a double-strike strategy to kill as many civilian victims as possible. We have released many reports that documented the massacres and violations that resulted from the Russian bombardment – the most recent of which is

[The Second Anniversary of the Russian Intervention in Syria](#)

Russian forces' targeting of civilian areas in a widespread and systematic manner, in addition to the use of highly destructive weapons, have raised the death toll among children and women.

We have documented, at SNHR, the killing of 988 females divided into 540 adult females and 448 female children as a result of attacks we believe were Russian. This considerably high toll reflect that civilians were deliberately targeted by Russian forces.

Thursday dawn, January 12, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at the east parts of [Babka village](#), northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of six civilians at once (three children and three women). The village is under the control of armed opposition factions.

Tuesday, February 7, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired two missiles at two residential buildings in al Qosour neighborhood, southern Idlib city, which resulted in the killing of five civilians, including one female child and three women. It should be noted that the same warplanes carried out eight airstrikes in Idlib city on that day that resulted in three massacres and the death of 29 civilians, including 15 children and 11 women. Additionally, about 30 others were wounded. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.

Friday, July 14, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a missile at a [residential building](#) in the middle of [Ein Tarma town](#), Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of [14 civilians](#), including [three children](#) and six women. The town is under the control of armed opposition factions.





Wednesday night, August 2, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at [al Tebni](#) town, western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 15 civilians, including seven children and six women, while about 19 others were wounded. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Thursday, October 5, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at al Mayadeen city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 14 civilians from the same family -IDPs from Deir Ez-Zour city- including four children and seven women. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

### **C. Violations by Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party forces– a branch for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party)**

In July 2012, Kurdish forces established themselves as one of the main parties to the conflict in Syria after Syrian regime forces had retreated from Kurdish-majority areas in northern and northeastern Syria, only limiting their presence to vital facilities. Democratic Union Party – the Kurdistan Workers’ Party- took over these areas and formed the Kurdish-majority Self-Management forces in January 2014.



## **A. Extrajudicial killing**

SNHR has documented the killing of no less than 136 females, divided into 74 adult females and 62 female children at the hands of Self-Management forces between July 2012 and November 2017. Most of the victims were killed in indiscriminate shelling operations or directly shot during raids or through sniping. Also, Self-Management forces have committed a number of massacres – some of which exhibited an ethnic nature, where females were killed in those massacres.

Saturday, September 13, 2017, the Kurdish-majority Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fired a number of artillery shells at Mazra'at al Assadiya village, northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of 16 civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including six children and four women, while about 10 others were wounded. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Houriya al Mesleh, woman, from al Qouriya city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. She died on Monday, October 9, 2017, due to lack of medical care in al Sad Camp, southern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, which is run by the Kurdish-majority SDF. It should be noted that these forces barred the woman's family from transferring the woman outside the camp to continue her treatment.

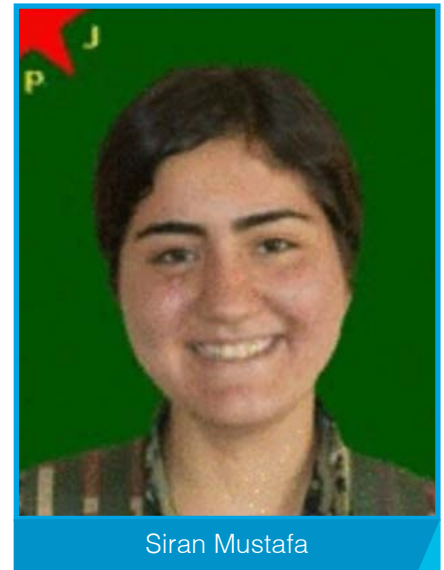
Self-Management forces have committed acts that constitute war crimes through indiscriminate shooting and killing. All of these crimes explicitly violate the international humanitarian law. Being a de facto rule, the party should adhere to the standards of the international humanitarian law.

## **2. Arbitrary arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture**

Self-Management forces has been enforcing conscription since 2014 to enhance their manpower. In doing so, Self-Management forces carried out raids, arrests, and abductions in their areas of control, targeting young men, women, and female minors. In case a female or her family refuses conscription, Self-Management forces resort to abducting her from the street, school, or when she leaves the house, and send them to training camps, while barring her from calling or seeing her family. After training, women take part in combat operations, where Self-Management forces don't inform their families of the circumstances of their death when and if they die.



Siran Mustafa, female child, from Turbet Sbayya, suburbs of Raqqa, born in 2001. In 2015, she was abducted by members of the Self-Management forces in front of her school. She was conscripted in the Women's Protection Units which are affiliated to the Kurdistan Workers' Party. She was 14-year-old at the time. Her fate remained unknown to her family until June 20, 2017, when The Women's Protection Units informed her family that she died in mysterious circumstances. Her father Hasan Mustafa died of a heart attack after hearing that his youngest daughter had been abducted in front of her school.



Aside from arresting women for the purpose of conscription, Kurdish Self-Management forces arrest female political and media activists for criticizing or opposing the policies and laws enforced by Self-Management forces in their areas of control. Also, a number of women who are related to individuals who oppose Self-Management forces were arrested as well in order to pressure those individuals to surrender themselves.

We recorded that no less than 257 females, divided into 188 adult females and 69 female children, are still under arbitrary arrest or forcibly-disappeared at the hands of Self-Management forces from July 2012 to November 2017.

Hasna al Mahmoud, woman, from al Qahtanoua town, northeastern Hasaka governorate, born in 1978. She was arrested by Self-Management forces on Thursday, February 2, 2017, from the agricultural lands that are administratively a part of al Qahtaniya town. She was released on Monday, February 13, 2017.



Hasna<sup>5</sup> told us that a patrol from the Self-Management forces came to them in her agricultural land: **“They demand that we evacuate our agricultural lands and stop cropping our lands, because we failed to pay taxes, even though the land was a property of ours. I refused to pay taxes and other owners of lands joined me, and we gathered and protested, so the patrol called for reinforcements from a military point in the town, and arrested everyone there, including me, and were taken to the town police station.”** Hasna added that there were seven men and two women. At the police station, they were insulted and beaten with an electric cable. **“Then they separated the men from the women and took us to a small detention room, and we were denied food for four years. Afterwards, they threatened to expel us from the village if we don’t pay taxes, and forced us to pay a fine, before we were released on Monday, February 13, 2017.”**

Khaldiya Abdul Hai, woman, from Tal Tahin village, suburbs of al Qameshli city, Hasaka governorate. On Monday, January 23, 2017, she was arrested along with 11 of her family members by Self-Management forces under the pretext of pursuing cells for ISIS. They were taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Hamida Mustafa al Ahmad, woman, from al Shyoukh town, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1985. She was arrested by Self-Management forces on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, at a checkpoint as she was coming back from Turkey. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Self-Management forces tend to use a number of methods on the detainees, such as brutal beating, removing fingernails, shaving heads, denial of health care and food, and keeping detainees in solitary confinement for long period of times that amount to weeks in cases of women’s imprisonment, in addition to the poor detention conditions that the female detainee suffers, such as narrow spaces, humidity, lack of cleanses and heat.

We have recorded that two women died due to torture and negligent health care inside detention centers for Self-Management forces between July 2012 and November 2017.

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<sup>5</sup> Contacted via Skype





## **D. Violations by Extremist Islamic groups**

### **ISIS**

#### **1-Extrajudicial killing**

Since the group was founded on April 9, 2013, ISIS practiced killing in a widespread and systematic manner through indiscriminate shelling, direct killing, field-executions, bombing, and committing massacres during attacks on the areas that are outside of the group's control. Also, victims were killed by landmines that ISIS plant in houses and roads after re-treating from areas that were previously under its control. Additionally, a number of females died under the siege imposed by ISIS on the neighborhoods and areas the group seeking to seize control of.

We have recorded the killing of no less than 573 females, divided into 295 adult females and 278 female children, at the hands of ISIS from the date it was founded to November 2017.

Wednesday, April 12, 2017, a number of landmines planted by ISIS on Raqqa – Sahlabiya road in western suburbs of Raqqa governorate blew, killing 10 civilians -from al Jheishat Tribe- including four children and two women. The area was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Thursday, May 18, 2017, ISIS artillery fired a number of mortar shells at a wedding in Har-abesh neighborhood, eastern Deir Ez-Zour city, which resulted in the killing of 15 civilians, including five children and five women. The neighborhood was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

**ISIS, and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, has perpetrated the crime of killing in widespread attacks against civilian residents, which constitutes crimes against humanity. Also, the indiscriminate shelling operations constitute war crimes and a violation to the international humanitarian law.**

#### **2- Arbitrary arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture**

ISIS has practiced a policy of oppression against women and enforced a set of laws that restricted her various life aspects. ISIS arrests women who violate its regulations and detains those women in special prisons that are managed by women who work with ISIS called "al Hesba al Nesa'iya". Also, ISIS practiced degrading punishments against detained women such as putting her in a cage in public squares or putting the cage on a car and drive it in the street. A woman can't be released until after her guardian comes and signs a pledge that the violation won't be repeated.



Further, ISIS carried out mass abductions after attacking areas outside its control and deliberately abducted women and female children, before taking them to undisclosed locations, as most of those have become forcibly-disappeared especially after ISIS lost a large part of its territories. Also, ISIS targeted in its abductions female activists in various fields.

We have recorded that no less than 337 females, divided into 315 adult females and 22 female children, are still under arbitrary arrest or forcibly-disappeared at the hands of ISIS from the date the group was founded until November 2017.

Hadeya al Suliman, woman, from Raqqa city, born in 1986, housewife. On Monday, May 15, 2017, she was arrested by ISIS fighters near al Khader Pharmacy in the middle of the city over charges of attempting to flee ISIS's areas of control. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Fawziya al Na'san, woman, nurse, from al Boukamal city, suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. On Friday, July 7, 2017, she was arrested by ISIS from al Boukamal city. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

During interrogation, female detainees are subjected to various types of brutal, systematic torture, as women of al Hesba use torture methods that include whipping, sever beating, biting, and electrocution. The severity and degree of torture vary by the charges, where women who were arrested for violating regulations, such as not wearing the specified clothes or leaving the house with a guardian "Muhram" (father, brother, son, uncle, husband, nephew) suffer less than women who were arrested for their activism. Also, ISIS enforced punishments that involved torture such as stoning and dragging a detainee on the ground until they die.

We have recorded that no less than 13 women have died due to torture inside ISIS detention centers from the date the group was founded to November 2017. Most of these women died by stoning after a ruling was issued by ISIS.



### **3- Restrictive practices against women**

ISIS has enforced a number of regulations and requirements for women when leaving the house, or for work, education, or even travel, starting with wearing specific clothes (al Lebas al Shar'i) and have a guardian accompany her and work in service jobs exclusively with other women, as having a workplace of mixed sex is prohibited. ISIS prohibited women from sitting in public places and forced them to marry its fighters, especially foreign ones, and banned her from receiving treatment by male doctors. In addition, ISIS hired women patrols "al Hesba" to monitor women and pursue female offenders, as the group used al Hesba as a gateway to tighten its grip on the society in order to intimidate and warn it about the consequences of opposition.

All of this have put the woman in complete isolation, and made her prefer to stay at home rather than leaving and putting herself at the risk of being pursued by al Hesba, which led to denial of education, work, and complete health care, rendering her life more of a siege.

### **4- Enslaving females and sexual violence**

ISIS has used sexual violence as a weapon of war that aims to terrorize civilians and force them to displace and flee their areas. On the other hand, ISIS used these methods to attract fighters and as a source of income through trafficking, where adult and children females are abduction and sold in special markets called (al Sabaya Markets) which are virtual markets, in most cases, on social media groups for ISIS members who post and publish pictures, descriptions, and prices of abducted females. Also, the group dedicated a number of houses in its areas of control to sell and display females for the group's leaders and members.

The females enslaved by ISIS are mainly of religious and ethnic minorities, and, to a second degree, females who are from other parties' areas of control. The largest enslavement was following an attack on the Yezidis' areas in Iraq in 2014, where hundreds of females, 8-40 years of age, were abducted, before most of them were transferred to Syria to be sold and sexually enslaved.

ISIS forces females who are of religious minorities to change their religion to Islam, and separate them from their children. Sexual enslavement starts immediately after they are sold to members or leaders in ISIS. Usually, a female is sold multiple times and is subjected to systematic rape and torture, and she might face death in case she tried to refuse, resist, or flee.



Most abducted females have become forcibly-disappeared after ISIS withdrew from its former areas of control. Due to the highly complex and unstable situation in those areas, it is difficult to determine their fates.

Jamila al Mohammad, woman, Raqqa city, her daughter was arrested by ISIS in January 2017 and was forcibly married. She managed to flee to Idlib city along with her family in late-March 2017 after she smuggled her daughter.

Jamila<sup>6</sup> told us that the Islamic Military Police came to her house at dawn to search for cigarettes, according to them, before they asked for her daughter and told her to display herself in front of them fully clothed: **“After that, they took my daughter, and I tried to stop them, but they told me to check with the police station. In the morning, I went to the police and they denied having her. After several attempts, a security member at the police admitted that she is detained and she have a special situation.”** Jamila added that she would go to the police station every day to ask about her daughter with no avail: **“I tried to convince individuals who know people with ISIS to mediate at the police station for me, so they would tell us why she was arrested and let us see her, but nothing happened. A few days later, the security member told me that she was transferred from the police station to another prison that no one knows of it. A month later, I visited the security member at his house and begged him to let me know where my daughter is, and he told me that she was transferred to a prison for women, and there she was enrolled in a Sharia course before she was forcibly married to an ISIS “Amir”. I asked him to give me some information about the Amir, and he inly gave me little information. I managed to find my daughter’s place of residence in Raqqa suburbs after I spent a month searching. Ultimately, we fled with her to Idlib after spending 10 days on the road.”**

**These practices by ISIS, and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham, in their areas of control constitute a breach to Article 3 of Geneva Conventions, and constitute war crimes.**

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<sup>6</sup> In a personal visit in Idlib city



## **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of armed opposition factions)**

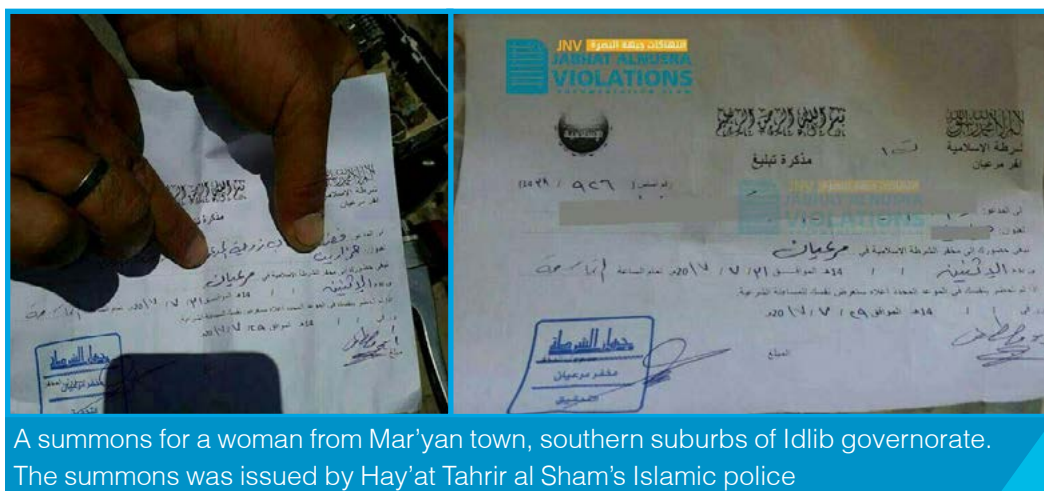
### **1- Extrajudicial killing**

Hay'at Tahrir al Sham has carried out acts of killing through indiscriminate shelling, field-executions, and indiscriminate shooting during raids on houses of wanted people, and in attacks on territories for factions from the armed opposition, in addition to bombings. We have recorded the killing of no less than 74 females, divided into 53 adult females and 21 female children, at the hands of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.

Mustafa Abdul Salam Qassam's daughter, from Beneen village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, female child. On Wednesday, July 19, 2017, she was shot and killed after the house she lives in was targeted by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.

### **2- Arbitrary arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture**

We have recorded that no less than 65 females, divided into 61 adult females and four female children, are still under arrest or forcibly-disappeared at Hay'at Tharir al Sham detention centers. Hay'at Tahrir al Sham arrests women activists under the pretext of the lack of work permit or for violating the regulations enforced by the group in its areas of control, such as non-compliance with the specified clothes, or women who oppose its policies in its areas of control. We have also recorded cases where female students were arrested for entering places of education that are limited to males or for sitting in public places for males. In addition, Hay'at Tharir al Sham abducted females during attacks on Syrian regime forces' areas of control.



A summons for a woman from Mar'yan town, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The summons was issued by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham's Islamic police



(Name is concealed for security concerns), woman, worker at a humanitarian organization. On Monday, September 4, 2017, she was arrested by fighters from Hay'at Tahrir al Sham from Atama Camp, northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Salma Ahmad al Yassin, woman, from Ma'aret al Nu'man city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, 47-year-old. On Wednesday, October 18, 2017, she was arrested by armed fighters from Hay'at Tahrir al Sham in Ma'aret al Mu'man city. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

### **3- Restrictive practices against women**

Hay'at Tahrir al Sham has established a "Hesba" agency (police) that are tasked with pursuing women and make sure their compliance with specific clothes and not dressing provocatively in markets and public places. Al Hesba consists of men members in some areas, while it is composed of female members who work with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham in others. Al Hesba conducts patrols in schools, universities, and public places, and issue warnings for women offenders, and can arrest them in case they refused to comply with al Hesba's orders. Al Hesba members are present mainly in Idlib city and the border camps.

## **E. Violations by factions from the armed opposition**

### **1- Extrajudicial killing**

Factions from the armed opposition carried out indiscriminate shelling operations that targeted Syrian regime forces' areas of control using primarily mortar shells, in addition, armed opposition factions carried out attacks on Syrian regime forces' areas of control. All of this resulted in civilian victims. SNHR has documented that 889 females, divided into 463 adult females and 426 female children, have been killed by various factions from the armed opposition.

Farah Koujak, female child, from Anadan city, northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. On Friday, January 20, 2017, she was killed by a gunshot during an armed opposition infighting in Qmainas town, northern suburbs of Idlib governorate.



Child Farah Koujak



Sherine Fares, woman, from al Tejara neighborhood, northeastern Damascus city. On Wednesday, July 12, 2017, she was killed by locally-made rocket shells that were fired from an armed opposition-held area.

## **2- Arbitrary arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture**

Following attacks on Syrian regime forces-held areas, armed opposition factions carried out abductions, where they mass arrested civilians and entire families for the sake of conducting prisoner exchange deals with government forces in the hopes of setting free women detainees. Also, armed opposition factions arrested female activists, and especially women who critique the actions of opposition factions, where a number of those women have become forcibly-disappeared. We have recorded that no less than 894 females, divided into 807 adult females and 87 female children, are still under arrest or forcibly-disappeared at detention centers for armed opposition factions.

Maha al Suliman, woman, from al Salamiya city, eastern suburbs of Hama governorate. On Friday, June 16, 2017, she was arrested by fighters from Ahrar al Sham Islamic Movement at a checkpoint near Salqin city, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. She was released on Wednesday, June 21, 2017.

SNHR spoke to Maha<sup>7</sup>, and she told us: **“As I was heading for Turkey, I had to pass through rebels-held areas in Salqin city. I was in a passenger bus along with 10 other people, and I didn’t know any of them. We were stopped by armed members from Ahrar al Sham Movement in Salqin. They asked for our I.D.’s and they found out that I was from al Salamiya city from my I.D. One of them came to me and asked if I was indeed from al Salamiya, and I said yes.”** Maha added that she was asked to get off the bus, and was arrested in a detention room near the checkpoint: **“Then, they called for a car via their wireless communication device, and the car came about 30 minutes later. The car driver, named Sheikh Abu Daoud, handcuffed me with a piece of cloth, while putting another one on my eyes. They took me to a military center, and left me in a windowless room, and it was very cold and humid with no ventilation. I found out later that it was a cave, as they kept calling the place “al Maghara Prison” (The Cave Prison).”** Maha revealed that she stayed in solitary confinement for a week, during which she appeared twice before a judge. According to Maha, the judge focused on the reason she was in these areas: **“I told him that I am just passing by on my way to Turkey. He was screaming at me a lot during interrogation, and I was slapped and hit with a thick electric cable on the lower part of my leg, in addition to threatening me to kill me if I didn’t confess to dealing with the Syrian regime. I was released after they asked about my family in al Salamiya city through acquaintances and friends.”**

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<sup>7</sup> Via phone



[E'tedal Hani Eid](#), woman, from al Majdal village, suburbs of al Suwayda governorate. On Sunday, April 3, 2016, she was arrested by armed members from Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction, at a checkpoint in Damascus city. She was released on Thursday, August 24, 2017

Ula Ahmad Shain, woman, from al Salamiya city, eastern suburbs of Hama governorate. On Monday, September 4, 2017, she was arrested by armed members from Ahrar al Sham Islamic Movement at a checkpoint in Qal'at al Madiq, western suburbs of Hama governorate. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Factions from the armed opposition have practiced methods of torture, such as severe beating, electrocution, and denial of food and health care at their detention centers. Also, psychological methods of torture have been used such as separating women from their children, especially males, and spreading news that they will execute them. We have recorded that one woman have died due to torture and negligent health care at armed opposition factions' detention centers.

### **E. Violations by international coalition forces**

Since the international coalition forces' military intervention started in Syria against ISIS on Tuesday, September 23, 2014, many of the airstrikes carried out by international coalition forces have resulted in massacres and civilian victims, including females, in governorates of Aleppo, Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zour, and Idlib. According to what has been recorded by SNHR team, international coalition forces killed no less than 611 females, divided into 342 adult females and 269 female children, from the start of the intervention until November 2017.

Sunday, May 14, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at a car transporting women workers who works at cropping "A harvest workshop" in al Ekershi village, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of 12 civilians, including 11 women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, August 8, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Thakna neighborhood in the middle of Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of 22 civilians from the same family -IDPs from Tadmur city in eastern suburbs of Homs- including 15 children and seven women. The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.





Monday, September 25, 2017, around 18:00, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired three missiles at a residential building -known as al Bik Restaurant- near al Ma'ari School in al Qetar Street, northern Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of 32 civilians -IDPs from Tadmur city in eastern suburbs of Homs governorate- including 16 children and 10 women. The area was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident, whereas it is currently under the control of the Kurdish-majority SDF as of this writing.

Rim Mohammad al Mousa, female child, born in 2014, she was killed along with her mother Zbeida Rahim Sheikh Hasan in a bombing by international coalition forces warplanes that fired missiles at a school in al Badou area in northwestern Raqqa city on October 5, 2017.



Hanan Mohammad Ali Hasan Hamza, woman, nurse, from al Dar'iya neighborhood, Raqqa city. She was killed in a bombing by international coalition forces warplanes that targeted a residential building with missiles in al Nour Street, al Dar'iya neighborhood on October 6, 2017.



## **F. Violations by other parties**

SNHR's categorization includes many classifications such as victims who drown to death, victims who die in explosions by groups we couldn't identify, and the victims killed by unknown groups to SNHR.

In addition, we encounter, in the course of the daily monitoring of human rights violations in Syria, incidents that were perpetrated by groups that operate as gangs that are not affiliate of any party, but are active in the areas of the parties to the conflict, taking advantage of the prevalent instability in order to commit crimes of killing and abduction motivated by greed or sectarian grudge. These groups are active across Syria, and especially in the Syrian regime forces-held areas and ISIS-held areas, and carry out abductions in the public streets and in areas that are highly instable - either due to its poor security or clashes between Syrian regime forces and other parties.

### **1- Extrajudicial killing**

SNHR has documented that no less than 556 females, divided into 285 adult females and 271 female children, were killed by groups we couldn't identify between March 2011 and November 2017.

Thursday, January 5, 2017, a car bomb exploded in al Mal'ab al Baladi Street in Jabla city, southern suburbs of Latakia governorate. The bombing killed 11 individuals, including four children, four women, and two military men who happened to be passing by at the time. As of this writing, we have not been able to identify the group who is responsible for the bombing. The city is under the control of Syrian regime forces.

Judi Ibrahim Tbeikh, female child, from al Sheikh Saad neighborhood, Damascus city. She was killed by mortar shells of unknown source on Tuesday, June 27, 2017.



[Suzan Ali Ibrahim](#), woman, from Tal Sikkeen, she was killed by a suicidal bomber who blow himself using an explosive belt at the main entrance of a bus center, called al Gharbi Garage, in Bab Tarabuls, Hama city, on Thursday, July 6, 2017.

## **2- Abduction and enforced-disappearance**

SNHR has documented that no less than 2897 have been abducted and forcibly-disappeared at the hands of other parties from March 2011 until November 2017.

Fatima Ass'ad, woman, from Latakia city, born in 1980. On Wednesday, April 5, 2017, she was abducted and forcibly-disappeared by unknown armed men on Latakia-Tartus road. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Samah al Dahrawi, woman, from Kafr al Toun town, western Hama city, born in 1989. On Wednesday, June 14, 2017, she was abducted and forcibly-disappeared at the hands of unknowns on the road between Hama al Salamiya cities near al Saboura town, eastern suburbs of Hama governorate. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

[Athar Sahloul](#), woman, from Ariha city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, 16-year-old, she was abducted by unknowns in Ariha city on Thursday, August 17, 2017. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

## **V. Recommendations**

Syrian regime and parties to the conflict

- The Syrian regime should lift its reservations on CEDAW treaty and immediately cease the deliberate killing, torture, and arrest against the Syrian woman.
- The Syrian-Russian alliance and the Iranian militias and their affiliates should stop deliberately shelling schools and kindergartens, as well as residential areas and populated areas, as targeting these areas results in more and more victims – most of them are women and children.
- International Coalition forces should investigate the incidents that particularly resulted in the death of females. Also, international coalition forces should apply pressure on SDF in order to compel them to cease recruiting female children, and put an end to the policy of abduction and arrest.
- All of the parties to the conflict should release detained females – especially who were detained in the context of the armed conflict- and respect the international laws on detaining girls. European States and the European Union



- The pace of economic sanctions on the two main supporters of the Syrian regime, Iran and Russia, should be raised which is an objective that could be effectively implemented by the European Union. While protecting civilians and safe areas are primary matters, economic sanctions can be effective.
- Make every possible effort to assist the active civil society organization in rehabilitating the victims and reintegrate them in the society.

### Security Council

- Protecting women in Syria has been detached from the Syrian regime's responsibility since 2011, seeing that the Syrian regime is the party who perpetrates the most violations against the Syrian woman, as this now is the Security Council's responsibility. All possible steps should be taken in order to protect women and the Syrian people.
- At the very least, pressure should be applied on the Syrian regime in order to have international observers, including the Commission of Inquiry, visit women's detention centers with no restrictions or conditions.

### OHCHR

- Release a special report on the violations against the Syrian woman in particular.

## Acknowledgment

We would like to thank the victims' families, relatives, and friends, as well as the local and media activists who contributed effectively to this report.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

