No less than 12,958 Barrel Bombs Dropped in 2016

No less than 648 Barrel Bombs in December 2016

Monday, January 9, 2017
The Syrian Network for Human Rights, founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, non-profit independent organization that is a primary source for the United Nations on all death toll-related statistics in Syria.

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I. Introduction

Vitaly Churkin, the Russian representative to the United Nations, said that the Syrian regime has stopped using barrel bombs. However, the daily monitoring and documentation conducted by SNHR prove, beyond any doubt, otherwise as the Syrian regime continues to kill and destroy Syria by dropping hundreds of barrel bombs. In this report, we are going to highlight the incidents in which we documented the use of barrel bombs particularly with place, date, and pictures. This report is a monthly report by SNHR.

Being a distinctively indiscriminate weapon with huge destructive impact, the barrel bomb doesn’t only kill civilians but also terrorizes and displaces residents in light of the destruction it creates. Dropping barrel bombs from warplanes in this savage and primitive manner amounts to a war crime. Every barrel bomb dropped is considered a war crime.

According to SNHR’s violations archive, the first notable use of barrel bombs by Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias) was on Monday 1 December 2012 against the residents of Salqein city in Idlib governorate. Barrel bombs is a locally-made weapon which is used by Syrian regime forces due to the fact that it costs notably less than missiles and it has a huge destructive impact. The use of barrel bombs is based on the principle of free fall and it weighs sometimes more than one-fourth ton, and it is a distinctively indiscriminate weapon. even if barrel bombs killed an armed man, this would be an accident as 99% of the victims killed by barrel bombs are civilians and the percentage of women and children victims varies from 12% to 35% in some cases. Security Council adopted Resolution 2139 on 22 February 2016 which specifically con-
demns the use of barrel bombs: “cease all attacks against civilians, as well as the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas, including shelling and aerial bombardment, such as the use of barrel bombs.” Nonetheless, Syrian regime forces are still dropping tens of barrel bombs on armed opposition-held areas.

In some cases, we documented the use of barrel bombs that is loaded with poison gases by Syrian regime forces which is a violation of Security Council Resolution 2118, adopted on 27 September 2013, and Resolution 2209, adopted on 6 March 2015.

This report monitors the number of barrel bombs that were dropped across Syria, the death toll it causes, and the destruction of most notable vital facilities caused by barrel bombs. In light of the difficulties our teams encounter, it should be noted that this the bare minimum of the actual magnitude of crimes.

The only party that possesses warplanes and helicopters is the ruling regime. However, the regime denies that it is using barrel bombs the same way it denies perpetrating other violations such as murder, arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture among others. In contrast, the regime denies the International Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic access to Syria, and bans local and international human rights organizations and independent media. Therefore, this report doesn’t include the remaining three parties (forces of what known as Self-management, extremist Islamic groups, and armed opposition factions) as none of them has as an air force.

All the reports and studies done by SNHR show that most of the attacks were deliberately against residential areas and vital centers in order to demolish any chances to establish an alternative state and an alternative authority in the areas that are not controlled by Syrian regime forces. Otherwise, what is the point of targeting areas that are tens of kilometers away from the frontlines?
II. Executive Summary

• Use of barrel bombs in 2016 by the Syrian regime forces

No less than 12958 barrel bombs dropped by Syrian Regime air-force in 2016 distributed on the governorates as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governorate</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Damascus suburbs</td>
<td>6599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleppo</td>
<td>4045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hama</td>
<td>909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idlib</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daraa</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homs</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lattakia</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quniyra</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deir Ez-Zour</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Suwaida</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to SNHR’s documentation

Distribution of barrel bombs dropped by Syrian Regime air-force over 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>1428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>1506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>1128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to SNHR’s documentation
A. Toll of barrel bombs

Through daily documentation and monitoring, SNHR team was able to document no less than 12,958 barrel bombs that were dropped by the Syrian regime warplanes in 2016 across Syrian governorates as follows:


Drop of barrel bombs over the course of the year 2016 was as follows:


These barrel bombs resulted in the killing of 635 civilians including 166 children and 86 according to the victim documentation team at SNHR. Death toll was distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

Aleppo: 506 civilians including 140 children and 63 women.
Damascus suburbs: 45 civilians including four children and seven women.
Homs: 25 civilians including six children and six women.
Daraa: 23 civilians including one child and three women.
Idlib: 26 civilians including 14 children and four women.
Hama: 6 civilians including one woman.
Deir Ez-Zour: 4 civilians including one child and two women.

B. Incidents of attacks against vital facilities that involved the use of barrel bombs

Due to the widespread use of barrel bombs, it is impossible to record all forms of destruction caused by barrel bombs. Therefore, we are going to focus on protected objects and vital facilities such as markets, hospitals, schools and places of worship. The barrel bombs that were dropped by Syrian regime forces in 2016 caused damages to no less than 97 vital civil facilities which are:

Places of worship
- Mosques: 23

Vital educational facilities
- Schools: 12

Vital medical facilities:
- Medical centers: 20
- Ambulances: 8
Vital cultural facilities:
- Archeological sites: 1

Communal facilities:
- Markets: 3

Infrastructures:
- Power stations: 5
- Civil defense centers: 17
- Water systems: 5
- Official headquarters: 3

**Use of barrel bombs in 2016 by the Syrian regime forces**

**A. Toll of barrel bombs**

Through daily monitoring and documenting, SNHR team was able to record that no less than 1946 barrel bombs at least were dropped in December 2016 by the regime helicopters. Those barrel bombs are distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

- Damascus suburbs: 341
- Aleppo: 225
- Hama: 38
- Idlib: 25
- Latakia: 13
- Daraa: 6

According to SNHR’s victim documentation team, 59 civilians, including 22 children, 11 women, one medical personnel, and two civil defense personnel were killed in barrel bombs attacks. The death toll caused by barrel bombs in December is distributed as follows:

- Aleppo: 34 civilians including 17 children, seven women and one paramedic.
- Damascus suburbs: 18 civilians including one female child, two women, and two civil defense personnel.
- Idlib: 6 civilians – four children and two women.
- Hama: 1 civilian.
B. Incidents of attacks against vital facilities that involved the use of barrel bombs

Due to the widespread use of barrel bombs, it is impossible to record all forms of destruction caused by barrel bombs. Therefore, we are going to focus on protected objects and vital facilities such as markets, hospitals, schools and places of worship. . .

The use of barrel bombs by the regime helicopters in the month of December caused damages to no less than 14 vital civil facilities:

Places of worship:
- Mosques: 3

Vital educational facilities
- Schools: 1

Vital Medical facilities
- Medical centers: 3
- Ambulances: 2

Vital cultural facilities
- Archeological sites: 1

Infrastructures:
- Power stations and energy sources: 1
- Water systems: 2
- Official headquarters: 1

III. Details

Most notable deaths caused by barrel bombs

Aleppo governorate

Wednesday afternoon 7 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on the southern parts of Al Mash-had neighborhood in Aleppo city, which resulted in the killing of four civilians. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident, whereas it is, at the time of this writing, under the control of Syrian regime forces.

Thursday 8 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on the eastern side of Al Maghayer neighborhood in Aleppo city, which resulted in the killing of one civilian. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident, whereas it is, at the time of this writing, under the control of Syrian regime forces.
Friday noon 9 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on the eastern parts of Al Ma’adi neighborhood in Aleppo city, which resulted in the killing of two children. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident, whereas it is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces.

Friday noon 9 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on the residential buildings near AbdulQader Al Najjar school in Al Jalloom neighborhood in Aleppo city, which resulted in the killing of 25 individuals including 15 children and six women. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the massacre, whereas it is, at the time of this writing, under the control of Syrian regime forces.

Saturday 10 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on Al Ferdous neighborhood in Aleppo city, which resulted in the killing of one paramedic who works with Sham Aiding Network. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the massacre, whereas it is, at the time of this writing, under the control of Syrian regime forces.

Monday morning 12 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on the southern parts of Sarja village, located in the southern suburbs of Aleppo governate and is under the control of armed opposition factions, which resulted in the killing of one civilian.

Damascus suburbs governorate
Monday 5 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped eight barrel bombs on Madaya town, located in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions, which resulted in the killing of four civilians including one female child and two civil defense personnel.

Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on Ain Al Fija village, located in Wadi Barada area in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions with some members of Fateh Al Sham Front being present in the village, which resulted in the killing of eight individuals at once including one woman. Additionally, about 30 others were wounded.
Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs in Deir Meqren village, located in Wadi Barada area in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions, which resulted in the killing of two civilians including one woman.

Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs in Kafr Al Zit village, located in Wadi Barada area in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions, which resulted in the killing of two civilians including one woman.

Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs in Huraira village, located in Wadi Barada area in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions, which resulted in the killing of one civilian.

Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs in Bassima village, located in Wadi Barada in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions with some members of Fateh Al Sham Front being present in the village, which resulted in the killing of one civilian.

**Idlib governorate**

Sunday 4 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the eastern farms of Al Taman’a town, located in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front, which resulted in the killing of six civilians from the same family (Four children and two women).

**Hama governorate**

Saturday 3 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on Helfaya city, located in the suburbs of Hama governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions, which resulted in the killing of one civilian.
B. Incidents of attacks against vital facilities that involved the use of barrel bombs

Places of worship

- Mosques

Friday noon 9 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb near Al Zaitouna mosque in Al Jalloom neighborhood in Aleppo city. The mosque building, and its cladding materials were moderately damaged. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident, whereas the neighborhood is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces.

Thursday 22 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs near Al Rahman mosque in Bassima village, located in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions with some members of Fateh Al Sham being present in the town. The mosque building, and cladding materials were moderately damaged.
Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs near the main mosque in Ain Al Fija village, located in Wadi Barada in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions with some members of Fateh Al Sham Front being present in the town. The mosque building, and its furniture were heavily damaged. It should be noted that the area was firstly targeted with barrel bombs before being bombed by fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes and Syrian regime heavy artillery using missiles and shells.

Vital educational facilities
- Schools
Friday noon 9 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb near AbdulQader Al Najjar school in Al Jalloom neighborhood in Aleppo city, which resulted in a massacre. Additionally, the school fence was partially destroyed, and the furniture and cladding materials were moderately damaged. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident, whereas the neighborhood, at the time of this writing, is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces.

Vital medical facilities
- Medical centers
Sunday evening 4 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb near Omar ben AbdulAziz makeshift hospital in Al Ma’adi neighborhood, located in Aleppo city and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The hospital building was partially destroyed, and the fuel warehouse of the hospital was burned. In addition, an ambulance belonging to the hospital was heavily destroyed and rendered out of commission.
Monday 5 December 2016, around 5:00, Syrian regime helicopters dropped four barrel bombs near the only medical point in Madaya town, in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The point building was heavily destroyed, and the equipment and cladding materials were heavily damaged. As a result, the point was rendered out of commission. It should be noted that this point was providing medical services for approximately 40,000 people in the town.

Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the building of Ain Al Fija health center in Ain Al Fija village in Wadi Barada area, located in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. with some members of Fateh Al Sham Front being present in the village. A fire broke out in the center which was heavily damaged. As a result, the center was rendered out of commission.

-Ambulances
Saturday morning 19 November 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb near an ambulance belonging to “Enqath” Aiding Network in the vicinity of Al Bayan surgical hospital in Al Sha’ar neighborhood, located in Aleppo city, under the control of armed opposition factions. The ambulance structure was heavily destroyed, and the ambulance was rendered out of commission. It wasn’t until 5 December 2016 we were able to contact activists from the area to verify the incident.

-Vital cultural facilities
- Archeological sites
Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs in Al Rabba Tekka roman ancient temple inside the facility of Ain Al Fija springs in Ain Al Fija village, located in Wadi Barada in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions with some members of Fateh Al Sham Front being present in the village. The temple was moderately damaged. It should be noted that the area was firstly targeted with barrel bombs before being bombed by fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes and Syrian regime heavy artillery using missiles and shells.
Infrastructures

- Power stations
Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on the power station in Ain Al Fija village, located in Wadi Barada area in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions with some member of Fateh Al Sham Front being present in the village. The station building, and its equipment were heavily damaged. As a result, the station was rendered out of commission. It should be noted that the area was firstly targeted with barrel bombs before being bombed by fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes and Syrian regime heavy artillery using missiles and shells.

- Water systems
Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on the facility of Ain Al Fija springs in Ain Al Fija village, located in Wadi Barada area in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions with some member of Fateh Al Sham Front being present in the village. The facility was partially destroyed, and the mechanical and electrical equipment were moderately damaged. As a result, the facility was rendered out of commission. Additionally, the spring water was polluted after it was mixed with soil and fuels. It should be noted that the area was firstly targeted with barrel bombs before being bombed by fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes and Syrian regime heavy artillery using missiles and shells.
Monday 26 December 2016, Syrian regime warplanes dropped two barrel bombs on the tunnel (canal) that transfers the water from Ain Al Fija springs in Bassima village, located in Wadi Barada in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions with some members of Fateh Al Sham Front being present in the village. The tunnel was fractured.

- Official headquarters (Institutions – ministries)
Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on the central call center of Wadi Barada in Ain Al Fija town, located in Wadi Barada in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions with some members of Fateh Al Sham Front being present in the town. The center building, and its furniture were heavily damaged, and was as a result, rendered out of commission. It should be noted that the area was firstly targeted with barrel bombs before being bombed by fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes and Syrian regime heavy artillery using missiles and shells.

I. Appendixes and Attachments
Video showing Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on Kafr Sajna town in the suburbs of Idlib governorate, Sunday 4 December 2016

Picture showing destruction that resulted from a number of barrel bombs that were dropped by Syrian regime helicopters in Helfaya city in the suburbs of Hama governorate, Wednesday 7 December 2016
I. Conclusions and Recommendations

Legal conclusions

1- The Syrian government has, beyond any doubt, violated Security Council Resolutions 2139 and Security Council Resolution 2254. Syrian regime forces used barrel bombs in a widespread and systematic manner and violated, through the crime of willful killing, Article 7 of the Rome Statute in a widespread and systematic manner as well which constitutes crimes against humanity. Additionally, the Syrian government violated many rules of the international humanitarian law by perpetrating tens of crimes that amount to war crimes which manifested in the indiscriminate and random bombardment that was also disproportionate due to the use of excessive force.

2- SNHR can confirm that the bombardment using barrel bombs is an indiscriminate bombardment that targeted unarmed civilians. Thus, Syrian regime forces have violated the rules of the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. Additionally, considering that these crimes were perpetrated during a non-international armed conflict, these crimes amount to a war crime where all the elements of a war crimes were fulfilled.

3- The indiscriminate attacks carried out by Syrian regime forces are considered a violation of the customary humanitarian international law where Syrian regime forces fired shells at residential areas rather than being directed against a specific military target.
4- These attacks, especially bombardment, have caused collateral damages that involved casualties, injuries, and great damages to civil facilities. There are strong indicators that suggest that the damage was considerably excessive in relation to the estimated military benefit.

5- The magnitude of the widespread frequent bombardment, the excessive force, the indiscriminate manner, and the coordinated approach of these attacks must be based on high orders and a state policy.

6- Syrian regime forces, including all their forms and leaders, are involved in perpetrating crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people in addition to those who provide Syrian regime forces with financial, political, and military support -such as the Russian government, the Iranian government, and Hezbollah among others. Also, the companies that supply weapons are considered partners in these crimes and are subject to criminal prosecution.

**Recommendations**

**The Security Council**

- The Security Council must insure the serious implementation of its Resolutions. These Resolutions have become merely words and, thus, the Security Council has lost all of its credibility and purpose.
- An arms embargo must be imposed on the Syrian government and all those who supply it with weapons and funding must be prosecuted considering the risk that these weapons might be used to commit crimes and serious violations of human rights.
- In the Syrian case, The Security Council is the one who is authorized to refer the case to the International Criminal Court. However, the Security Council has been obstructing this procedure for five years instead of facilitating it and working on instilling peace and security in Syria. The prosecution of everyone involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes must commence immediately.

**Acknowledgment**

Our most heartfelt condolences for the families and friends of the victims, and our thanks go out to all local activists and families who contributed majorly to this study and the investigations.