



## Syrian Government's Use of Barrel Bombs in February 2015 1113 Barrel Bombs Killed 126 Individuals, including 21 Children and 12 Women

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### I- Introduction:

By daily observing and recording violations, after the beginning of the popular protests in March 2011, we found out that first significant use of barrel bombs by government forces (Military forces, security forces, local militias, and foreign Shi-ite militias) was on Monday 1 October, 2012 in Idlib – Silqean town where a helicopter dropped a barrel bomb on a two-floor residential building which collapsed completely and 32 civilians, including seven women and seven children, were killed in addition to 120 others who were injured as shrapnel scattered everywhere.

It is worth noting that this might not be the first time barrel bombs were used but it was the first time it was used in such a notable manner. The international community was not familiar with that kind of weapon yet. Barrel bombs sometimes weigh quarter of ton and rely on the free fall principle. These barrels are random weapons and locally made, since it is less expensive, causes massive destruction, and causes a great loss of lives. 99% of the casualties are civilians, where the percentage of targeted women and children ranges between 12 and 35%.

The same as with any new weapon, government forces cautiously waited for the international community's respond as the Syrian government deems the international community's silence or condemnation a red light to use and employ this weapon on a larger scale which was the case when it started using aerial weapon, poison gases, cluster munitions, and Scud missiles.





The Security Council waited a year and a half before adopting resolution 2139 on 22 February, 2014 which condemned the use of barrel bombs and mentioned it by name: “Demands that all parties immediately 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” The Syrians welcomed the resolution because it expressed an intention to take further action in the events of non-compliance.

The Syrian government, through its allies at the Security Council first and the other states’ failure to shoulder their legal and moral role, disregarded resolution 2139 the same way it disregarded resolution 2118, adopted on 27 September, 2013, resolution 2042 and 2043, adopted in April 2012.

The Syrian government fully realizes that there are no serious consequences of its action where its forces are openly and proudly violating the Security Council resolutions and international laws (A pro-government politician said on TV that the Syrian government should use nuclear weapons to attack the areas outside its control). Our daily documentation of violations shows that there is no notable difference before 22 February, 2014 (resolution 2139) and after.

SNHR studies and reports prove that most of the attacks were deliberate and targeted crowded civilian areas. The government’s aerial bombardment, displacement and destruction it causes are apparently aimed at thwarting the establishment of any governance model that may serve as a substitute for the Assad government.

## **II- Executive Summary:**

### **A- Barrel Bombs Used in February 2015:**

Through our daily documentation, SNHR team was able to document the use of not less than 1113 barrel bombs in February 2015, detailed as follows:

- Damascus suburbs: 465
- Daraa: 239
- Hama: 212
- Aleppo: 114
- Idlib: 43
- Homs: 21
- Latakia: 12
- Al Qunaitera: 3
- Al Hassaka: 4





The use of barrel bombs as random weapons killed 126 individuals, including 21 children and 12 women, according to the documentation team in SNHR.

**The classification of the victims' death toll according to the Syrian governorates:**

Aleppo: 73 individuals were killed including 11 children and 8 women.

Idlib: 34 individuals were killed including 4 children and 1 woman.

Hama: 7 individuals were killed including 3 children and 1 woman.

Homs: 7 individuals were killed including 3 children and 1 woman.

Daraa: 2 children were killed.

Al Qunaitera: One individual was killed

Al Hassaka: One individual was killed

Lattakia: One individual was killed

**B- Targeting Vital Facilities with Barrel Bombs:**

We could not document all destructions caused by barrel bombs, therefore we recorded the number of vital facilities targeted by government aviation, i.e. markets, schools, hospitals and houses of worship.

During February 2015, not less than 9 vital facilities were targeted by barrel bombs:

- Schools: 5 were targeted
- Markets: 1
- Ambulances: 1
- Infrastructure: 1
- Service Facilities: 1

**III- Report Details:**

**A- Victims Death Toll in February 2015 due to the use of Barrel Bombs by government forces:**

Victim's death toll due to the use of barrel bombs, distributed as follows according to the Syrian governorates:

**Aleppo:**

1- On 5 February 2015, **government helicopters** dropped three **barrel bombs** on Ba'abdeen roundabout in **Al Halak neighborhood** which killed 16 individuals including 8 children and 5 women.

2- On 21 February 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Al Sak-hour neighborhood which killed 9 individuals including 2 children and 3 women.





### **Idlib:**

- 1- On 2 February 2015, [government helicopters](#) dropped several [barrel bombs](#) on Khan Shaykoun city in Idlib which [killed 25 individuals](#) including 4 children.
- 2- On 6 February 2015, government helicopters dropped [several barrel bombs](#) on Al Bara city which killed 5 individuals including 2 children and a woman.

### **Daraa:**

- 1- On 21 February 2015, government helicopters dropped [several barrel bombs](#) on Dael city in Daraa which killed 3 children and 2 women.

### **Deir Al Zour:**

- 1- On 5 February 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Al Hamad town in Al Hassaka suburbs which killed 8 individuals and injured 13 others. Additionally, 6 commercial shops were completely destroyed.

## **B- Targeting Vital Facilities with Barrel Bombs:**

### **Schools:**

- 1- On 2 February 2015, government helicopters dropped [two barrel bombs](#) next to Al Kamleya archeological school in Al Ma'adi neighborhood in Aleppo which killed 3 individuals including a child and a woman. The school was damaged.
- 2- On 2 February 2015, government helicopters dropped [two barrel bombs](#) on Al Kifah School on [Tareeq Al Bab neighborhood](#) in Aleppo which damaged part of the school's building.
- 3- On 18 February 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on one of the schools in Al Za'afarane town in Homs which killed one individual and damaged the school's building.
- 4- On 18 February 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs next to Al Za'afarane town in Homs which injured 12 individuals.
- 5- On 23 February 2015, government helicopters dropped [two barrel bombs](#) opposite to Abu Baker Al Razi School in Al Halak neighborhood in Aleppo which damaged parts of the school.





### **Markets:**

1- On 5 February 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs several shops in Al Hamad town in Al Hassaka southern suburbs which killed 8 individuals and injured 13 others. Six shops were completely destroyed.

### **Ambulances:**

1- On 5 February 2015, government helicopters dropped **three barrel bombs** on Ba'abdeen roundabout in **Al Halak neighborhood** in Aleppo. The third barrel bomb hit an ambulance that was in the region which was aiding injured people from the previous shelling. The driver was killed, 2 paramedics were injured and the ambulance was completely destroyed.

### **Infrastructure:**

1- On 26 February 2015, government helicopters dropped **two barrel bombs** on a residential street in Al Sha'ar neighborhood in Aleppo which damaged the power network in the region. The neighborhood suffered from a power outage for several hours.

### **Service Facilities:**

1- On 5 February 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on a power station in Al Hamad town in Al Hassaka suburbs which killed 8 individuals and injured 13 others. The power station was burned.

## **IV- Conclusions and Recommendations:**

1- The Syrian government has, beyond any doubt, violated Security Council resolution 2139 and used barrel bombs in a widespread and systematic manner. Furthermore, the Syrian government perpetrated the crime of murder in a widespread and systematic manner according to Article VII of The International Criminal Court Rome Statute. Additionally, it violated many principles of the international humanitarian law and perpetrated tens of crimes that can be classified openly as war crimes through its indiscriminate and proportionate bombing.

2- SNHR notes that the bombing using explosive barrels is an act of indiscriminate bombing that targeted armless civilians, thus the government forces and its militias have violated the articles of the international law for human rights which guarantee the right to live. Furthermore these violations were perpetrated during a non-international armed conflict and hence can be absolutely classified as war crimes.

3- The random attacks committed by the government forces are considered violations of the customary international law considering the fact that government forces have attacked residential areas rather than a specific military target.





4- These attacks, especially aerial bombing, have caused immeasurable humanitarian and material losses. There are strong indicators that prove that the damage was deeply severe compared to the expected military advantage.

5- The magnitude of this wide systematic frequent bombing, the level of its excessive strength, its military nature, and the coordinated approach of these attacks must be based on high orders, and a state policy.

6- Government forces, and all of its leaderships and forms, are responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes as well as any parties that support the Syrian government politically, materially, and militarily – such as the Russian government, the Iranian government, and Hezbollah in addition to the weapon manufacturing companies. All of these parties must be prosecuted for the crimes they perpetrated, or contributed to, against the Syrian people.

## **Recommendations**

### **The Security Council**

1- The Security Council should take serious steps in order to implement its resolutions which have become ineffective and thus lost all of its credibility and purpose.

2- Also, it should impose an arms embargo on the Syrian government and prosecute anyone who supplies the Syrian government with money and weapon considering that those resources are being used to perpetrate crimes and serious human rights violations.

3- The Security Council is the party who has the authority to refer the Syrian case to the International Criminal Court. Instead of preserving peace and security, the Security Council is hindering this step. Everyone responsible for war crimes and crimes against must be prosecuted.

### **V- Attachments:**

Video footages and images that document the barrel bomb shelling in February 2015:

- A video that depicts an unexploded **barrel bomb** that was shelled by government helicopters on **Al Tamane'a town** in Hama on 3 February 2015

- A video that depicts **the barrel bomb** shelling by government helicopters on Talbisa city in Homs on 5 February 2015

- A video that depicts **the barrel bomb** shelling by government helicopters on 6 February 2015

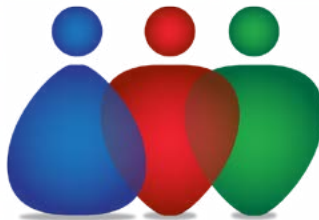
- A video that depicts **the barrel bomb** shelling by government helicopters on Al Sakhour neighborhood in Aleppo on 6 February 2015

- A video that depicts **the barrel bomb** shelling by government helicopters on Al Sakhour neighborhood in Aleppo on 8 February 2015





- A video that depicts [the barrel bomb](#) shelling by government helicopters on Masaken Hanano neighborhood in Aleppo on 10 February 2015
- A video that depicts [the barrel bomb](#) shelling by government helicopters on Masaken Hanano neighborhood in Aleppo on 15 February 2015
- A video that depicts [the barrel bomb](#) shelling by government helicopters on Al Latamena city in Hama on 16 February 2015
- A video that depicts [the barrel bomb](#) shelling by government helicopters on Ma'art Hirnma town in Idlib on 23 February 2015
- A video that depicts [the barrel bomb](#) shelling by government helicopters on Daraya city in Damascus suburbs on 23 February 2015
- A video that depicts [the barrel bomb](#) shelling by government helicopters on Al Latamina city in Hama on 24 February 2015
- A video that depicts [the barrel bomb](#) shelling by government helicopters on the northern ranches in Talbisa city in Homs on 28 February 2015



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