



Syrian Government's Use of Barrel Bombs in January 2015 949 Barrel Bombs Killed 122 Individuals, including 21 Children and 18 Women

Report Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Executive Summary
- III. Report Details
- IV. Conclusions and Recommendations
- V. Attachments and Annexes
- Acknowledgment and Condolences

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 Shiite 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 in 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 January 2015:

Through our daily documentation, SNHR team was able to document the use of not less than 949 barrel bombs in January 2015, detailed as follows:

Hama: 286

Damascus suburbs: 238

Daraa: 243

Aleppo: 88

Idlib: 64

Homs: 12

Lattakia: 8

Al Hassaka: 4

Al Qunaitera: 6

The use of barrel bombs as random weapons killed 122 individuals, including 21 children and 18 women, according to the documentation team in SNHR.

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

Daraa: 12 individuals were killed including 5 children and 3 women.

Hama: 18 individuals were killed including 2 children and 5 women.

Homs: 24 individuals were killed including 2 children and 4 women.

Idlib: 26 individuals were killed including 4 children and 4 women.

Aleppo: 24 individuals were killed including 8 children.

Al Hassaka: 12 individuals were killed.

Damascus suburbs: 4 victims were killed including 2 women

Al Qunaitera: 2 victims were killed

A. Targeting Vital Facilities using 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 January 2015, not less than 9 vital facilities were targeted by barrel bombs:

Schools: 5

Places of Worship: 2

Markets: 1

Pharmaceutical Factories: 1

II. Report Details:

A. January 2015 Victims Death Toll due to the use of Barrel Bombs:

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

Homs:

1. On 21 January 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on [Al Houla region in Homs](#) which killed 14 [individuals including 2 children and 2 women](#).

Al Hassaka:

1. On 20 January 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on the livestock market in Al Khansaa town which [killed 30 individuals](#) including 3 children and a woman.

Hama:

1. On 29 January 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on Al Dalati town in [Kafr Zeita city](#) in Hama which killed 5 individuals including 2 women.

A. Targeting Vital Facilities with Barrel Bombs:

Schools:

1. On 1 January 2015, government helicopters dropped barrel bombs on a high school in Damascus suburbs – [Az-Zabadani city](#) which [damaged the school's](#) buildings and bathrooms.





a school in Idlib – Ein Larouz village



2. On 1 January 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on a [school in Daraa](#) – Daraa Al-Balad which damaged the school's building.
3. On 19 January 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on a high [school in Hama](#) – Al-Latamna city which destroyed part of the school's fence and a number of classrooms in addition to heavily damaging the school's building. No casualties or injuries were documented.
4. On 20 January 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on a school in Idlib – [Ein Larouz village](#) which damaged the school while no casualties or injuries were documented.
5. On 25 January 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb near a [school](#)





[in Hama – Al-Latamna city](#) which destroyed the school’s fence while no casualties or injuries were documented.

Markets:

1. On 20 January 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on a [livestock market in Al-Hassaka – Al-Khansaa’ village](#) to kill 30 victims including three children and one woman.

Places of Worship:

1. On 25 January 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on Assadllah Hamza Mosque in Hama – [Kafrzyta city](#). The mosque wasn’t damaged as the bomb didn’t explode.

2. On 27 January 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs near a mosque in Idlib suburbs – Kansfra town to kill four victims including a woman in addition to [damaging the mosque](#).

Pharmaceutical Factories:

1. On 24 January 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on Asia Establishment for Pharmaceutical industries, located near Aleppo suburbs – Kafr Hamra town. The storage hall was heavily damaged and huge amount of drugs were burned while no casualties were documented.

III. 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.





Video footages and images that document the barrel bomb shelling in January 2015:
A [video](#) that depicts the barrel bomb shelling on Jirjinza town in Idlib on 1 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts the barrel bomb shelling on Adnan city in Aleppo on 10 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts the barrel bomb shelling location on Dael City in Daraa on 20 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts the barrel bomb shelling on Inkhil city in Daraa on 25 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts the barrel bomb shelling location on Al Rakaya town in Idlib on 25 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts the barrel bomb shelling on Tbte'e town in Daraa on 26 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts the barrel bomb shelling on Al Bara – Al Knasfara town in Idlib on 27 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts the barrel bomb shelling on the farms between Khan Shaykhoun and Murouk cities in Idlib on 28 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts the barrel bomb shelling on Khan Al Shiekh in Damascus suburbs on 15 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts an unexploded barrel bomb that was dropped on Al [Latamena](#) city in Hama on 19 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts the barrel bomb shelling on Inkhil city in Daraa on 26 January 2015

A [video](#) that depicts an unexploded barrel bomb on Al Latamena city in Hama on 27 January 2015

