

Statement

Fearing for the Lives of Nearly 750 Trapped Civilians in Deir Ez-Zour

Syrian Democratic Forces
Have to Immediately Allow
Trapped People to Flee to their
Areas of Control

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Friday, November 3, 2017

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.



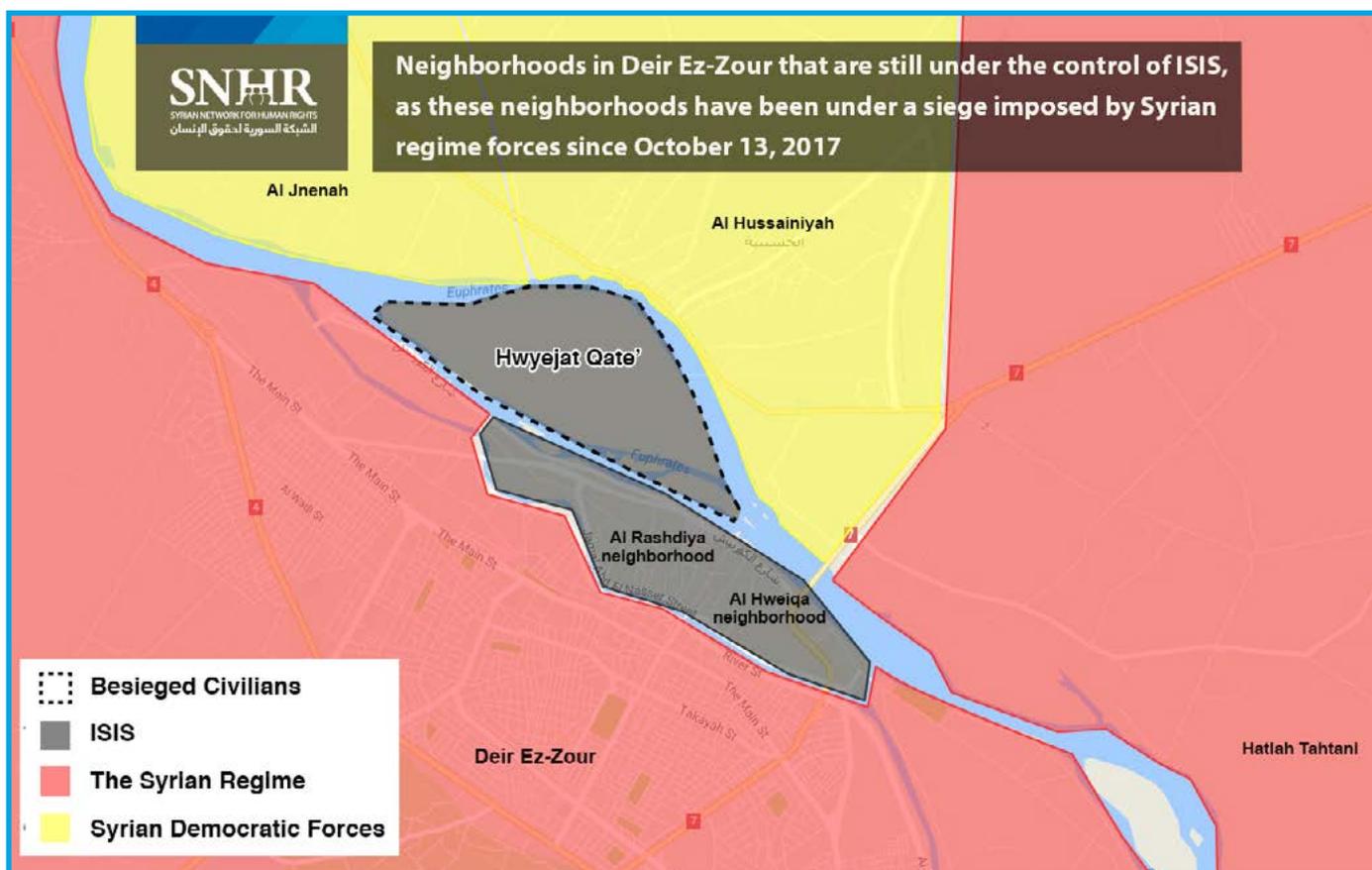
Since mid-August 2017, Syrian regime forces and their pro-regime militias have managed to hold most of the villages in western and eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour that are located to the west of Euphrates River, effectively ending the siege on al Joura and al Qosour neighborhoods that have been under a siege imposed by ISIS since March 2015. In doing so, Syrian regime forces didn't take any of the rules of the international humanitarian law into consideration at all, as we documented hundreds of frequent violations on a daily basis, in addition to careless employment of indiscriminate attacks, and deliberate targeting of vital civilian facilities, resulting in the killing of no less than 687 civilians, including 189 children and 123 women. These attacks forced roughly 252,000 people to flee Deir Ez-Zour city as well as the eastern and western suburbs, where most of the people headed for the villages to the east of Euphrates River. We have released [a brief report](#) shedding light on the humanitarian conditions the IDPs are living under.

On October 13, 2017, Syrian regime forces took over al Salhiya town – the northern entrance to Deir Ez-Zour and the only exit point that civilians used to flee military operations towards the areas of Deir Ez-Zour suburbs- and trapped the civilians who remained inside – nearly 750 civilians in nine ISIS-held neighborhoods: al Ummal, al Sena'a, al Rsafa, al Matar al Qadim, Kanamat, al Hweiqa, al Aradi, al Sheikh Yasin, and al Hamidiya.

Not only did the siege was tightened on civilians who were barred from fleeing, Syrian regime forces also intensified their heavy airstrikes that killed tens, as we recorded that 22 civilians were killed, including five children, at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance between October 13, 2017, and the time of this report.

On November 2, Syrian regime forces have managed to take over 90% of Deir Ez-Zour city, as only the neighborhoods of al Hweiqa and al Rashdiya, as well as Hwayejat Qate', where civilians are besieged, are under the control of ISIS, as the only option left for these people is to head for the SDF-held Husainiya village. On the 1st and 2nd of November, we recorded that SDF opened fire at Hwayejat Qate', hindering civilians' passage, and making them wary of using boats in case they decided to flee the village, fearing that they might be targeted.





SNHR fears for the lives of 750 civilians who are trapped within an area of no more than 1.5 km². In case Syrian regime forces were to raid the area, this would be followed by wide violations and random retaliation acts, a methodology for the Syrian regime, as this was the case in 2012, when they raided areas that were outside their control, and retaliated against their residents in the most brutal manner possible.

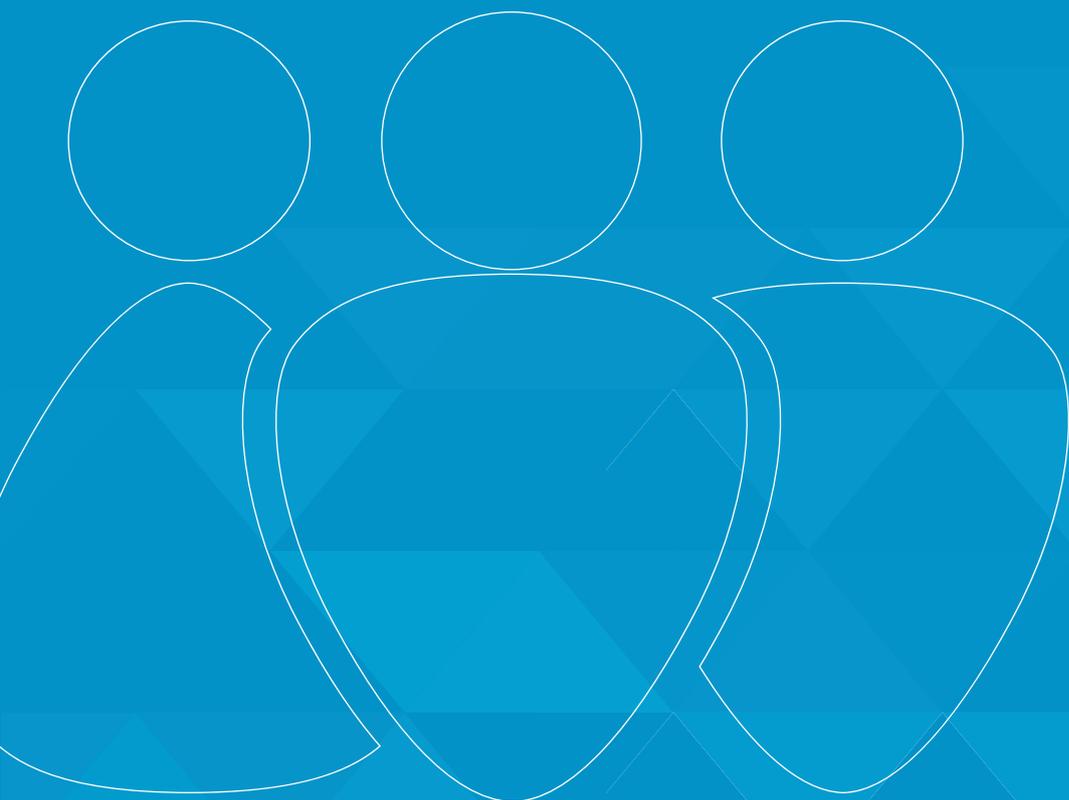
The international community needs to take immediate action in response to the cries for help in order to prevent the massacres that took place in 2012 from reoccurring, as the international community was legally and morally responsible for these massacres, and for what will happen in the event it fails to respond immediately.

Russia, which is working on holding political gatherings to resolve the Syrian crisis, has to, at the very least, make sure that its ally, the Syrian regime, stops killing Syrian citizens.

SDF has to stop targeting civilians, and facilitate their movement from Hweijat Qate' towards al Husainiya village that is under their control.

Syrian-Russian alliance forces have to immediately cease their indiscriminate attacks, and stop using ISIS as a pretext to bomb residential neighborhoods and vital civilian facilities.





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