

167 Medical and Civil Defense Personnel Killed, and 448 Incidents of Attack on their Facilities in 2016

10 Medical and Civil Defense
Personnel Killed, and 33 Incidents
of Attack on their Facilities in
December 2016

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Wednesday, January 4, 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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Acknowledgment

I. Introduction and Methodology

SNHR's high-level methodology for documentation relies on survivors and families' direct accounts in addition to the process of verifying and analyzing pictures, videos, and some medical records. However, we can't claim that we have documented all cases in light of the ban and pursuit by Syrian regime forces and some of the other armed groups.

To read more about SNHR methodology for documenting victims, please see the following [URL](#).

The consistent bombing and targeting of medical facilities and civil defense centers by Syrian regime forces since 2011, and the killing and arrest of medics and civil defense personnel at the hands of different conflict parties, especially Syrian regime forces, indicates a systematic policy that only aims to shed more blood and deepen the suffering of the injured – civilians and armed.

Fadel Abdul Ghani, chairman of SNHR, says:

“The Russian attacks on medical and civil defense centers as well as medical and civil defense personnel are considered a blatant violation of the international humanitarian law and constitute war crimes considering the chaotic, and in many cases, deliberate, targeting of objects that are under special protection. All of this have only deepened the suffering of the wounded and injured and is one of the main reasons behind the displacement of the Syrian people as it sends a very clear message: there is no safe area, or a red line, including hospitals, you either flee or perish.”



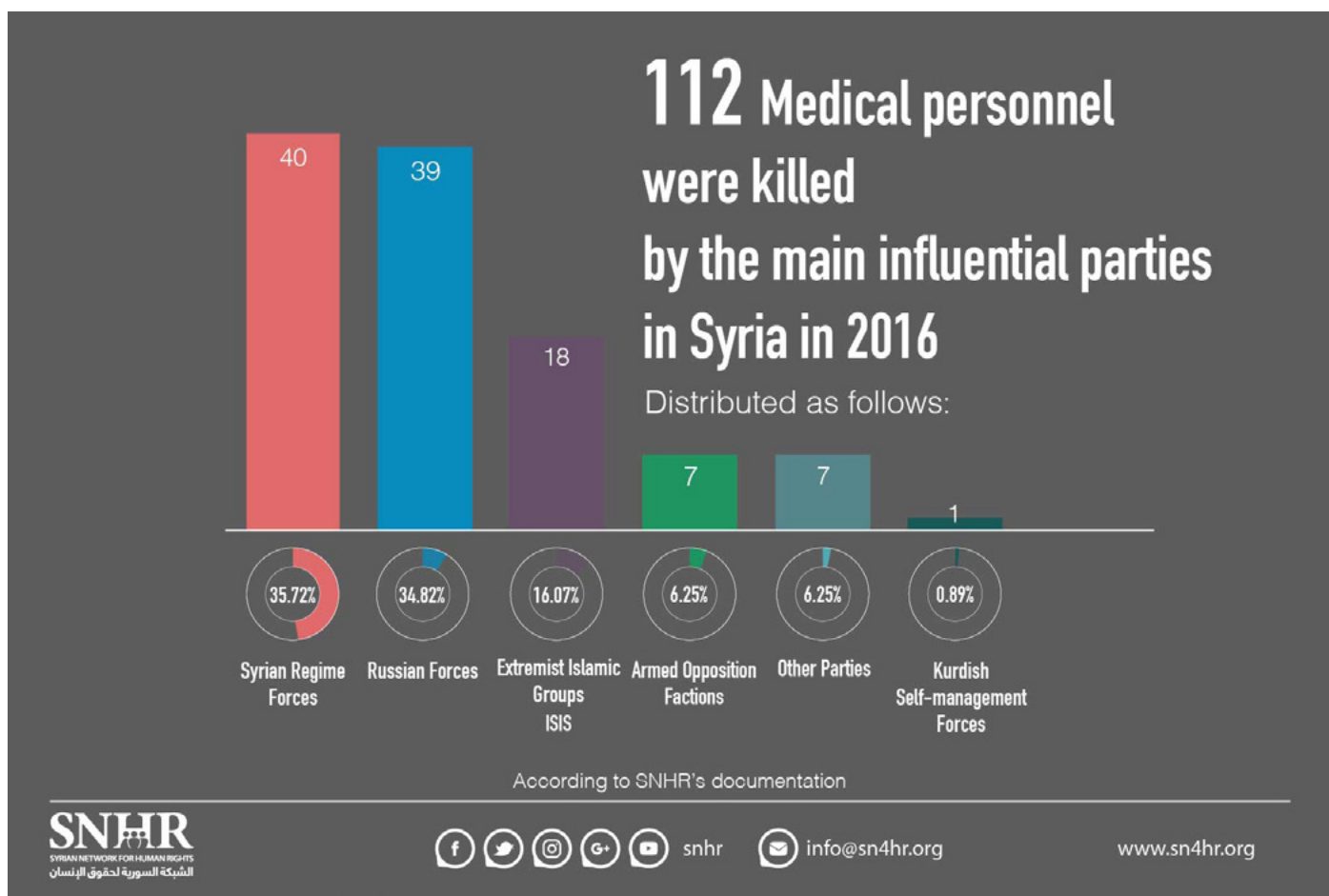
This report only represents the bare minimum of the actual magnitude and severity of the violations that occurred. Additionally, the report doesn't cover the social, economic, and psychological ramifications.

II. Executive Summary

- Toll of 2016

SNHR documented the following main violations against medical and civil defense personnel and their respective facilities in 2016:

A. The killing



We documented the killing of 167 members of medical and civil defense personnel in 2016 as follows;

- Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): killed 77 medical and civil defense personnel as follows:
 - 8 doctors, including one doctor who died due to torture
 - 8 paramedics
 - 7 nurses, including three women



- 2 Syrian Reb Arab Crescent (SARC) volunteers
- 3 pharmacists, including one pharmacist who died due to torture
- 37 civil defense personnel
- 12 medical personnel

- Russian forces: killed 55 medical and civil defense personnel as follows:
 - 4 doctors
 - 3 paramedics
 - 16 nurses, including four women
 - 3 SARC volunteers
 - 16 civil defense personnel
 - 13 medical personnel, including one woman

- Extremist Islamic groups
 - ISIS (Self-proclaimed the Islamic State): killed 18 medical and civil personnel as follows:
 - 6 doctors, including three women
 - 9 female nurses
 - 1 SARC volunteer
 - 1 pharmacist
 - 1 medical personnel

 - Armed opposition factions: killed 9 medical and civil defense personnel as follows:
 - 3 doctors
 - 1 nurse
 - 1 female SARC volunteer
 - 1 pharmacist
 - 2 civil defense personnel
 - 1 medical personnel

 - Self-management forces (Consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party): killed 1 doctor

 - Other parties: killed 7 medical and civil defense personnel as follows
 - 4 doctors, including one woman
 - 3 female nurses



B. Targeting vital medical and civil defense facilities, and SARC facilities

SNHR documented 448 incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities, and SARC facilities distributed as follows:

- Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 257 incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities, and SARC facilities as follows:

- 89 medical facilities
- 41 ambulances
- 7 SARC facilities
- 120 civil defense facilities

- Russian forces: 174 incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities, and SARC facilities as follows:

- 74 medical facilities
- 55 ambulances
- 7 SARC facilities
- 38 civil defense centers

- Extremist Islamic groups

ISIS (Self-proclaimed the Islamic State): 4 incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities, and SARC facilities as follows:

- 2 medical facilities
- 1 SARC facility
- 1 civil defense facility

- Armed opposition factions: 8 incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities, and SARC facilities as follows:

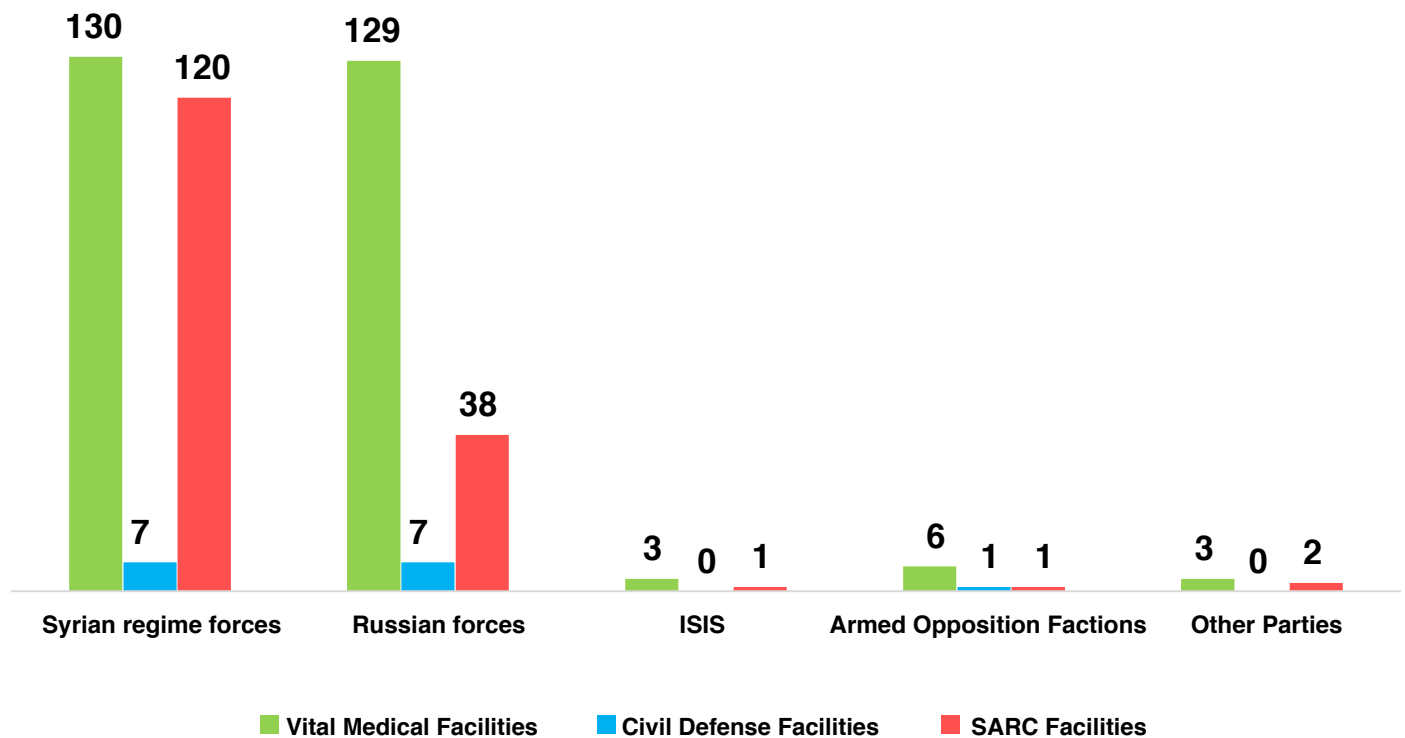
- 4 medical facilities
- 2 ambulances
- 1 SARC facility
- 1 civil defense facility

- Other parties: 5 incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities, and SARC facilities as follows:

- 3 medical facilities
- 2 SARC facilities



Distribution of incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities, and SARC facilities by the influential party is as follows:



Toll of December 2016

SNHR documented in the month of December 2016 the following main violations against medical and civil defense personnel and their respective facilities:

A. The killing

We documented the killing of 10 medical and civil defense personnel as follows:

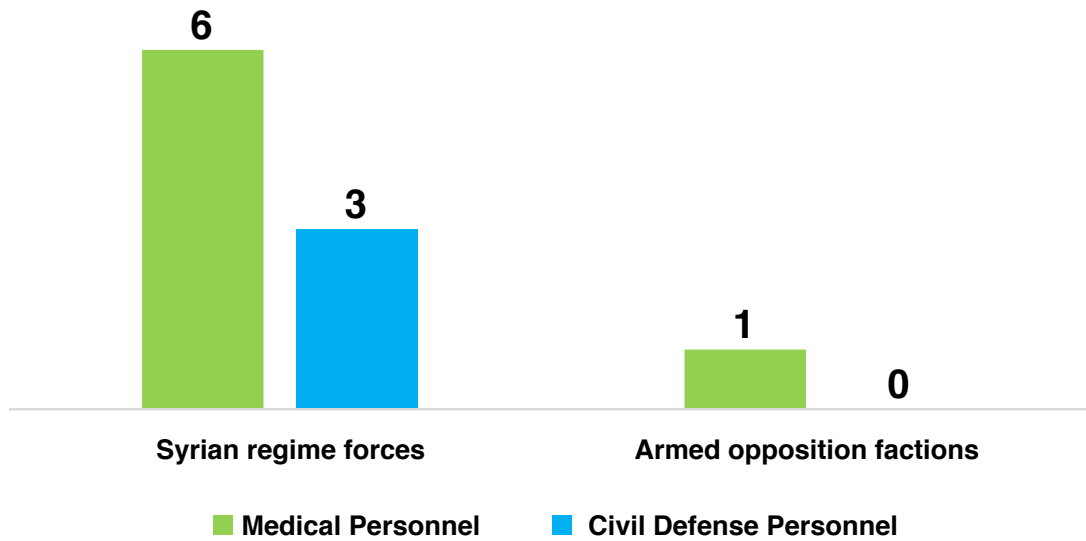
- Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, foreign Shiite militias): killed 9 medical and civil defense personnel distributed as follows:

- 2 doctors
- 2 female nurses
- 1 paramedic
- 1 SARC volunteer
- 3 civil defense personnel

- Armed opposition factions: killed 1 doctor



Victims from medical and civil defense personnel are distributed by the influential party as follows:



B. Targeting vital medical and civil defense facilities

SNHR documented 33 incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities as follows:

- Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, foreign Shiite militias): we recorded 23 incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities as follows:

- 9 medical facilities
- 2 ambulances
- 1 SARC facility
- 11 civil defense facilities

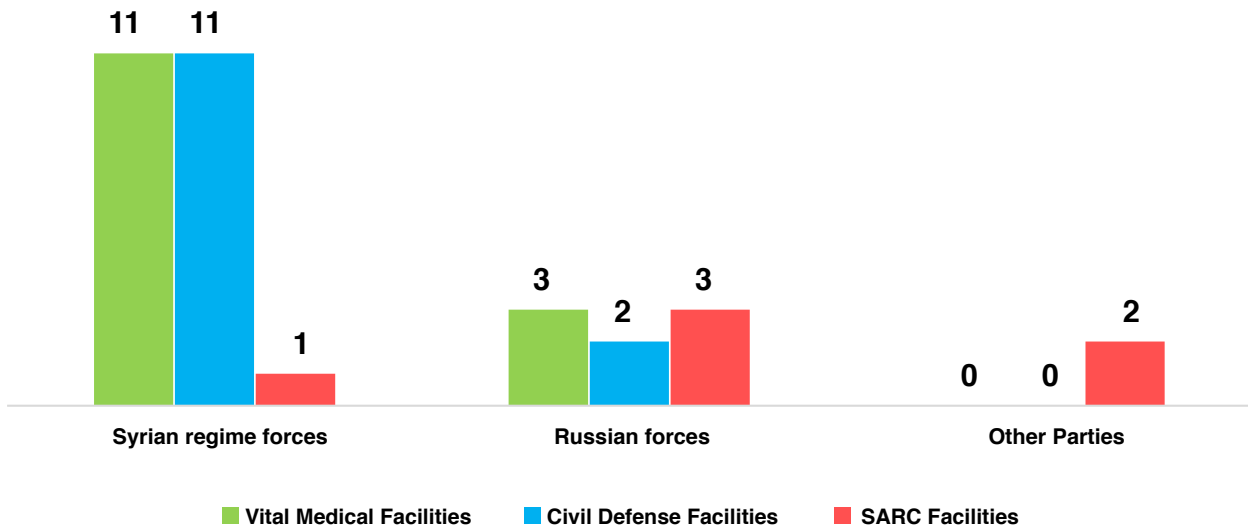
- Russian forces: we recorded 8 incidents of attacks on vital medical and civil defense facilities as follows:

- 2 medical facilities
- 1 ambulance
- 3 SARC centers
- 2 civil defense facilities

- Other parties: 2 incidents of attack on two SARC vehicles



Incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities are distributed by the influential party as follows:



III. Details

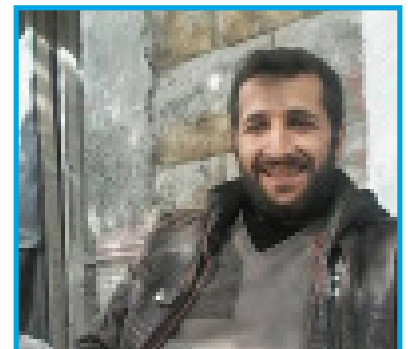
A. The killing

1- Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

[Nayef Mohammad Ass'ad](#), a civil defense member at the civil defense center of Madaya town, from Madaya town in Damascus suburbs governorate, born on 2 June 1996, single. He was killed on Monday 5 December 2016 by a barrel bomb dropped by Syrian regime helicopters that dropped barrel bombs on Madaya town as he was tending to the wounded from a previous bombing.

[Ali Samer Zahra](#), a member of the rescue team at the civil defense center in Maday town, from Madaya town in Damascus suburbs governorate, born in 22 January 1998, single. He was killed on Monday 5 December 2016 by a barrel bomb dropped by Syrian regime helicopters that dropped barrel bombs on Madaya town as he was tending to wounded from a previous bombing.

Mohammad Ahmad Salim, paramedic, from Aleppo city, born in 1980, works with Sham Aiding Network, has a high school diploma, married and a father. He was killed on Saturday 10 December 2016 by a barrel bomb dropped by Syrian regime helicopters that dropped barrel bombs on Al Ferdous neighborhood in Aleppo city.



Feryal Mahmoud Al Kanawi, female nurse, from Homs governorate, works at the national hospital in Tadmour city, married. She was killed on 10 December 2016 in a Syrian regime's artillery shelling that was in synchronization with Syrian regime forces using opening fire from machine guns at IDPs families, from Tadmour city, near Al Dawa area in the eastern suburbs of Homs governorate.

Salwa Al Anad, female nurse, from Homs governorate, works at the national hospital in Tadmour city. She was killed on 10 December 2016 in a Syrian regime's artillery shelling that was in synchronization with Syrian regime forces using opening fire from machine guns at IDPs families, from Tadmour city, near Al Dawa area in the eastern suburbs of Homs governorate.

[Hasan Al Mahshi](#), a media activist for center 250 which is affiliated to the civil defense center in Douma city, from Douma city in Damascus suburbs governorate, born in 1994. He was killed on Sunday 11 December 2016 by fixed-Syrian regime warplanes that fired missiles at Douma city as the civil defense teams were tending to the wounded from a previous bombing.



Yaser Laqmoush, a SARC volunteer, from Idlib city, works as an aiding coordinator at the SARC center in Idlib city. He was killed on Thursday 15 December 2016 by fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes (Sukhoi 24) that fired a number of missiles near the SARC center (Was formerly Al Karilton hotel) in Idlib city.



[Nabil Omar Salam](#), an internal doctor, from Douma city in Damascus suburbs governorate, born in 1979. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on 2 October 2012. On Tuesday 20 December 2016, we received information confirming his death inside a Syrian regime detention center.



Mamdouh Yousef, anesthesiologist, from Ain Al Fija town in Damascus suburbs governorate, married. He was killed on Thursday 22 December 2016 by Syrian regime forces stationing at Al Ashrafiya checkpoint who opened fire from machine guns at him after they let him pass where he was heading for Bassima town in Wadi Barada Area, Damascus suburbs governorate.

2- Armed opposition factions

Saturday 26 November 2016, the Revolutionary Medical Office of Eastern Ghouta announced that they received a statement from Jaish Al Islam, an armed opposition faction, for the death of the doctor Ibrahim AbdulGhaffar Al Mefleh, from Nahta town in Daraa governorate. The [statement](#) says that the doctor died in the bombing of the tunnel on Al Lewa' Al Rabea' (The Fourth Brigade)'s front. Note that Jaish Al Islam arrested doctor Ibrahim more than two years ago. Doctor Naseh Al Mefleh, doctor Ibrahim's brother, commissioned the Revolutionary Medical Office to follow-up with the case of his brother. On Sunday 4 December, we contacted activists from the area, and verified the aforementioned details.



B. Targeting vital medical and civil defense facilities, and SARC facilities

1- Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

Vital medical facilities

- Medical centers

Sunday 4 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes (Sukhoi 24) fired a number of missiles near Al Khatib hospital in Al Khatib street in the western parts of Kafr Nobool city, located in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The hospital building and equipment were moderately damaged.

Sunday 4 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes (Sukhoi 24) fired a number of missiles near Kafr Nobbol surgical hospital (Formerly Al Orient hospital) which is near the main road Kafr Nobbol – Al Bara in the northern parts of Kafr Nobbol city, located in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The hospital building and equipment were moderately damaged.



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.

Thursday 15 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired [missiles](#) at the makeshift [hospital](#) in Otaya town in Al Marj area, located in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The hospital; building was heavily destroyed, and the [equipment](#) and furniture were [heavily damaged](#). As a result, the [hospital](#) was rendered [out of commission](#).



Thursday 15 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes (Sukhoi 24) fired missiles at the emergency center that is affiliated with [Violet Organization](#) in the southern parts of Idlib city, under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The center building was partially destroyed, and the [equipment](#) and cladding materials were moderately [damaged](#). As a result, the [center](#) was rendered [out of commission](#).

Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime forces raided Kamal Arnous hospital in Al Panorama square in Damascus city, under the control of armed opposition factions, and declared the hospital's fourth floor a military center for the regime forces.

Friday 23 December 2016, Syrian regime helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the building of Ain Al Fija health center in Ain Al Fija town in Wadi Barada area, located in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. A fire broke out in the center which was heavily damaged. As a result, the center was rendered [out of commission](#).



Friday 30 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired missiles at the dispensary building in Helfaya city, located in the suburbs of Hama governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The building's fence and cladding materials were [moderately damaged](#).



- 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](#).

International Humanitarian insignia

Red Crescent (Facilities - vehicles)

Thursday 15 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes (Sukhoi 24) fired missiles near SARC center (Was formerly Carlton hotel) in the southern parts of Idlib governorate, under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front, which resulted in the killing of a SARC volunteer. In addition, the center fence was moderately [damaged](#).

Civil defense centers (Facilities and vehicles)

Friday 9 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired missiles at the civil defense center in Joni area in the northwestern parts of Kafr Nobbol city, located in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al sham Front. The center building was partially destroyed, and the furniture was moderately damaged. In addition, an ambulance belonging to the center was moderately [damaged](#). It is worth noting that the building was used previously by Kafr Nobbol city council.

Sunday 11 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired missiles near an ambulance belonging to the civil defense center in Ma’aret Al No’mān city, located in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The ambulance structure was moderately [damaged](#) in [its the frontal parts](#).

Thursday 15 December 2016, around 10:00 AM, Syrian regime forces breaches the agreement struck by armed opposition factions and the Russian regime, with coordination with the Turkish regime, to evacuate the residents of the besieged city of Aleppo, which was under the control of armed opposition factions, where they opened fire from machine guns targeting a civil defense center ambulance that was transporting a number of



wounded people near Al Ramousa crossing in Aleppo city, which resulted in casualties in addition to moderate damages to the ambulance.

Thursday 15 December 2016, around 10:00, Syrian regime forces breaches the agreement struck by armed opposition factions and the Russian regime, with coordination with the Turkish regime, to evacuate the residents of the besieged city of Aleppo, which was under the control of armed opposition factions, where they opened fire from machine guns targeting a wheel loader vehicle for civil defense as she was clearing path for the civilian evacuation convoy at Al Ramousa crossing in Aleppo center. The leader of the civil defense team in Aleppo city was injured, in addition to moderate damages to the vehicle.

Monday 19 December 2016, Syrian regime artillery fired explosive cylinders that fell near the civil defense center in Al Wa'er neighborhood, located in Homs city and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The center building and its cladding materials were moderately damaged. In addition, an ambulance belonging to the center was rendered out of commission as it was partially [destroyed](#).



Tuesday 20 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a missile near an ambulance belonging to center 270 which is affiliated to the civil defense in Mes-raba town, located in Eastern Ghouta in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. As a result, a civil defense member was wounded, and the structure of the [ambulance](#) was [heavily destroyed](#) in addition to its glass windows [shattering](#).

Friday 23 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired missiles at center 109, an engineering center specializing in disposing of weapon remnants, that is affiliated to the civil defense center in Kafr Zita city, located in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The center building was partially destroyed and its furniture was moderately [damaged](#). In addition, a service [vehicle](#) belonging to the [center](#) was slightly damaged.



Thursday 29 December 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired missiles near an ambulance for center 200 which is affiliated to [the civil defense center](#) in Douma city, located in Eastern Ghouta in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The ambulance structure was moderately [damaged](#), and some of its [glass](#) windows shattered.



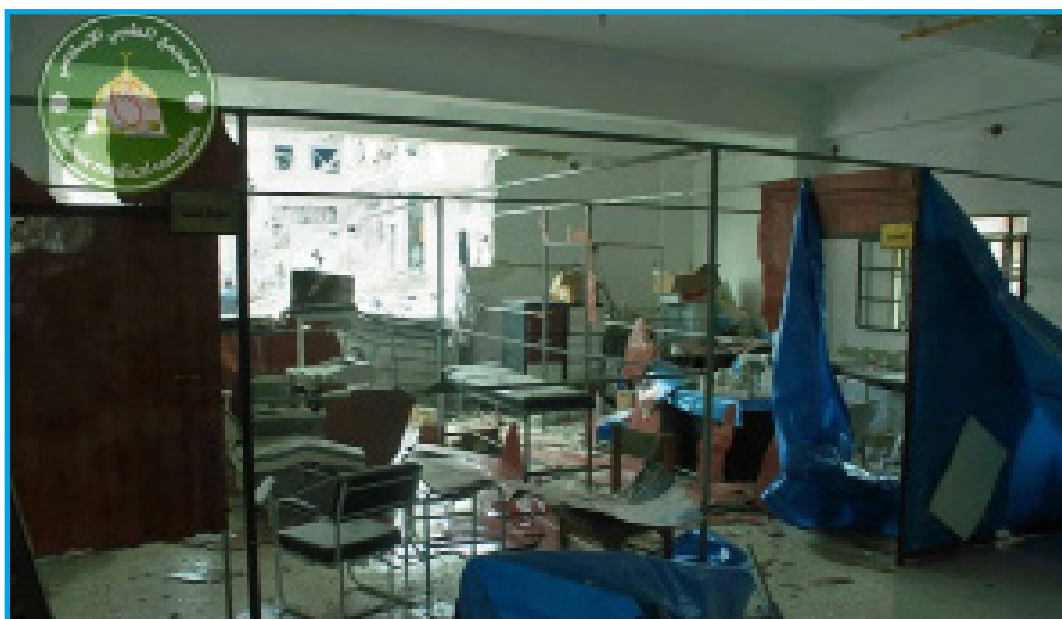
2- Russian forces

Vital medical facilities

- Medical centers

Monday 5 December 2016, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired missiles near the dispensary building in the southern neighborhood of Binnesh city, located in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The dispensary building was partially destroyed, and the equipment was moderately damaged. As a result, the dispensary was rendered out of commission.

Monday 5 December 2016, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired missiles at the Islamic Medical Complex in Binnesh city, located in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The complex building was partially destroyed, and the clinic and laboratory section, as well as the pharmacy, was moderately damaged. As a result, the complex was rendered out of commission.



- Ambulances

Monday 5 December 2016, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired missiles near an ambulance belonging to Sham Aiding Network in the southern neighborhood of Binnesh city, located in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The ambulance structure was heavily damaged, and its glass windows shattered. The ambulance was rendered out of commission.

International humanitarian insignia

- Red Crescent

Tuesday 27 December 2016, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a missile at the SARC center (Was formerly Carlton hotel) in Idlib city, under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The center fence and garage were moderately damaged. In addition, two ambulance belonging to the Red Crescent were damaged to varying degrees.



Civil defense centers (Facilities and vehicles)

Tuesday afternoon 27 December 2016, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired missiles near the civil defense center in Al Uthmaniya village, located in the southern suburbs of Aleppo governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions, which resulted in two civil defense members getting wounded. In addition, the center building was partially destroyed, and a fire truck belonging to the center was moderately damaged.



C. Other parties

International humanitarian insignia

- Red Crescent

Thursday 15 December 2016, armed gunmen attacked SARC team that was heading for the organization's warehouses in Mazra'at Um Anoun area in western from the Red Crescent center in Idlib city, which is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The armed men stopped them and opened fire randomly, and forced the team to get off a service vehicle belonging to the Red Crescent before seizing the vehicle and some equipment from the team. As of this writing, we haven't been able to find out the identity of the group behind the assault.

Tuesday 27 December 2016, unknown gunmen stopped a service vehicle for SARC near the military security branch in Idlib city, which is under the joint control of armed opposition and Fateh Al Sham Front, and had the driver get off before taking the vehicle to an unknown location. As of this writing, we haven't been able to find out the identity of the group behind the assault.

III. Conclusions and Recommendation

Legal conclusions

1- The incidents mentioned in this report are considered, beyond any doubt, violations of Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2254 which both state that indiscriminate attacks must be halted. Also, these incidents are violations of Article 8 of Rome Statute through the act of willful killing which constitutes war crimes.

2- We can confirm that most of the incidents included in this report have targeted armless civilians. Therefore, Syrian regime forces and Russian forces have violated the rules of the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. Additionally, these violations were perpetrated in a non-international armed conflict which amount to a war crime where all elements were fulfilled.

Also, ISIS, armed opposition factions, and Kurdish Self-management forces have carried out acts that constitute war crimes which manifested in extrajudicial killings and targeting vital civil facilities.

3- The attacks mentioned in this report are considered a violation of the customary international law as the shells were fired at populated areas rather than a specific military object.



4- Aerial bombardment has caused collateral damages that involved loss of lives, injuries, and significant damages to civil facilities. There are strong indicators suggesting that the damage was too excessive compared to the anticipated military benefit.

Recommendations

The Security Council

- The Security Council has to take additional steps as it has been more than two years since Resolution 2139 was adopted and no pledges to cease the indiscriminate bombardment operations have been made. All the conflict parties must respect these steps and adhere to the rules of the international humanitarian law.
- The Syrian case must be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible must be held accountable including the Russian regime whose involvement in committing war crimes have been proven.
- Instill security and peace in Syria and implement the norm of the Responsibility to Protect in order to protect the lives, culture, and history of the Syrian people from being destroyed, looted, and ruined.
- Expand the sanctions to include the Syrian and Iranian regimes and all of their pillars who are directly involved in committing crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people.

The International Community

- In light of the split of the Security Council and its utter inability, Steps must be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people that would protect them from the daily killings and siege and enhance the support for the relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction must be activated in local courts regarding these crimes in order to conduct fair trials for all those who were involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect in tens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) after all political channels through the Arab League's plan and then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan were drought out. Therefore, steps under Article 7 of the Rome Statute must be taken and the norm of the Responsibility to Protect, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, must be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.
- Renew the pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- Work on fulfilling justice and achieving accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights council and work on utilizing the principle of the universal jurisdiction.



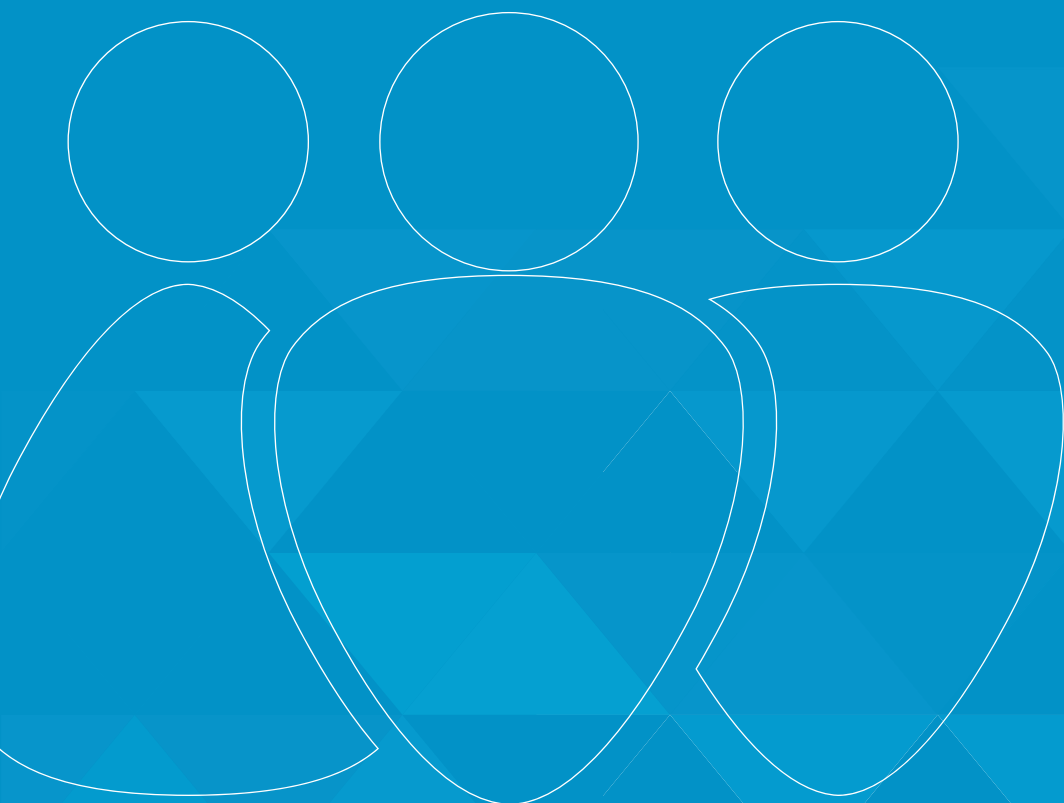
Medical organizations around the world

There is a severe shortage in medical manpower in Syria because of the ceaseless killing of medical personnel. Firstly, Syrian doctors must come back to Syria to compensate for the severe shortage in medical personnel. Also, international organizations can send volunteers to safe areas where wounded are sent for treatment. We have recorded many cases where wounded died due to lack of medical resources.

Acknowledgment

Our most sincere thanks go to the victims' families and friends and to the local activists who majorly contributed to this report.





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