

No less than 33 Massacres in November 2017

Including 29 by Syrian-Russian
Alliance Forces

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Thursday, December 7, 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.



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I. Introduction

On December 30, 2016, a comprehensive ceasefire was announced from the Turkish capital Ankara under a Russian-Turkish sponsorship. The signing parties, the Syrian regime on one side and armed opposition factions on the other side, agreed to cease all armed attacks, including airstrikes, and stop raids and on-the-ground advancements. The military areas controlled by ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State) were excluded from the agreement. Ankara Ceasefire Agreement was followed by seven rounds of talks that were held in Astana, Kazakhstan's capital, between Russian, Turkish, and Iranian representatives as the states who sponsored Ankara Ceasefire Agreement. These rounds -the most recent of which was on October 30-31, 2017- discussed mostly, in parallel with a number of local agreements, ways to further establish de-escalation zones in Idlib governorate and the surrounding areas (parts of Aleppo, Hama, and Latakia governorates), northern Homs governorate, Eastern Ghouta, and parts of Daraa and Quneitra governorates in south Syria. Additionally, the talks addressed ways to deliver humanitarian aids and enable IDPs to return to those areas. Since these agreements went into effect, the included areas saw a relatively good and noticeable drop in killing rates in relation to the past months since March 2011.

We noticed that these agreements reflected on the civilians' lives in most of the areas that were included in the agreements, as patients were able to go to hospitals and medical points, and many children went back to school after their families prevented them out of fear for their lives in light of the repeated bombing that targeted schools, as well as hospitals. Markets became more active, and many infrastructure services were restored thanks to a number of maintenance campaigns. Nonetheless, breaches didn't stop, mainly by the Syrian regime, who is seemingly the party that would be most affected should the cease-



fire go on, and in particular extrajudicial killing crimes and, more horrendously, deaths due to torture. This strongly asserts that there is a ceasefire of some sort on the table, but the crimes that the international community -especially the guarantors- won't see are still going on as nothing had changed.

A de-escalation agreement was reached in Eastern Ghouta between Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction, and Russian forces under an Egyptian sponsorship on Saturday, July 22, 2017, and was followed by a similar [agreement](#) with Failaq al Rahman faction that established the faction's inclusion in the de-escalation zone in Eastern Ghouta on Wednesday, August 16, 2017. Nonetheless, Syrian-Russian alliance have initiated a vicious offensive against Eastern Ghouta on the 14th of last November. We released a report, "[The Barbarian Bombardment and Siege on Eastern Ghouta Practically Invalidates the Upcoming Geneva Round](#)", documenting the most notable violations by the Syrian-Russian alliance between November 14-27, 2017.

In November, we recorded that Syrian regime forces were responsible for the majority of massacres -after a one-month drop- with 48% of all massacres committed in November. Russian forces perpetrated the second-most massacres with 39%. Roughly 59% of all massacres committed by the Syrian-Russian alliance were in Deir Ez-Zour governorate, followed by Eastern Ghouta with approximately 38%.

Methodology

SNHR incorporates high documentation standards that rely on direct accounts from survivors or victims' families and local media activists. In addition, we have verified and analyzed the pictures and videos and some medical records we received. We have all the pictures and videos that are mentioned in this report in a secret online database, and backup copies on hard drives. Certainly, we can't claim that we have documented all cases in light of the ban and pursuit by Syrian regime forces and other armed groups.

The type and number of evidences vary from one case to another. In light of the challenges we mentioned above, many of the incidents' legal description change based on new evidences or clues that surface after we had released the report. We add these evidences and clues to our database archive. On the other hand, many incidents don't constitute a violation to the international humanitarian law, but it involved collateral damages, so we record and archive these incidents to know what happened historically and to preserve it as a national record. However, we don't describe it as crimes.

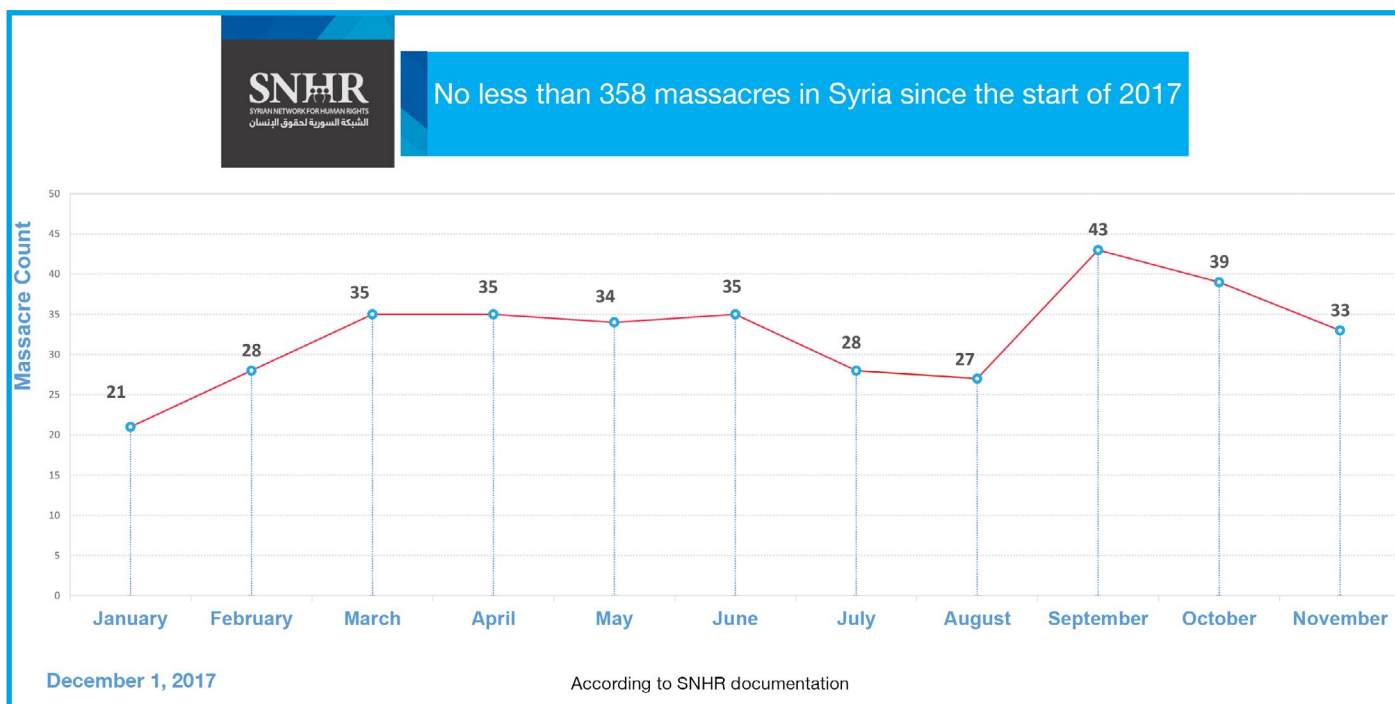


SNHR describes an incident as a massacre if it involves the killing of five peaceful individuals at the same time. For more information about our methodology in documenting victims, please see the Following [URL](#)

II. Executive Summary

A. Toll of massacres in 2017

SNHR has documented 358 massacres at the hands of the parties to the conflict between the start of 2017 and December of the same year

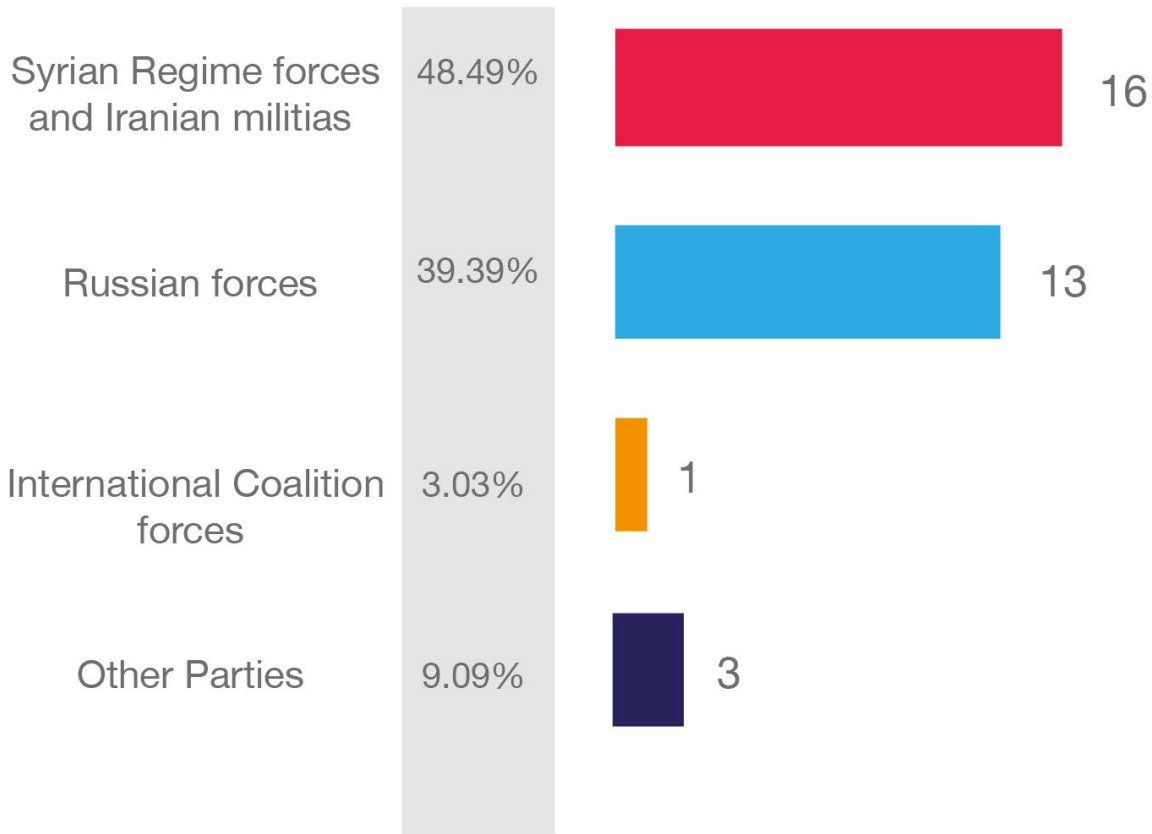


B. Toll of massacres in November 2017

SNHR has documented no less than 33 massacres in November



No less than 33 massacres in Syria in November 2017

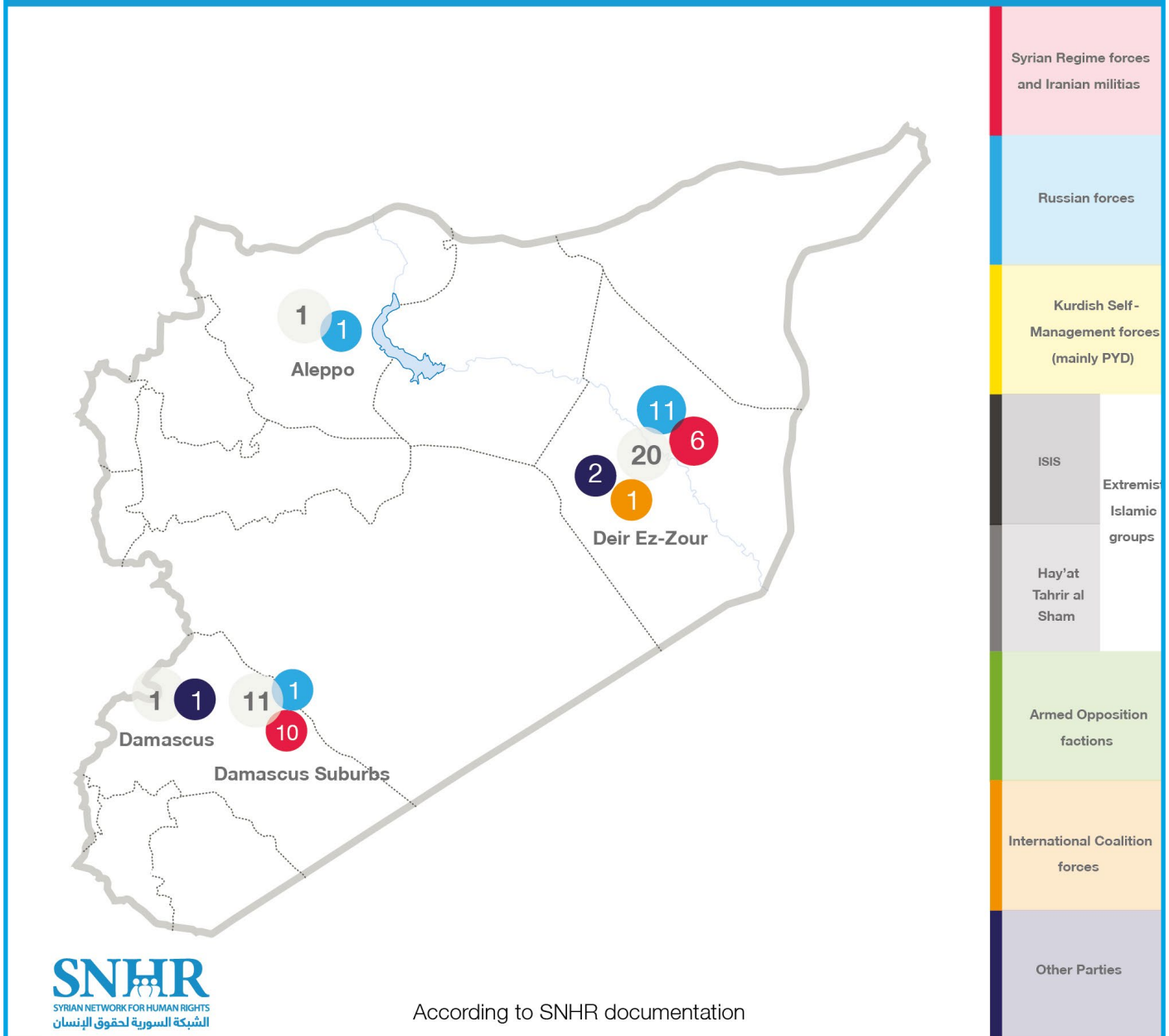


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According to SNHR documentation



No less than 33 massacres in Syria in November 2017



The massacres perpetrated by Syrian regime forces in November 2017 were distributed by area of control as follows:

- 10 massacres in areas under the control of armed opposition factions
- 6 massacre in areas under the control of ISIS

According to the victim documentation team at SNHR, 410 individuals were killed in those massacres, including 135 children and 62 women (adult female). This means that 49% of all victims were women and children, which is a considerably high percentage and an indication that civilians were targeted in most of these massacres.



The death toll of these massacres is distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:

Syrian regime forces: 123 individuals, including 37 children and 18 women.

Russian forces: 254 civilians, including 87 children and 42 women.

International coalition forces: 5 civilians, including 1 child.

Other parties: 28 individuals, including 10 children and 2 women.

II. Most Notable Massacres in November

A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

Deir Ez-Zour governorate

Monday, November 6, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Hari village which is administratively a part of al Boukamal area, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of nine civilians, including two children and one woman. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Saturday, November 11, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the water crossing in al Sosa town which is administratively a part of al Boukamal area, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of five civilians from one family who were IDPs from al Qouriya city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. Among the victims were two children and two women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, November 28, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the water crossing in al Ramadi village, known as [al Baq'an](#) village, which is administratively a part of al Boukamal area, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of 11 civilians. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Damascus suburbs governorate

Thursday, November 2, 2017, [fixed-wing](#) Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [a residential neighborhood](#) behind the [local market](#) in [Douma](#) city, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of six individuals at once, including one child and one woman. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.





Child victim killed in a massacre by Syrian regime forces in Douma city, Damascus suburbs – November 2, 2017

Monday, November 20, 2017, around 16:00, Syrian regime rocket [launchers fired](#) a number of rockets at [Kafr Batna](#) town, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in [the killing](#) of five civilians ([four children](#) and their mother) while around [15 others](#) were [wounded](#). The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Victims killed in a massacre by Syrian regime forces in Kafr Batna town, Damascus suburbs – November 20, 2017



Sunday, November 26, 2017, around 10:30, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired [a number of missiles](#) at [Misraba square](#) in the middle of [Misraba](#) town, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of [20 civilians](#), including [six children](#) and one woman, while about 50 others were wounded. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Monday, November 27, 2017, around 13:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired [a number of missiles](#) at Madyara village, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in [the killing](#) of nine civilians at once, including [one child](#) and one woman, while about 25 others were wounded. The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.





Victims killed in a massacre by Syrian regime forces in Madyara village, Damascus suburbs
– November 27, 2017

B. Russian forces

Deir Ez-Zour governorate

Saturday, November 4, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at a house in [al Jalaa](#) town which is administratively a part of al Boukamal area, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of six civilians from the same family who were IDPs from al Sukkariya village, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. Among the victims were three children and one woman. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Saturday, November 11, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at a group of IDPs tents near the bank of Euphrates River in al Sukkariya village which is administratively a part of al Boukamal area, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of 27 civilians from the same family, including 13 children and five women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, November 14, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at a group of IDPs tents in al Iwyna area, the Badiya of M'eizila village which is administratively a part of Boukamal area, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of 11 civilians (10 children and one woman) who were mostly from the same family. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Friday, November 24, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at a group of IDPs tents in the Badiya between al Sayal village and al Ghabra village which both are administratively a part of al Boukamal area, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of 29 civilians, including 12 children and seven women. The area was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Sunday, November 26, 2017, around 01:30, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at [al Sha'fa](#) city which is administratively a part of al Boukamal area, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of 44 civilians who were mostly from the same family, including 20 children and nine women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Damascus suburbs governorate

Sunday, November 19, 2017, around 19:00, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of six civilians (four children and their parents) while no less than 15 others were wounded. The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Aleppo governorate

Monday, November 13, 2017, around 15:00, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired [six missiles](#) at [al Atareb](#) city, western suburbs of [Aleppo governorate](#). The missiles landed on the [main market](#) and [al Atareb Free Police Station](#), which is located by the market's entrance, in the city. The bombardment resulted in the killing of 79 individuals, including [seven children](#) and eight women while about 100 others were wounded. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.





Victims killed in a massacre by Russian forces in al Atareb city, Aleppo – November 13, 2017

C. international coalition forces

Deir Ez-Zour governorate

Thursday, November 30, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Darnej village, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of five civilians who were from the same family, including one child. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

D. Other parties

Deir Ez-Zour governorate

Friday, November 17, 2017, a bomb car driven by a suicidal bomber exploded in the middle of a group of IDPs cars near a checkpoint for the Kurdish-majority Syrian Democratic Forces in Abu al Netil village, northern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 15 civilians, including five children and one woman. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the group behind the bombing given the considerable difficulty to identifying the perpetrator in such bombings. The village was under the control of the Kurdish-majority SDF at the time of the incident.



Damascus governorate

Tuesday, November 7, 2017, around 13:00, a number of mortar shells landed near al Hamra Restaurant in [al Hamra Street](#), northwestern Damascus city, which resulted in the killing of five civilians at once, including one woman while about six others were wounded. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the group who fired the shells. The area was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Syrian regime forces and Russian forces

1. SNHR can confirm the bombing cases, deliberate or indiscriminate, targeted armless civilians, thus, the Syrian-Russian alliance forces have violated the rules of the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. Furthermore, these violations were perpetrated during a non-international armed conflict which amounts to war crimes as all elements of a war crime have been fulfilled.
2. SNHR believes that the acts of killing that took place during these massacres can be classified as crimes against humanity.
3. These attacks, especially bombardment, have resulted in collateral damages that involved casualties, injuries, and damages to civil facilities. There are strong indicators that compel to believe that the damage was deeply severe compared to the anticipated military benefit. In all of the cases, we couldn't confirm that there were any military targets before or during these attacks.
4. The magnitude of the massacres, its frequent pattern, the exaggerated use of strength, its military nature, the indiscriminate manner of the bombing, and the coordinated approach of these attacks must be based on high orders, and a state policy.

Other forces

According to this report, international coalition forces and other parties have committed massacres that constitute war crimes. However, these crimes are not crimes against humanity as with the case of Syrian regime forces and their pro-regime forces that are committing massacres in a widespread and systematic manner.

Recommendations

The United Nations and the Security Council

1. Refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court and stop the disrupting of the decisions that must be adopted by the Security Council against the Syrian government. This disruption is a wrong message to all dictatorships around the world and supports the culture of crime.



2. Impose urgent punishments on those who are involved in widespread violations of human rights in Syria.
3. Bind the Syrian government to allow all relief and human rights organizations to enter Syria as well as the International Intendent Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and journalists and let them work without any obstructions.
4. Insure that all weapon imports to the Syrian government, who is using weapons in widespread attacks against civilians, are halted.
5. the Security Council must shoulder its responsibility in preserving security and civil peace in Syria considering that the violations of the Syrian government entail a gross threat to the international peace and security.
6. List the militias that are fighting with the Syrian government and have committed widespread massacres, like Iranian militias, the Lebanese group Hezbollah, other Shiite brigades, National defense Army and “Shabiha” militias, on the international list of terrorist organizations.
7. Implement the “Responsibility to Protect” norm, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, in Syria as it is direly needed there.
8. With the crimes against humanity committed by the Syrian government, the international community should stop dealing with this government as an “official side” concerning the relief issues, and stop supplying the Syrian government with most of the financial and humanitarian aids that, in most cases, are not being delivered to those who are in need and go instead to the people and parties that support the Syrian government.

The Russian guarantors

1. The Syrian regime has to be stopped from dooming the de-escalation agreements. Otherwise, it will only be seen as an exchange of roles between the Russian regime, on one side, and the Syrian/Iranian alliance on the other side.
2. Start making progress in the detainees issue by revealing the fates of 76,000 forcibly-disappeared persons at the hands of the Syrian regime.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

Our thanks and appreciations go to the victims’ families, eyewitnesses, and local activists whose accounts contributed majorly to this report. Our most profound consolations go out to the victims’ families and friends.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

