



## Report: bombardment, killing, siege and storming Al Nabak city by government forces and its pro militias

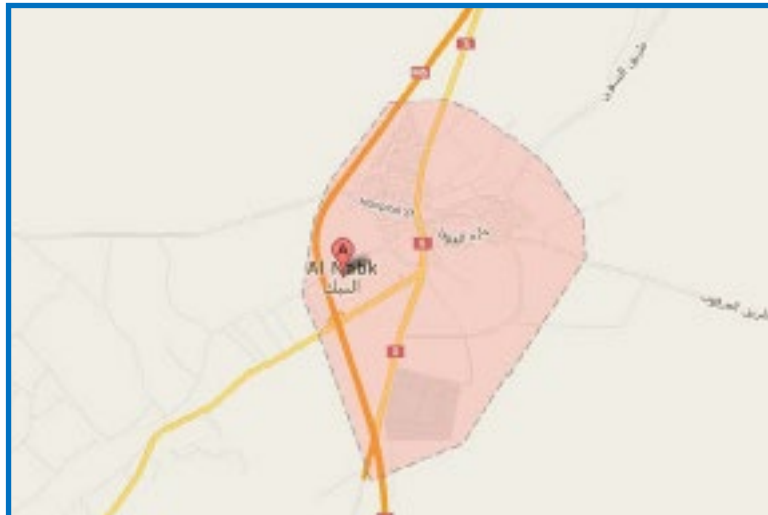
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### Introduction

Al Nabak city is located in Damascus suburbs, it is located to the north of the capital Damascus. Yabrood town is on the south of Al Nabak, and Deir Atiya is on the north. As military location, Al Nabak is bordered by the brigade 18 on the south. the Air Defense, the Military Security, and Al Ishara school on the west, Al Radar on the northeast which means geographically that the city is completely besieged by Syrian government forces.

The location on the map:



Since the beginning of the popular uprising against Syrian government, the role of Al Nabak was limited to receiving the injured persons from the neighboring towns until it had been controlled by armed opposition factions.





When the armed opposition factions controlled the city and as part of the Syrian government policy of collective punishment, the Syrian government forces has been shelling Al Nabak since 20-11-2013. Then they besieged the city on 24-11-2013 which included the cut of all services like water, electricity, and communication means in addition to complete ban on food, medicine and fuel. Syrian government forces used warplanes, surface-to-surface rockets, and thermobaric missiles to shell the city. The bombardment lasted for 21 days and resulted in casualties and widespread destruction. Therefore, the armed opposition got out of the city.

### Details:

SNHR methodology relies on the investigation carried out by its team in Damascus suburbs besides a number of families and activists in Al Nabak city. The report includes two testimonies by eyewitnesses, information and pictures by collaborator activists inside the city.

Mr. Abu Ragheb, one of civilians in Al Nabak city, he witnessed the burning of a building in the city. SNHR's team contacted him and he told us his testimony:

“during the siege which had been imposed by regime and the bombardment with thermobaric missiles and scud missiles, as the bombardment was intensively day and night, the bombardment targeted the residential building near Al Ghafri mosque in Al Makhraj square in the city center and the building started burning. We ran toward the building to extinguish fire and help stuck people in the fire. One youth tried to deliver the water hose to the roof of the building but a sniper affiliated to the regime targeted him and obstructed him to extinguish fire. After big suffering, we were able to evacuate people from the building but we couldn't extinguish fire as the bombardment increased and the shells reached Al Gafri mosque”

You can contact the eyewitness via Skype: zen.aldin4

Abu Ali, he is an armed opposition element. He was at Al Nabak city in the siege period. He told SNHR his testimony:

“The regime forces cut the international highway from Al Nabak side in supported by Tho Al Qafar Iraqi brigade who besieged Al Nabak on the north, Republican Guard forces on the west, Hezbollah on the west and the brigade 18 with the third squad that affiliated to Syrian army on the south.





After 13 days of siege and constant bombardment, the regime forces entered Al Fatah neighborhood which is located in the northwest of Al Nabak, stormed a building, and executed all its residences and slaughtered them by knives. The leader of Tho Al Faqar, Abu Shad Al Jabouri had committed this massacre. After the massacre, an agreement signed between the regime and us which includes a truce in exchange of securing a safe passage to civilians. We withdrew to the second line. But as the regime policy, it violated the agreement after two hours and his forces with Tho Al Faqar forces entered the neighborhood and controlled Al Fatah neighborhood. In the course of 8 days after controlling Al Fatah neighborhood and others neighborhoods, the massacres and execution operation have been committed. During the whole period of the storming, the regime banned the civilians to get out of Al Nabak. A road was opened after controlling the city to so they can keep stealing and looting”.

Abu Ali added and described a massacre that involved seven children in Al Nabak city:” in the 18th day of the siege and after our withdrawal from Al Nabak, the regime and the Iraqi militias massacred seven children in Al Nabak and sent their corpses in a car to Yabrood. The regime aimed to send a message to Yabrood families that the killing and the massacres will reach Yabrood”.

### The victims’ toll:

SNHR’s team in Damascus Suburbs have documented the victims in Al Nabak during the period between 20/11/2013 and 27/12/2013, as the search for corpses in the houses and gardens, where the Syrian regime entered, lasted for several days. The team were able to document the death of 401 persons which distributed as follows: 362 civilians including 102 children and 96 women, and 39 armed opposition elements.

A link includes the names of victims:

Attachments and [pictures](#):

A picture depicts [the fire](#) in the building of the city that mentioned in Abu Ragheb’s testimony:

A video depicts [the bombardment in Al Nabak city](#) 20/11/2013:

Videos depict the bombardment aftermaths, the smoke billowed and the fire:





Pictures depict victim's corpses who died in Al Nabak massacre. They were found on 24/12/ 2013 behind the fuel station. They were executed and their corpses were burned.

## Conclusions

1. SNHR affirms that the bombardment on Kafr Batna city in Damascus suburbs was indiscriminate and directed against unarmed civilians. Thus, government forces and Al Shabiha have violated the international human rights law which protects the right to life in addition to being committed in non-International armed conflict so it mounts to war crime as all elements were fulfilled.
2. SNHR deems what happened in Al-Nabak, the murder crime, a crime against humanity because it is not the first case but it has been systematically repeated in all Syrian governorates in a widespread manner.
3. The indiscriminate attacks by government forces are violation of customary international humanitarian law where government forces launched several shells on populated areas and did not direct to specific military object.
4. Those attacks, particularly the bombardment, caused casualties, injures or damaged civilian objects. Moreover, there are a strong indicators that the damaged was great compared with the military benefits.
5. The volume of the massacre in addition to its nature, the amount of power that was used, and the indiscriminate and coordinated nature of bombardment cannot be without high instructions and it's a state policy.

## Recommendations:

### To the Syrian government:

- 1- To stop all Human Rights violations immediately.
- 2- To respect its international commitments that includes the protection of civilians in the time of war, and respect the rules of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.





### **To Human Rights Council:**

- 1- To demand the Security Council and the concerned international institutions to shoulder their responsibilities in regard to what is happening to Syrian people like murder, arrest, rape, and displacement.
- 2- To press on the Syrian government to cease murder, torture and release all kidnapped persons.
- 3- To hold Syrian government's allies and supporters- Russia, Iran, and China- morally and materially responsible for happening to the children of Syria.
- 4- To give the disastrous situation of victims' families in Syria greater interest and seriousness.

### **To the Security Council:**

- 1- To adopt a resolution to refer all perpetrators and criminals to the International Criminal Court.
- 2- To warn the Syrian government about the ramifications of severe acts and systematic murder and send a clear message regarding this case.

### **To the Arab League:**

- 1- To ask the Human Rights Council and the United Nations to give the case of daily murder its right of interest and follow-up.
- 2- To give the case the serious and great interest and follow-up, and try to give the victims' families psychological, material and educational care.
- 3- To press politically and diplomatically on the main Syrian regime allies- Russia, Iran and China- to ban them from providing the international and political cover and protection of all committed crimes against the Syrian people and to hold them morally and materially responsible for all Syrian government violations.





## To International Commission of Inquiry:

To cease depicting the conflict as it is between two equal parties in crimes, power and central decision-making, and to describe the crime as it is without mitigation for political objects. It also has to increase its cadres that is concerned with the Syrian case due to the volume of the daily crimes which allow it for border and more comprehensive documentation.

