



Targeting of Children in July by Government Forces

Rule 135 of the customary international law: Children affected by armed conflict are entitled to special respect and protection

The civilians are the most major portion that suffered from government forces' attacks, as 85% of victims killed by Syrian regime forces were civilians, were less than 15% were armed rebels. This percentage of civilian deaths is higher than World War II's, where 57% of the victims were civilians.

The children percentage of the total number of victims is 11% which is a very, very serious rate that represents an explicit indicator that Syrian government forces are deliberately targeting civilians in scud missile attacks and in the systematic and daily shelling, and in an indiscriminate savage manner through barrel bombs that are being dropped on residents without the slightest degree of discrimination.

From the start of July until July 27, 2013, no less than 223 children were killed across Syria, as follows:

Aleppo: 63, including a massacre in al Nayrab, in which 27 children were killed.

Damascus and its suburbs: 51

Daraa: 35

Idlib: 27

Homs: 21

Hasaka: 9

Tartus: 6

Raqqa: 5

Hama: 5

Deir Ez-Zour: 1

Quneitra: 1





Children were killed in different and various ways:

- 1- Shelling
- 2- Sniping
- 3- Raids and field-executions

What is more horrendous is that forces affiliated to the Syrian government have arrested more than 9000 children (less than 18 years of age) out of no less than 215,000 Syrian citizens. Those children were subjected to extremely brutal methods of torture that are mostly the same methods used on adults, as both of these age groups aren't distinguished at detention centers. Many former detainees told us that they would hear children crying and screaming that they want their mothers and they want to leave.

A child under torture

Child Qusai Dergham, 14-year-old, al Salhiya, Damascus, died due to torture inside Syrian regime forces after four months of imprisonment, July 21, 2013

Legal conclusions

1. SNHR affirms that government forces have violated the rules of the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. Also, there are tens of cases wherein the elements of a war crime were fulfilled with respect to the crime of murder.

Evidences and proofs, according to hundreds of eyewitnesses' testimonies, indicate that 90% at least of the widespread and single attacks were directed against civilians and civilian facilities.

All of this discredits the Syrian government's claims that they are fighting "Al-Qaeda and terrorists"

2. SNHR notes that these incidents of killing constitute crimes against humanity where most of these cases involved the element of widespread or systematic attack against a group of civilian residents.

Condemnation and liability

Every internationally unlawful act committed by the state will entail a legal responsibility on that state. Equally, the customary international law states that the state is responsible for all the acts committed by the members of its security and military forces. Consequently, the state is responsible for the unlawful acts, including crimes against humanity that have been perpetrated by the members of its military and security forces.





We, at SNHR, hold the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Bashar al Assad responsible for all the acts of killing and torture and massacres that took place in Syria as he is the responsible before anyone else for issuing commands for these acts. We also, hold all parts of the Syrian government that command the security and military apparatuses directly responsible for these acts.

In this context, the Iranian government and Hezbollah are directly involved in the killings and bear legal and judicial responsibility, in addition to all the funders and supports of this regime, which is perpetrating ceaseless massacres in a systematic manner and on a daily basis. We hold them all responsible for the reactions and consequences that come out from the Syrian people and especially the victims' relatives and families.

Human Rights Council:

- 1- 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- Apply pressure on the Syrian government to cease murder, torture and release all kidnapped persons.
- 3- Hold Syrian government's allies and supporters- Russia, Iran, and China- morally and materially responsible for what is happening to the children of Syria.
- 4- Give the disastrous situation of victims' families in Syria greater interest and seriousness.

The Security Council:

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

The Arab League:

- 1- Ask the Human Rights Council and the United Nations to give the case of daily murder its right of interest and follow-up.
- 2- Give the case the serious and great interest and follow-up, and try to give the victims' families psychological, material and educational care.
- 3- Apply political and diplomatic pressure on the main Syrian regime's 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.

