

# The 90th Periodic Report and 5th Annual Report on Russian Forces Violations Since the Start of Russia's Direct Military Intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015, Some of Which Amount to Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes

UN and International Sanctions Must Be Imposed on Russia for Committing Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes in Syria, in Which It Killed 6,859 Civilians, including 2,005 Children, and Targeted 207 Medical Facilities

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.

**SNHR**  
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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## **I. The Russian Military Intervention in Syria Is a Stigma in Russia's History, and It Is Illegal Intervention, Albeit at the Request of the Syrian Regime**

The 30th of September every year marks a painful memory for Syrians because this date is linked to Russia's military entry into their country. Over the course of five years since that fateful date on September 30, 2015, and up to the present day, this brutal incursion has led directly to the inflicting of hundreds of violations, some of which amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes; even worse than that, through these actions, Russia has obstructed, if not wholly terminated, the political process in Syria. The Syrian regime no longer feels the need to sit at the negotiating table after regaining control over many areas thanks to the vast and extensive Russian military assistance, in an effort to eliminate the progress of the mass uprising that demanded the departure of the Assad family and a transition towards democratic governance that respects human rights and the regular rotation of power and achieves freedom and dignity for Syria's citizens.

Russia has always justified its intervention in Syria by insisting that it came about at the request of the Syrian regime which controls the Syrian state; in reality, however, this is simply legal misdirection, as there are human rights requirements which must be met to legitimize any military intervention, none of which are fulfilled in the Syrian case, where Russia's intervention fails to meet any of the criteria. The most prominent of these requirements are two primary criteria:

Firstly: That the military intervention should not be used to commit egregious violations such as crimes against humanity and war crimes; according to all reports issued by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI), the Syrian regime has been implicated in committing crimes against humanity and war crimes since March 2011, with these reports further substantiated by dozens more reports by local and international human rights organizations. Therefore, the Russian military intervention on the side of the Syrian regime falls firmly within the context of supporting crimes against humanity and war crimes; this is further confirmed by the Syrian regime's continuing to commit crimes against humanity and war crimes since the intervention as before it. Indeed, the Russian military intervention has not only helped the regime to continue committing these crimes, but also to commit more of them.

Secondly: Russian military forces are themselves implicated in committing dozens of crimes against humanity and war crimes. This means that, in addition to the first item of their support for the Syrian regime in continuing to commit these crimes and expanding them, Russia's forces have also been involved since the first days of their intervention in committing violations that constitute war crimes, and have continued to commit violations in a widespread, deliberate and planned manner over the past five years.



The following link contains [89 reports](#) documenting the most notable violations by Russian forces since the start of Russia's military intervention in Syria in September 2015 and the violations that followed, including killing, destruction, and forced displacement. These reports contain a large proportion of the data on incidents that the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has been able to document.

### **Working methodology on preparing previous reports and this report:**

This report provides an update on the record of the most notable human rights violations committed by the Russian forces since the start of Russia's military intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015, up until September 30, 2020. It also includes examples of the most notable incidents recorded by the Syrian Network for Human Rights in the last year, i.e. between September 30, 2019, and September 30, 2020.

In the course of the SNHR team's ongoing monitoring of incidents and reports, carried out via an extensive network comprising dozens of various sources that has been gradually increased through building relations with a wide variety of credible individuals since the start of our work in 2011 to date, whenever we receive information, or hear some news about a violation via the internet or media outlets, we work to follow up on these reports and try to verify them and collect as much evidence and information as possible in every case. Moreover, our methodology in assigning responsibility to Russian forces in relation to specific incidents still relies on a number of determinants, including cross-checking large quantities of information and statements published by Russian officials, in addition to cross-checking a large number of first-hand accounts, most of which come from central signal operators who work on tracking the movement of the warplanes that take off from Syrian or Russian airbases and determining their course. In many attacks, observatory operators are able to specify the models of these warplanes and their flight codes. In many cases, we have also noted the difference in the destructive power seen in Russian attacks compared to that inflicted in attacks by Syrian regime forces in order to assign responsibility to Russian forces for specific attacks, in addition to noting that the Russian air force has the ability to fly and carry out bombing raids at night. For more details on our working methodology, please visit [the following link](#).

This report contains seven first-hand accounts that we've collected through speaking directly with eyewitnesses, with none of these being cited from any open sources. We explained the purpose of these interviews beforehand to the eyewitnesses, who gave us permission to use the information they provided without us offering or giving them any incentives. Also, SNHR endeavors always to spare the eyewitnesses the agony of remembering the violations as much as possible, and to provide assurances that we will conceal the identity of any witness who prefers to use an alias in order to protect witnesses' confidentiality and prevent them from being harassed or prosecuted. All our procedures are carried out in accordance with our internal protocols, on which basis we have worked for years, and we strive constantly to develop these through our experience to ensure the best standards of care and reliability.



The investigations included in this report have proved conclusively that the targeted locations were in civilian areas where no military bases or armories for the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army, ISIS, or Hay'at Tahrir al Sham were situated during or even before the attack. Also, Russian forces failed to issue any warnings to civilians prior to any of the attacks, despite such warnings being required under international humanitarian law.

SNHR has analyzed numerous videos and photos posted online or submitted by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media. Some of the videos posted by activists showed the sites of the attacks, dead bodies, injuries inflicted, and the large extent of destruction caused by the bombardment.

We retain copies of all the videos and photos included in this report in a confidential electronic database and in hard disk backup copies. We do not claim, however, that we have documented all cases, given the severe prohibitions, restrictions and persecution by Syrian Regime forces and some other armed groups.

Russian authorities deny all of these incidents and crimes, and have yet to launch even one investigation, a practice in which they are following in the footsteps of the Syrian regime which has failed to hold any member of its forces accountable for any crimes since March 2011. This failure to acknowledge its crimes certainly does not exonerate Russia of responsibility for them, however.

The information contained in this report only represents the bare minimum of incidents which we have been able to document, and of the severity and magnitude of the violations that occurred. Also, it doesn't include any analysis of the profound social, economic, and psychological ramifications.



The Russian military intervention in support of the Syrian regime constitutes a profound and shameful stigma on Russia's modern history, providing additional evidence of the extent of Russia's barbarity and brutality, as it has bombed residential areas and razed whole neighborhoods from the face of the earth without any mercy. The countries of the world must come together to deter Russian brutality, impose political and economic sanctions on it, and expose the practices of the ruling regime to the Russian people, so that we may witness a mass movement to advance it towards civilization, democracy and human rights.



**Fadel Abdul Ghany**  
**Chairman of the Syrian**  
**Network for Human Rights**

## II. A Brief Timeline of the Russian Strategy During the Years of Its Direct Military Intervention

In the first year of its direct military intervention, the Russian forces focused their attacks on the areas controlled by the Armed Opposition, while failing to target the areas controlled by ISIS except to a very limited extent; their concentrated air support in 2017 had a decisive influence in ensuring the Syrian regime's ability to regain control over large areas in the eastern suburbs of Raqqa (the villages of Shamiya located south of the Euphrates River), the western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour (the villages of Shamiya located south of the Euphrates River) and Deir Ez-Zour city.

In 2018, Russian air strikes and intense bombardment again contributed decisively to the Syrian regime's regaining control over three areas that were included in the de-escalation agreement, namely: Homs governorate, the Eastern Ghouta in Damascus Suburbs, and parts of Daraa and Quneitra governorates.

Russian forces have also pursued this strategy through carrying out airstrikes on the last de-escalation zone in northwestern Syria (Idlib governorate and parts of the governorates of Hama, Aleppo and Latakia), which was included [in the Sochi Agreement](#), that entered into force on September 17, 2018. These actions provide clear and practical evidence that Russia does not give any consideration to agreements, treaties, charters and laws, using only the language of deception and treachery. As in previous years, Russia's political machinations are often accompanied by a brutal military escalation, with the aim of compelling the peoples in the affected areas to yield to Russia's political demands by force and terrorism; [coinciding with the holding of the Constitutional Committee sessions](#), (the meeting of the Constitutional Committee Large Body from October 30, 2019, to November 1, 2019, the first meeting of the Constitutional Committee Small Body from November 4, to November 8, 2019, and the second meeting from November 25, to November 30, 2019), [the heavy bombardment carried out by the Russian forces in particular continued](#), in an effort to impose a fait accompli on the ground, and to achieve the ultimate goal, which is military victory, ending any hope of political solution, and maintaining the rule of the Assad family.

The Russian-Turkish meetings dominated the political scene in the fifth year of the Russian intervention, with the agreements that resulted from these meetings contributing to reducing the intensity and frequency of the Russian air strikes to a certain extent. This year has seen three ceasefire agreements in the Idlib region as a result of the Russian-Turkish meetings; the first agreement, on January 9, 2020, failed to achieve any reduction in the frequency of military attacks, while the second agreement entered into force on January 12, 2020 after the Turkish Ministry of Defense announced that it had reached a ceasefire agreement with Russia. This agreement was violated by Russia after less than 48 hours, with the SNHR's Monitoring team recording bombardment by fixed-wing Russian warplanes

on Khan al Sebel town in the southern suburbs of Idlib, after which further bombardment and escalation continued to take place; this was accompanied by a ground advance by Syrian Regime forces and the Iranian militias supporting them, with these joint forces seizing control of several areas, villages and towns in the suburbs of Idlib and Aleppo, most notably the cities of Ma'aret al Numan and Saraqeb in the suburbs of Idlib. The percentage of territory recaptured by the Syrian regime during this period reached about 25% of the area of land that had been under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.

As for the third agreement, this entered into force on March 6, 2020, resulting in joint Russian-Turkish patrols on the 'M4' International Road (Latakia-Aleppo Road). This agreement contributed to temporarily ceasing Russian air strikes, which were resumed at the beginning of June when the Russian forces returned to breach the agreement by carrying out air strikes on contact lines, extending into populated areas, causing multiple casualties.

Although the fifth year saw a noteworthy decline in the intensity and frequency of the Russian air strikes, Russia's intervention has become more than simply a military intervention and has exceeded the level of attacks and combat operations, with Russia's long-term goals increasingly emerging more and more clearly, being embodied by Russian domination of the capabilities and territories of the Syrian state, taking advantage of the existence of a government that only cares about staying in power at the expense of alienating the people and the state.

The Russian policy between the end of 2019 to date can be divided according to geographical regions; in the northwestern region of Syria, the Russian attacks have often focused on the lines of contact between the areas controlled by the Syrian regime and those controlled by the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army, especially the Jabal al Zaweya area, in addition to carrying out air strikes on the Sheikh Bahr area and on the west of Idlib city, which targeted Hay'at Tahrir al Sham's headquarters.

In the past year, Russia has attempted to more effectively extend its incursion into the eastern region of Syria and focused its efforts on two main goals, firstly to support the Syrian regime to regain control of the oil fields, and secondly to stop the 'Peace Spring' Turkish military operation. Russian forces took advantage of the US-led coalition forces' withdrawal from the western and northern suburbs of Raqqa and the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka, and sponsored an [agreement](#) between Syrian Regime forces and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces on October 13, 2019, which guarantees the entry of Syrian Regime forces to the cities of Ein al Arab and Manbej, with hundreds of Russian soldiers deployed in the military bases established by the US-led coalition after the coalition soldiers' withdrawal from them during the same period, especially in Sarrin airbase, south of Ein al Arab city, and the Qameshli city airport. The Russian forces' interest in extending



lines of communication with the tribal dignitaries has been evident, specifically in Qameshli area in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka, and the tribal area in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, in what appears to be an attempt to gain the support of these tribes and form a military force to fight alongside the Russian forces against the American presence.

Russia has also strengthened its military presence in Deir Ez-Zour city by increasing its forces' presence at the Deir Ez-Zour Military Airbase and al Tala'e Military Camp, in addition to carrying out patrols towards the cities of al Mayadeen and Boukamal in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour.

The southern region of Syria was an exceptional case amongst the regions which witnessed the collapse of the de-escalation agreement, as this region was subject to a bilateral Russian-American ceasefire agreement, in addition to a de-escalation agreement that included four regions in Syria; despite this, the Russian forces violated these agreements and carried out hundreds of air strikes to force the Armed Opposition factions to surrender and [to displace the population of the area viewed as the popular incubator of the uprising to northern areas, which actually happened in July 2018](#); thereafter, Russia planned to convert the Armed Opposition fighters who accepted the terms of the settlement into a parallel army protecting Russian interests in the region. The events documented by SNHR last year, however, proved that Russian forces failed in this objective, with the security situation deteriorating in the southern region, while Russia did not fulfill its promises to release detainees from the areas subject to the agreement, to improve living conditions, or to prevent security prosecutions by the regime's security forces against the people of the areas who rose up against the Syrian regime again, with the arrests continuing, abductions escalating, and the living conditions worsening.

### **III. Three Veto Uses Seen in the Fifth Year of the Russian Military Intervention and 16 Times Since the Beginning of the Popular Uprising in Order to Paralyze the Security Council in Favor of the Syrian Regime**

As a continuation of its limitless support for the Syrian regime, Russia used its UN veto three times in the past year out of the 16 times it has invoked the veto since March 2011; these three uses were against draft resolutions that attempted to revive Resolution [No.2165](#) issued by the UN Security Council in July 2014, that allowed the United Nations to deliver cross-border aid without the Syrian regime's permission, which had been extended on five consecutive occasions through the following Security Council resolutions:

[\(2191\) of 2014](#), [\(2258\) of 2015](#), [\(2332\) of 2016](#), [\(2393\) of 2017](#), [\(2449\) of 2018](#).

When the time came in December 2019 for the resolution's annual renewal, Russia and China opposed this by using their veto powers against the extension of the draft resolution submitted by Germany, Kuwait and Belgium, which called for extending the resolution for a period of six months, followed by an additional six months. Although the draft resolution stated that it would include all crossings except for al Ramtha border crossing, Russia and China refused to extend it.

On January 10, 2020, another draft resolution, [No. 2504](#), which included additional amendments in favor of Russia, was submitted, with the extension being limited to six months, excluding al Ramtha and al Ya'rubiya border crossings, with Russia and China abstaining on this occasion, meaning that the aid delivery was extended until July 10, 2020.

On July 7, 2020, the resolution to deliver aid returned to the corridors of the UN Security Council, with states submitting various draft resolutions; Belgium and Germany submitted a draft resolution providing for extending Resolution No. 2504, for a full year, which was met by a Russian and Chinese veto, aborting the draft resolution. On July 10, 2020, Germany and Belgium returned, submitting a similar draft resolution but for a period of six months only, with Russia and China using the veto for the third time.

Meanwhile, Russia submitted two draft resolutions, [the first on July 9, 2020](#), calling for the delivery of humanitarian aid through only one crossing rather than two, namely the Bab al Hawa crossing, for a period of only six months. This was not adopted due to insufficient votes. [On July 10](#), Russia submitted a draft resolution, in which it called for the delivery of humanitarian aid through the Bab al Hawa crossing for a period of 12 months, with the draft resolution calling on the Secretary-General to provide a report by the end of August on the "direct and indirect impact of unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria on its socio-economic situation and humanitarian deliveries from outside Syria". The draft resolution was suspended after seven members, including three permanent members, objected.

We have issued [a report](#) outlining the timeline of Russia's use of the veto since 2011.

#### **IV. Three Russian Companies to Recruit Mercenaries to Fight Alongside the Syrian Regime and the Russian Forces**

Since the end of 2018, we have noted an expansion in the deployment of Russian ground forces, clearly showing that Russia's military intervention is no longer limited to air strikes, with these ground forces participating in some ground military operations and using artillery and tanks. Local and international media reports have talked about Russia's recruitment of security companies and mercenaries to fight in exchange for material income alongside its ground forces on the front lines in Syria, who also provide training to the Syrian regime's forces and work to protect oil and economic installations.

Following extensive efforts, the SNHR was able to gain valuable insight into three of these Russian companies; while we believe that there are more than three companies involved, this is what we have been able to document, having studied material from a number of local Russian media outlets, including the photos and videos published by these outlets. It has become evident to us that some of these companies provided forces who clearly fought alongside Syrian Regime forces, and we believe that they are involved in committing violations that constitute war crimes, according to the SNHR's database. We also work to track economic companies that violated the Caesar Act, and we will publish a special report about that over the coming weeks.

1- The Wagner Company: The Wagner Group intervened in Syria at the end of 2015, supporting Syrian Regime forces in the battles against the Armed Opposition, with part of its missions being to guard oil installations in eastern Syria.

According to a report [published](#) by 'Radio Free Europe' on December 16, 2016, Wagner mercenaries participated with Syrian regime forces in the battles to recapture Tadmur city in the eastern suburbs of Homs in May 2016.

On April 21, 2020, the 'Novaya Gazeta' newspaper [published](#) an investigative report on the killing of Muhammad Taha Ismail, a young man from al Kharitta village in the suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, who was brutally tortured and killed in June 2017 by mercenaries, who the newspaper said belonged to Wagner Company.

2- The 'Vega/ Vegaci' Security Company: This is a Russian-Ukrainian company whose promotional video footage, published in January 2019, showed its activities in Syria, with the video including photos showing military training conducted by the company for the members of 'Liwa al Quds' (al Quds Brigade) in Aleppo governorate; this brigade is one of the Palestinian militias fighting alongside the Syrian regime, according to a report [published](#) by the 'Conflict Intelligence Team' website on March 28, 2019.

[A video](#) showing the Company's operatives in Tadmur city in the suburbs of Homs and Busra al Sham in southern Syria.

The company [appeared](#) publicly in the summer of 2018 at the Damascus International Fair of Industrial Products, where it was among the firms that supervised the security protection for the exhibition.

3- The Security Company (Shchit or Shield): The 'Novaya Gazeta' Russian newspaper revealed that three Russian fighters were killed in Syria in June 2019, as a result of bombardment during fighting that occurred north of Tadmur city near the Twinan gas field in central Syria, with the newspaper noting that the mercenary dead men belong to a company called 'Shchit' (Shield), a Russian private security firm.



According to the [newspaper](#), the 'Shield' special military company appeared for the first time in 2018, with its base being Kubinka city in the capital, Moscow, where it is believed that it belongs to the Special Forces Unit of the Russian Air Force.

## V. Russia Recruits Syrian Citizens in the Fighting in Libya

Since December 2019, Russia has worked to use the remaining Syrian fighters in the areas whose population was compelled to conduct forced settlements with the Syrian regime; after the Syrian regime subsequently conscripted many of these fighters into its forces and arrested and disappeared a number of them, Russia exploited the remaining former fighters by luring them with huge salaries and other incentives, including offering them exemption from compulsory military service in the regime army, in exchange for being transferred to Libya to fight alongside the forces of General Khalifa Haftar. We obtained information indicating that this Russian recruitment drive originally began in Suwayda governorate, after which it was rolled out to Damascus and its suburbs, Daraa, Quneitra, Hama, Homs, Deir Ez-Zour, Raqqa and Hasaka, with the fighters first being transferred to the Hmeimim Military Airbase and from there to Benghazi airport in Libya. [Reuters](#) reported that the pace of this recruitment accelerated in May 2020, further noting that this recruitment has not been limited solely to former Armed Opposition fighters (meaning those living in the areas where forced settlements were imposed), but that Russia also worked to recruit fighters from pro-Syrian regime militias, especially the Shiite-majority ones.

## VI. The Syrian Regime Issues Discriminatory Laws in Favor of Russia

On December 18, 2019, the Syrian regime's president, Bashar al Assad, issued laws numbers 33, 34 and 35, according to which he approved three contracts signed on September 2, 2019, between the Ministry of Oil and Mineral Resources and the Russian Mercury Company, which enabled it to obtain a license to explore for oil in the two areas of Block No. 7, an oil field located on the Syrian Jazira which extends over an area of 9.531 km, and in Block No. 19, which is located in the eastern region north of the Euphrates River.

In addition to the Mercury contracts, we recorded similar contracts with Technoprom Export for the maintenance of thermoelectric plants, and the Capital Company for exploration for energy resources in the marine sector.

Through the Syrian Network for Human Rights' work to track Russian companies that violate sanctions and support the Syrian regime, we have been able to record a large quantity of information about Russian companies that have obtained licenses and signed exclusive contracts with the government controlled by the Syrian regime, in the fields of oil, gas and energy.

## VII. Analysis of the Most Notable Violations by Russian Forces According to SNHR's Database

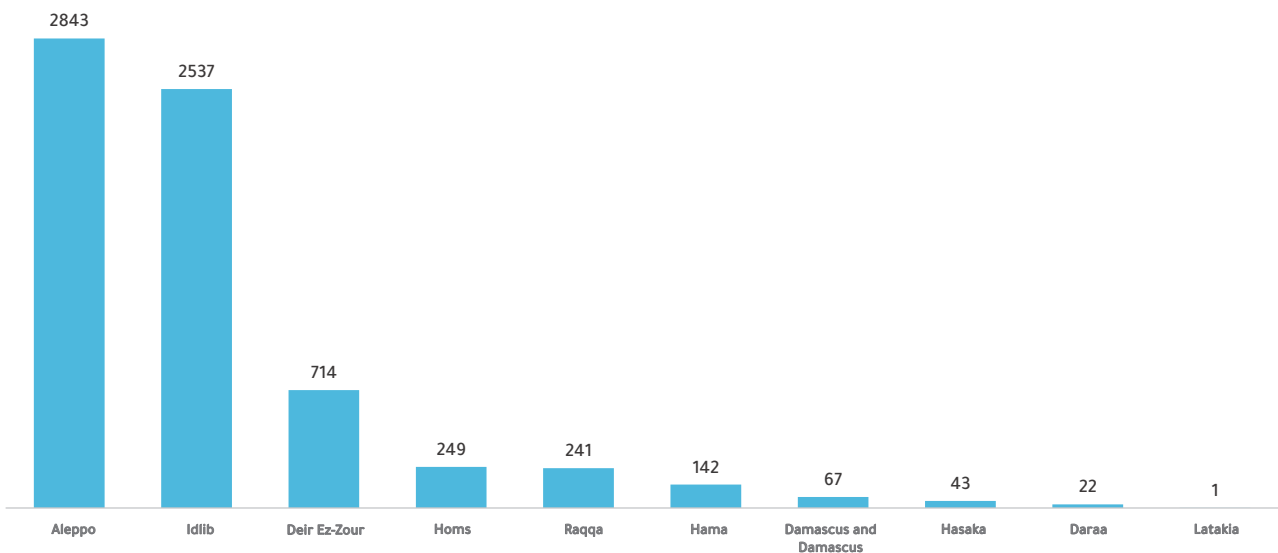
### A. Death toll

SNHR has documented the deaths of 6,859 civilians, including 2,005 children and 969 women (adult female), at the hands of Russian forces since the start of Russia's military intervention in Syria up until September 30, 2020.

#### The death toll of civilian victims killed by Russian forces distributed by year as follows:

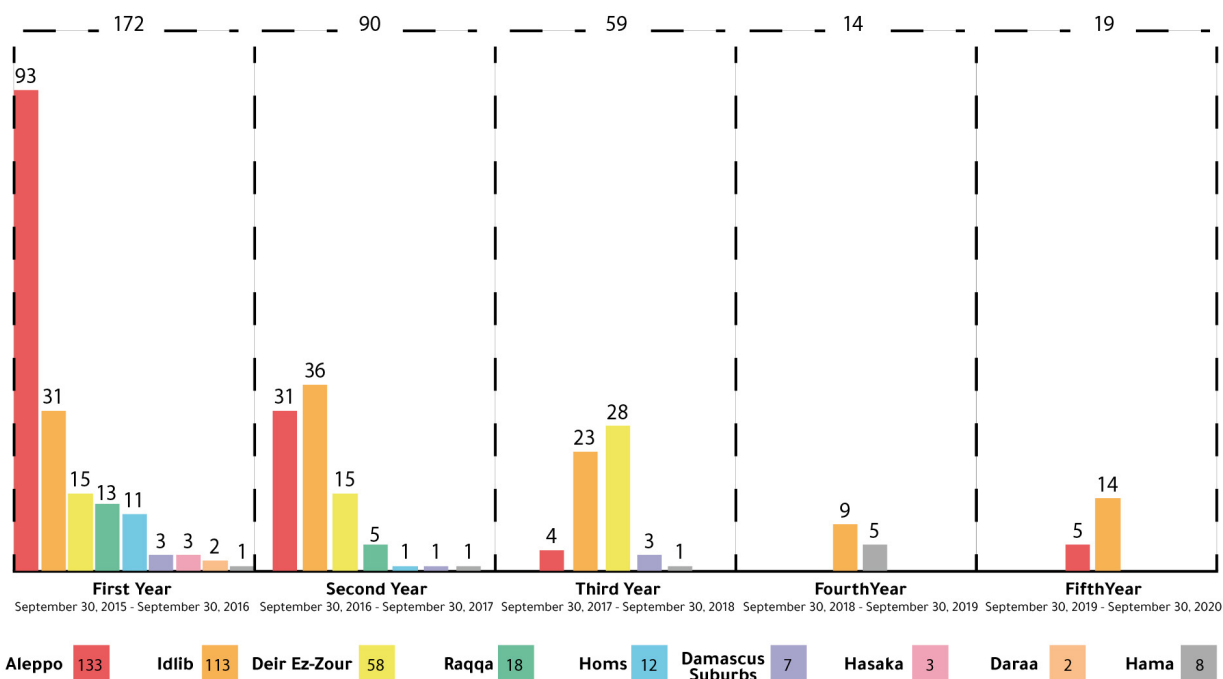
- From September 30, 2015, to September 30, 2016: 3,564 civilians, including 1,027 children and 404 women.
- From September 30, 2016, to September 30, 2017: 1,547 civilians, including 448 children and 236 women.
- From September 30, 2017, to September 30, 2018: 958 civilians, including 354 children and 211 women.
- From September 30, 2018, to September 30, 2019: 447 civilians, including 79 children and 47 women.
- From September 30, 2019, to September 30, 2020: 343 civilians, including 97 children and 71 women.

#### The death toll of civilian victims killed by Russian forces distributed across governorates as follows:



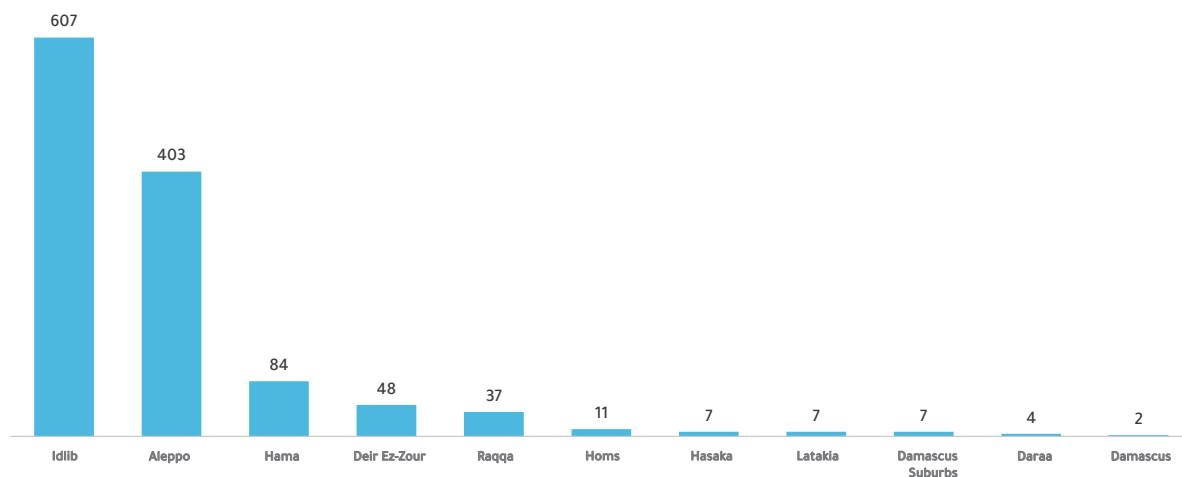
### B. Record of massacres (the deaths of five or more persons in the same incident):

SNHR has documented at least 354 massacres by Russian forces since the start of Russia's military intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015, up until September 30, 2020, distributed as follows:



### C. Record of attacks on vital civilian facilities:

SNHR has documented at least 1,217 attacks on vital civilian facilities by Russian forces, including 222 attacks on schools, 207 attacks on medical facilities and 58 attacks on markets, since the start of Russia's military intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015, up until September 30, 2020, distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

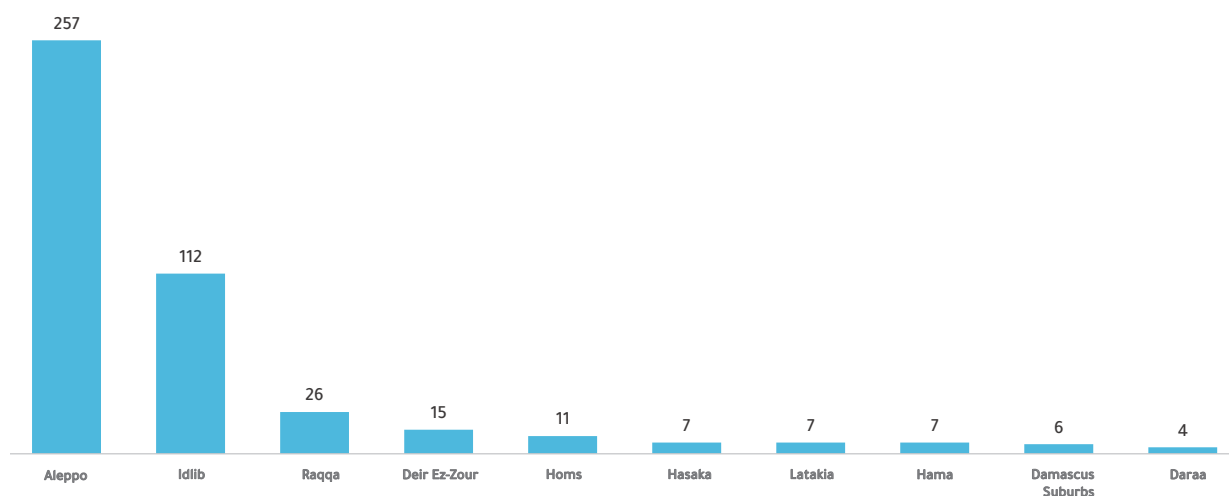


These were distributed by year as follows:

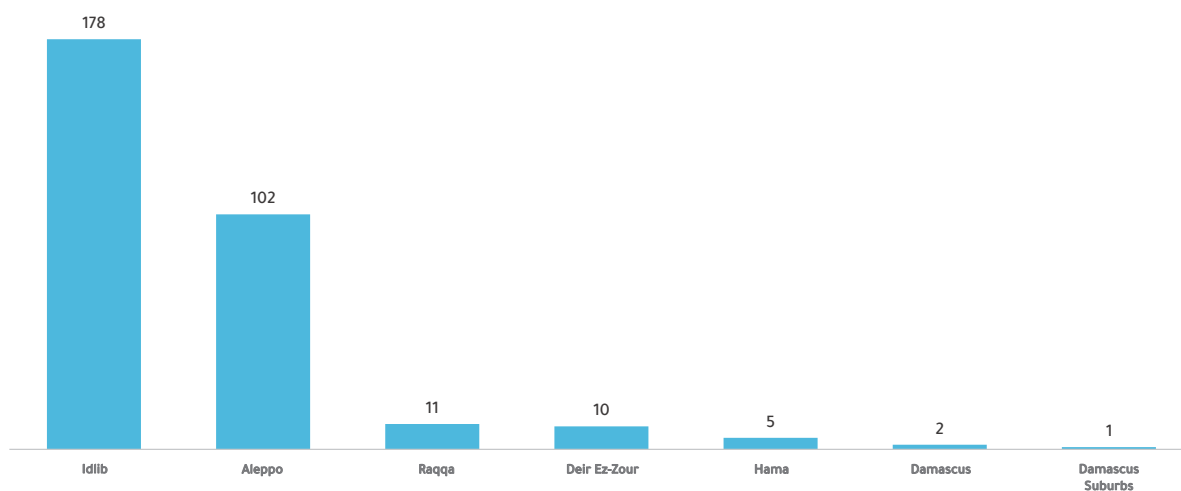
**First year:** September 30, 2015 - September 30, 2016: 452 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including 74 attacks on schools, 77 attacks on medical facilities and 35 attacks on markets.

These attacks were distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



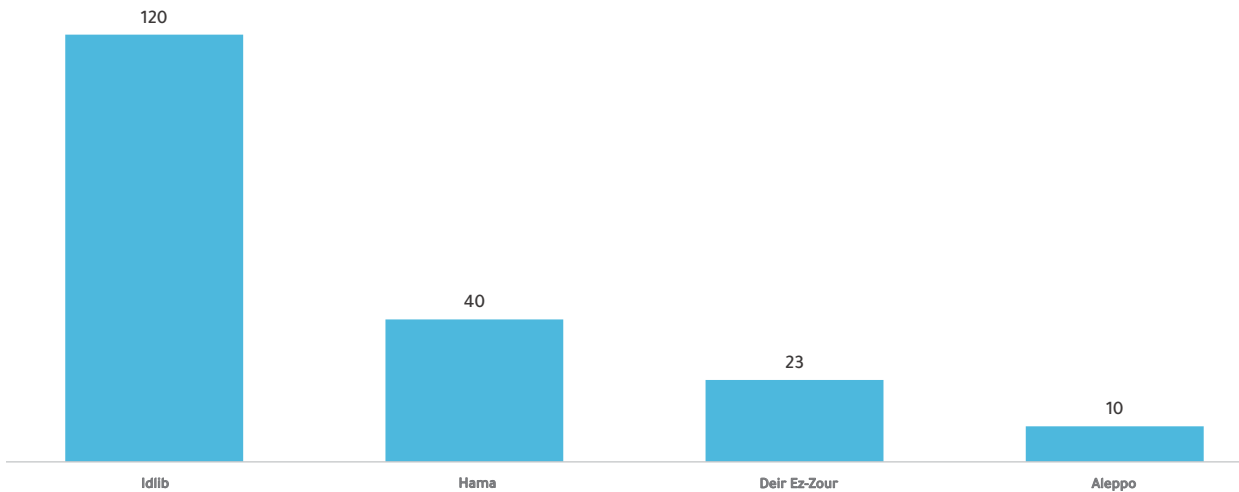


**Second year:** September 30, 2016 - September 30, 2017: 309 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including 65 attacks on schools, 54 attacks on medical facilities and 12 attacks on markets. These attacks were distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



**Third year:** September 30, 2017 - September 30, 2018: 193 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including 37 attacks on schools, 35 attacks on medical facilities and 8 attacks on markets.

These attacks were distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



**Fourth year:** September 30, 2018 - September 30, 2019: 129 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including 25 attacks on schools, 24 attacks on medical facilities and 1 attack on a market.

These attacks were distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

Aleppo: 2, Idlib: 95, and Hama: 32.

**Fifth year:** September 30, 2019 - September 30, 2020: 134 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including 21 attacks on schools, 17 attacks on medical facilities and 2 attacks on markets.

These attacks were distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

Aleppo: 32, and Idlib: 102.

#### **D. The death toll of victims among medical and Civil Defense personnel:**

SNHR has documented the deaths of 69 medical personnel, including 12 women (adult female), killed at the hands of Russian forces since the start of Russia's military intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015, up until September 30, 2020, distributed by year as follows:

**First year:** September 30, 2015 - September 30, 2016: 39, including 7 women.

**Second year:** September 30, 2016 - September 30, 2017: 11, including 2 women.

**Third year:** September 30, 2017 - September 30, 2018: 9, including 3 women.

**Fourth year:** September 30, 2018 - September 30, 2019: 6.

**Fifth year:** September 30, 2019 - September 30, 2020: 4.

We have also documented the deaths of 42 Civil Defense personnel during the same period, distributed by year as follows:

**First year:** September 30, 2015 - September 30, 2016: 15.

**Second year:** September 30, 2016 - September 30, 2017: 10.

**Third year:** September 30, 2017 - September 30, 2018: 8.

**Fourth year:** September 30, 2018 - September 30, 2019: 9.

**Fifth year:** September 30, 2019 - September 30, 2020: We were unable to document any incident in which Civil Defense personnel were killed in the fifth year of Russia's military intervention.

#### **E. The death toll of victims among media workers:**

SNHR has documented the deaths of 22 media workers at the hands of Russian forces since the start of Russia's military intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015, up until September 30, 2020.

#### **F. Record of the use of cluster munitions:**

SNHR has documented at least 236 attacks using cluster munitions carried out by Russian forces since the start of Russia's military intervention in Syria up until September 30, 2019.

#### **G. Record of the use of incendiary munitions**

SNHR has documented at least 125 attacks using incendiary munitions carried out by Russian forces since the start of Russia's military intervention in Syria up until September 30, 2019.

#### **H. Forced displacement**

The escalating violence inflicted by Russian forces has had the greatest impact in terms of exodus and forced displacement, as Russian attacks, in parallel with the attacks carried out by the Syrian-Iranian alliance, have resulted in the displacement of approximately 4.5 million people, most of whom have been forcibly displaced multiple times.

## **VIII. Details Outlining Some of the Incidents That Were Added to SNHR's Database During the Past Year**

Between September 30, 2019, and September 30, 2020, SNHR has documented on its database:

- The deaths of 343 civilians, including 97 children and 71 women,
- At least 19 massacres,
- At least 134 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including 21 on schools, 17 on medical facilities and 2 on markets,
- The deaths of 4 medical personnel,
- The deaths of 1 media worker.



The death toll of civilian victims distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

- Aleppo: 94
- Idlib: 249

This report outlines 22 attacks in which Russian forces targeted civilian areas and vital civilian facilities, with a number of these attacks resulting in civilian deaths. These attacks took place between September 30, 2019 and September 30, 2020.

We have categorized these attacks in our database into a number of patterns. For instance, there were attacks that resulted in massacres and others targeting vital civilian facilities, in addition to attacks that resulted in the deaths of medical and Civil Defense personnel.

- **Most notable massacres at the hands of Russian forces in the fifth year of Russia's intervention:**

On Wednesday, November 6, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles at residential neighborhoods of [al Sahhara](#) town in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, resulting in [the deaths](#) of [eight civilians](#), including [two female children](#) and [one woman](#), and injuring 25 others. Al Sahhara town was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

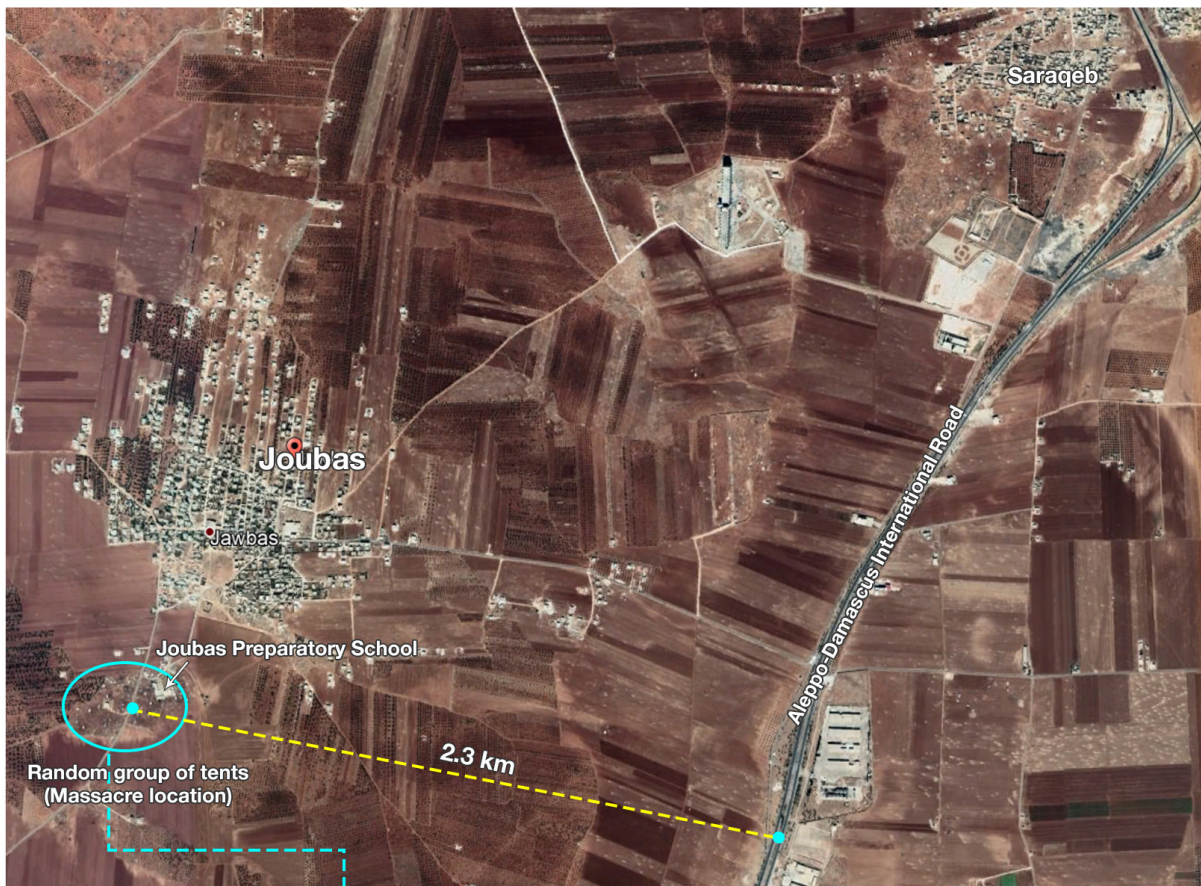
At around 09:29 on Tuesday, December 24, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired two missiles, one of which hit a random IDP camp (consisting of approximately 25 tents), in the southern outskirts of Joubas village, south of Saraqeb city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, while the second missile hit the preparatory school adjacent to the camp. The bombardment [resulted](#) in [the deaths](#) of [10 civilians](#), [most of whom were from one family](#), including [five children](#) (three males and two females) and four women (adult female), in addition to destroying five tents. The bombing also [destroyed part of the school perimeter wall, and caused significant material damage](#) to the school cladding materials and furniture. Joubas village was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

We note that this random camp is located about 2.3 km from the Damascus-Aleppo M5 International Road within the area covered by the humanitarian truce, which OCHA circulated to local organizations to facilitate the exit of civilians from the area. [We issued a report documenting the incident.](#)

Map showing the location of the massacre committed by Russian forces in Joubas village in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate on December 24, 2019:



Location of a Russian air attack on a random camp in Joubas village in the eastern suburbs of Idlib, resulting in a massacre – December 24, 2019



SNHR contacted Hussein Absi al Qaddour<sup>1</sup>, who is in charge of managing the local council in Joubas village. He told us that he was in his home, located about 800 meters from the site of the massacre, at the time of the attack: **“Suddenly I heard a very violent explosion, which blew out my house’s windows. We initially thought that the site of the bombing was very close, but it became clear to us later that it was near the preparatory school. I arrived at the place after the martyrs and the injured had been transferred to the Odai Abu Hussein Hospital, and I saw five tents completely destroyed, in addition to some torn tents.”**

We spoke to Asaad Haj Na’san<sup>2</sup>, a local activist from Joubas village, who said: **“While I was in the village that morning, the observatories circulated reports about Russian warplanes flying in the sky, then circulated news of them conducting a raid on the Dad-ikh Road in the southwestern outskirts of the village; I estimated immediately that the raid was in the area of the preparatory school and the camp adjacent to it. I went directly to the place where the Civil Defense teams were evacuating the martyrs and the injured.”** Asaad added, **“An old woman who was there told me that the bombing killed a whole family, many of whose members were children and women; I saw the hole caused by the missile impact and the great damage to the tents due to the bombing.”** Asaad

told us that the camp residents were preparing to leave when the massacre occurred.



Two child victims of the massacre committed by Russian forces in a random group of tents in Joubas village, Idlib - December 24, 2019

Ibrahim Asaad Arsan<sup>3</sup>, from Joubas village, whom SNHR spoke with, said that he was outside the village at the time of the attack, and arrived at the site half an hour afterwards: **“When I arrived at the site, I saw the impact site of one of the missiles among the tents - about 20 meters from the school - which destroyed six tents and burned some of them, while the second missile hit the school perimeter wall; I knew all the martyrs personally. The rest of the camp residents were gathering what remained of their possessions to be transported to another place.”**

Ibrahim confirmed that the area was free of any military presence, and that Russian warplanes had carried out the raid, according to the observatories transmissions via their walkie-talkies.

<sup>1</sup> Via WhatsApp on December 25, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Via WhatsApp on December 25, 2019

<sup>3</sup> Via WhatsApp on December 25, 2019



On Tuesday, January 21, 2020, at around 11:45, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, bombed a house on the outskirts of [Kafr Ta'al](#) village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, resulting in the deaths of [nine civilians](#) from [one family](#), including [six children](#) ([three males](#) and [three females](#)) and [one woman](#). Kafr Ta'al village was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, January 29, 2020, at around 17:00, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at the main street, located between al Gharbi Mosque and Nouri Hamesho Mosque, in the middle of [Kafr Lata](#) village in Jabal al Arba'in area in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [resulting in the deaths of 19 civilians](#) including [four children](#) (three males and one female) and two women, in addition to injuring 30 others. Kafr Lata village was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Monday, February 3, 2020, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a missile at a microbus carrying IDPs from Shamikou area in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate while it was passing through Jam'iyet al Rahhal area in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate heading towards safer areas, [resulting in the deaths of nine civilians](#) at [one time](#), including five children (four males and one female) and two women. The area was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Victims of a massacre perpetrated in an air attack we believe was Russian on a bus carrying IDPs in Jam'iyet al Rahhal area, Aleppo – February 3, 2020

On Thursday, March 5, 2020, at around 02:05, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, carried out a raid using at least two missiles, targeting a poultry farm where IDPs from Idlib and Aleppo suburbs were living. The poultry farm is located on the western outskirts of Ma'aret Misreen town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate - about 2 km a line of sight - on the road between Ma'aret Misreen and Batenta. The poultry farm building consists of two hangars used for raising chickens, which are linked on the western side to a two-storey residential building where the IDPs were living. At the entrance to the poultry farm there is a building for guards where IDPs also reside.

At around 02:27, after the recovery operations for the wounded and the injured had begun, the same warplanes again targeted the site with at least two missiles. No casualties were reported in this second attack among the paramedics and rescue workers, who were able to escape the scene prior to the bombardment. We note that we were unable to accurately verify the number of missiles and the impact site of each of them up until the time of preparing this report, because the attacks were carried out at night, and because we have been unable to visit the site of the incident so far. The area was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

The two attacks resulted in [the deaths](#) of [15 civilians](#), [including two female children](#) and [seven women](#), and [injured](#) at [least 19 others](#), [in addition to killing hundreds](#) of [birds](#) that were in the hangars, and almost complete destroying the poultry farm building and some of the houses surrounding it. We issued [a report](#) on the incident.



Visual guide of the impact site of a Russian air attack which targeted a poultry farm sheltering IDPs, resulting in a massacre in Ma'aret Misreen town:



Visual guidance showing the site of Russian air attack resulted in a massacre against IDPs in Ma'aret Misreen town in Idlib northern suburbs on March 5, 2020

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الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

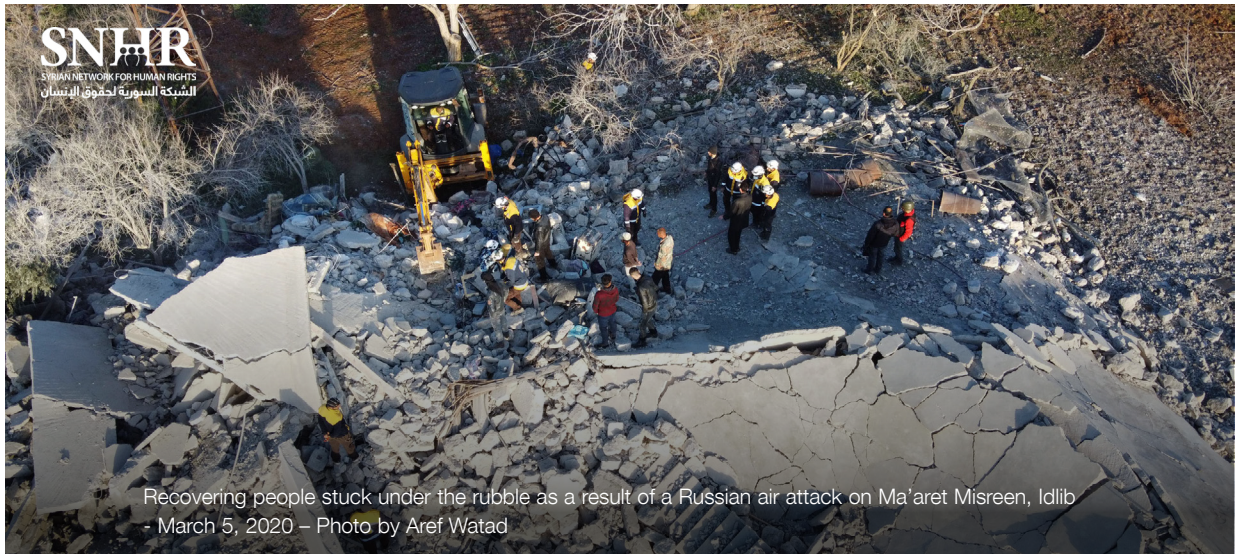


The SNHR contacted Marwan Abu Hatem<sup>4</sup>, the commander of the Civil Defense Center in Ma'aret Misreen city, whose team went to the site of the massacre after hearing loud explosions from the western outskirts of the town. He told us: **“We arrived at the site about 20 minutes after the first raid was carried out, with Russian reconnaissance aircraft flying overhead in the air, according to the observatories’ reports circulation, which warned us a few minutes afterwards of the presence of Russian warplanes preparing to carry out an imminent attack, so we left the site immediately,”** Marwan added that they moved their vehicles and put them among the trees

<sup>4</sup> Via WhatsApp on March 5, 2020



in a place relatively far from the site of the massacre as a precautionary measure before returning to the site to recover those stuck under the rubble following these second airstrikes: **“Transferring the victims took a long time due to our vehicles being some distance from the place and we kept working until the morning, where we had recovered 15 victims, including women and children, and more than 15 injured, all of whom were among the IDP residents at the poultry farm and homes surrounding it.”**



Laith al Abdullah<sup>5</sup>, a media worker for the Civil Defense Organization - Saraqeb Center, headed with his team to the site of the massacre to support the team from Ma'aret Misreen, which was subjected to a double-tap airstrike. He told the SNHR the following: **“At around 2:00 am on March 5, Russian warplanes launched a violent raid on Ma'aret Misreen, the sound of which resonated across Idlib suburbs. The warplanes launched another raid about 25 minutes later. Following the second attack, we received calls to support the Civil Defense team at the site, so we immediately went there. Upon our arrival, I saw the scale of the great destruction that had taken place, which seemed as if the missiles used were of a new type that were more powerful, as I saw three large holes in the place when I arrived. We worked until about 08:30 and we were able to retrieve the bodies of a female child, a woman and two men.”**

Laith confirmed that the death toll from the attack was 15 martyrs, some of whom died after arriving at the hospital, and 19 injured, in addition to the deaths of hundreds of chickens that were in the poultry shed.

<sup>5</sup> Via WhatsApp on March 5, 2020



- **Most notable victims among medical personnel who were killed at the hands of Russian forces in the fifth year of Russia's intervention:**

[Zakwan Tammaa](#), from Ariha city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was an anesthesia technician and the administrative director at al Shami Hospital known as Ariha Surgical Hospital, north of Ariha city. Zakwan, who was born on June 15, 1977, died on Saturday, February 1, 2020, of wounds sustained on Wednesday, January 29, 2020, in the blasts from three airstrikes launched by fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, when they used missiles against al Shami Hospital and the surrounding area in Ariha city.

Abdul Rahman Majed Hilal, Obaidah Khaled Hilal, and Muhammad Raed Haj Asaad, all paramedics, were killed on Thursday, February 6, 2020, in bombardment by fixed-wing warplanes that we believe were Russian, which used missiles to target an ambulance belonging to the 'Free' Idlib Health Directorate's Idlib Ambulance System. The warplanes launched the missile strike as the ambulance was passing alongside a military vehicle while driving through al Kurneish al Sharqi area - Qmainas crossing road - in the eastern outskirts of Idlib city. The bombing also completely [destroyed the ambulance](#), putting it out of service.

[Abdul Rahman Majed Hilal](#), from Saraqeb city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate

[Obaidah Khaled Hilal](#), from Saraqeb city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate

[Muhammad Raed Haj Asaad](#), from Joubas village in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate





Abdul Rahman Hilal, Muhammad Haj Asaad, and Obaidah Hilal, all paramedics, were killed on Thursday, February 6, 2020, in a Russian air attack targeting an ambulance near Qmainas village in the eastern suburbs of Idlib

- **Media workers who were killed at the hands of Russian forces in the fifth year of Russia's intervention:**

On Tuesday, February 4, 2020, at around 07:00, media activist Amjad Mohammad Anas Aktalati, was killed when fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles targeting al Midan neighborhood in Ariha city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

[Amjad](#), a photographer at the General Media Center, was a married father of three from Ariha city. Born in 1992, he was a third-year student at the Faculty of Education - Department of Psychology - University of Damascus.

The SNHR contacted the media worker, Anas Tracy<sup>6</sup>, a friend of Amjad, who told us: **"When I heard about the news of Amjad's death, I contacted one of the Civil Defense personnel who was at the site of Amjad's death, who told me that the Russian warplanes launched several missile airstrikes targeting the al Midan neighborhood in Ariha city, one of which targeted the house of Fadi Rahal, a friend of Amjad, in whose house Amjad spent the night, which resulted in the death of Amjad and his friend Fadi."** Anas added that the bodies of the two martyrs were not retrieved until the next day because of the intense shelling that day and the great destruction in the area.

<sup>6</sup> Via WhatsApp on February 18, 2020

- **Most notable attacks on vital civilian facilities at the hands of Russian forces in the fifth year of Russia's intervention:**

- Mosques:

On Wednesday, November 20, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at [al Nasr Mosque](#) in al Bara village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [partially destroying](#) the [mosque building](#), and caused [moderate material damaged](#) to its furniture. Al Bara village was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Saturday, February 1, 2020, at around 23:30, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired four missiles that landed in the middle of al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. One of the missiles fell on the dome of [Sheikh Dawshal Mosque](#) in the city, [partially destroying](#) the [mosque building](#) and [causing](#) a fire that burnt [its furniture](#), as well as causing significant material damage to its cladding. Another missile fell near [al Kabir Mosque](#), causing minor material damage to its building and furniture. We note that this was the first time al Bab city had been subjected to aerial bombardment by Syrian-Russian alliance forces since it came under the control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army in February 2017.



Damage caused by an air attack which we believe was Russian on Sheikh Dawshal Mosque in al Bab city, Aleppo – February 1, 2020

PH : OMNAN ALDOUMANI

- Schools:

On Tuesday, August 11, 2020, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a missile at the Urm al Shamalia School in Urm al Kubra village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, causing partial destruction to the school building, and causing moderate material damage to its furniture. Urm al Kubra village was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



- Medical facilities:

On Tuesday, November 5, 2019, at around 23:55, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, launched an air raid, firing two missiles that landed near al Ikhlas Children's and Women's Hospital, southeast of Shnan village in Jabal al Zaweya area in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate; the warplanes subsequently launched a second air raid with two missiles shortly afterwards at around 00:20 on November 6, targeting the hospital directly, injuring two medical staff, in addition to [severely destroying](#) the [hospital building](#), [igniting fire](#) in [a part](#) of [the hospital](#), [and inflicting significant material](#) damage to its equipment, furniture and [an ambulance belonging to the Syrian American Medical Society \(SAMS\)](#), putting the hospital out of service. Shnan village was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Visual guide showing the site of an air attack, which we believe was Russian, on al Ikhlas Hospital in Shnan village, Idlib:



Adham Hamrin, a nurse from Me'rata village, who was working in the ambulance department of al Ikhlas Hospital in Shnan village, was suffocated by the fire that broke out in the hospital as a result of the attack. Adham<sup>7</sup> told us: **"I woke up a few minutes before midnight of November 6 to the sound of a huge explosion that rocked the area. I later learned that it was the explosion of two missiles, one of which fell 50 meters east of the hospital, while the other fell a little further away than the first one. The bombing injured a number of the hospital's reviewers. We gave them first aid, then we immediately started evacuating the nursing mothers, infants in the incubators, and staff from the hospital."** Adham said that he returned with one of his colleagues to the hospital to make sure that it was empty: **"After we arrived, the aircraft returned to carry out a raid with two missiles that hit the hospital building directly, causing its destruction and igniting fire in it; we were able to get out only after the arrival of the Civil Defense members and the people who extinguished the fire got us out."** Adham added: **"The hospital was severely destroyed in most of its departments, generators and equipment, and an ambulance was damaged. It is currently out of service."**

<sup>7</sup> We contacted him via WhatsApp on November 13, 2019



On Sunday, November 24, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at Adnan Kiwan Children's and Women's Hospital, which is supported by Syrian Expatriate Medical Association (SEMA), in Kansafra village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The [missiles directly targeted the hospital building, severely destroying its building, and causing significant material damage to its equipment and furniture, putting it out of service](#). Kansafra village was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident

The Syrian Expatriate Medical Association (SEMA) issued [a statement](#) condemning targeting of the hospital on their official website.



On Sunday, January 26, 2020, at around 04:10, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at al Iman Hospital in the east of [Sarja](#) village in Jabal al Zaweya area in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, injuring a number of civilian reviewers at the hospital, [in addition to severely destroying the hospital's building, and causing significant material damage to its equipment](#), putting it out of service. Sarja village was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Saturday, February 1, 2020, at around 10:40, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, launched two missile strikes on al Huda Surgical Hospital, which is supported by the SKT Organization, in [Hour](#) village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The missiles fell in the middle of the hospital's yard, [partially destroying](#) the [hospital building](#), and [causing significant](#) material damage to [its equipment](#). The hospital, which was established in 2014, provides services to nearly 250,000 people, treating around 6,000 people per month, and providing 13,000 free medical services per month. Hour village was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Sunday, February 9, 2020, at around 20:10, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles that landed near al Atareb Maternity and Child Care Hospital in al Atareb city in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which is supported by the Syrian [American Medical Society](#) (SAMS), causing [severe material damage](#) to [the hospital](#) building and cladding, putting the hospital out of service. Al Atareb city was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Monday, February 17, 2020, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at al Kenanah Hospital in the south of Darat Ezza city in western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, [partially destroying the hospital building](#), and [causing significant material damage](#) to [its furniture](#) and [equipment](#). The attack also targeted the neighboring al Fardous Hospital – which is supported by the Syria Relief and Development Organization – located adjacent to al Kenanah Hospital, injuring the hospital guard, in addition to partially destroying the hospital building, and causing significant material damage to its equipment and furniture. Darat Ezza city was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





- Markets:

On Saturday, December 7, 2019, at around 14:00, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at the main market, known as al Albasa (clothes) Market, in the middle of [Balyoun](#) village in Jabal al Zaweya area in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, resulting in a massacre, [in addition](#) to [inflicting severe destruction on a number of shops](#), and causing significant material damage to the market facilities. Both Ahmad Astila Basic School and Balyoun High School Balyoun, which are adjacent to each other, are located in the market. The bombing partially destroyed the perimeter walls of both schools. Balyoun village was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

- Civil Defense centers:

On Thursday, January 23, 2020, at around 09:30, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at an area of al Hajj Road, located at the foot of Jabal al Arba'in in the eastern outskirts of Ariha city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, while Civil Defense teams, Ariha Center, was inspecting the site following a previous bombing by the same forces there; [one of the missiles directly hit the team's ambulance, igniting a fire that caused significant material damage to the vehicle](#), putting it out of service. The city was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

[The Syrian Civil Defense](#) published a news report on the incident via its official account on 'Twitter'.



Civil Defense ambulance burning as a result of a Russian air attack east of Ariha city, Idlib - January 23, 2020

- Bakeries:

On Monday, November 25, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at al Eman automatic Bakery northeast of [Beneen](#) village in Jabal al Zaweya in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [partially destroying the bakery's building](#), [causing significant material damage](#) to [its equipment](#), and igniting fire in the fuel section inside the bakery, putting it out of service. The city was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



- IDP camps:

On Monday, December 16, 2019, at around 11:00, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles at an IDP shelter in the southern outskirts of Binnesh city, which is located in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, resulting casualties, [in addition to](#) causing [significant destruction](#) to [the shelter's building](#). We note the IDPs were killed while they were sheltering in a building of a former poultry farm. The area was under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

## IX. Conclusions and Recommendations

### **Legal conclusions:**

1. The Russian regime has been implicated in supporting the Syrian regime, which has committed crimes against humanity against the Syrian people, by providing it with weapons and military expertise and through direct military intervention alongside it. The support of a regime implicated in crimes against humanity constitutes a clear violation of international law and makes the Russian regime vulnerable to accountability.
2. The Russian military intervention in Syria is illegal, regardless of taking place at the request of the Syrian regime, because this military intervention has been used to continue the Syrian regime's perpetration of violations against the Syrian people, many of which constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes. In addition, the Russian forces themselves are involved in committing crimes against humanity and war crimes; for these two reasons together, the intervention is in violation of international law, making Russia's regime complicit in the Syrian regime's crimes.
3. Russia has used its veto many times even though it is a party to the Syrian conflict, which is a direct violation of the Charter of the United Nations; these uses of the veto have been employed to provide Syria's regime with impunity for its crimes, giving it absolute immunity, with the veto being used in a wholly arbitrary fashion that contradicts and disregards human rights.
4. Russia has not launched a single investigation despite launching thousands of bombing operations that have caused the deaths of at least 6,859 Syrian citizens, further confirming its disregard for Syrians' lives, with this indifference to human life shared with the Syrian regime and with neither having any interest in protecting the people of Syria.
5. The Russian regime has unquestionably violated UN Security Council Resolutions No. 2139 and 2254 which ordered the cessation of indiscriminate attacks, as well as violating Article 8 of the Rome Statute by committing intentional homicide, all of which constitute war crimes.
6. We can confirm that the incidents of bombardment cited in this report targeted unarmed civilians. This provides additional evidence that Russian forces have violated the rules of customary international human rights law, which protects the right to life. In addition, this bombardment has been carried out extensively in a non-international armed conflict and as part of widespread offensives in many of the attacks which, therefore, amount to crimes against humanity, and in some cases war crimes, fulfilling all the relevant criteria.
7. The attacks included in this report, which were carried out by the Russian regime, constitute a violation of customary international humanitarian law as shells were directed at populated residential areas rather than at specific military objects.
8. Incidents of bombardment have inadvertently caused losses of civilian lives, injuries, and severe damage to civilian objects, and there are strong indications which lead us to believe that the resulting damage is disproportionately extreme compared to any military objectives for the attacks.



## **Recommendations**

### **Security Council**

- There should be no use of the veto in the case of any state involved in the conflict, with Russia, which is an active brutal participant in the Syrian conflict, using the veto in its own and the Syrian regime's favor, despite both being primary parties in the conflict
- There is a need to refer the Syrian issue from the Security Council to the United Nations General Assembly after 9 years of failure on the part of the Security Council to protect civilians and ending the Syrian conflict.
- The Security Council should take additional steps following the adoption of Resolution 2254, which clearly demands that all parties should, "...Immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such, including attacks against medical facilities and personnel, and any indiscriminate use of weapons, including through shelling and aerial bombardment,"
- The Syrian issue should be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those implicated in perpetrating crimes should be held accountable, including the Russian regime whose involvement in war crimes has been proven.
- Establish security and peace in Syria and implement the 'Responsibility to Protect' norm in order to preserve Syrians' lives, heritage, and cultural artefacts from being destroyed, looted, and ruined.
- Impose UN economic and military sanctions on the Syrian and Iranian regimes which have been directly involved in committing war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Syrian people.

### **International community**

- In light of the Security Council's division and utter inability, action should be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people.
- Seek to expand the States' use of their universal jurisdiction over crimes committed in Syria.
- In light of Russia's recurring use of its veto, despite the Syrian regime continuing to commit crimes against humanity and war crimes, it is imperative to form an international civilized coalition outside the Security Council that aims to protect civilians in Syria from Russian and Syrian regime attacks.
- Expand political and economic sanctions against the Russian regime for committing war crimes in Syria, for continuing to violate sanctions imposed against the Syrian regime, and for assisting it in breaching UN Security Council resolutions, including those regarding non-recurrence of using chemical weapons and barrel bombs.
- As a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP), SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the 'Responsibility to Protect (R2P)' norm in dozens of studies and reports, more especially after all the political initiatives, from the Arab League agreement, then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan, to the Cessation of Hostilities and Astana agreements which followed, proved to be useless. As such, action should be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, and the 'Responsibility to Protect' norm, which was established by the UN General Assembly, should be implemented.



- Renew pressure on the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- Seek to refer adjudication on the Syrian case to the UN General Assembly.

#### **Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI)**

- Work to investigate the cases included in this report. SNHR is willing to contribute to this as much as possible.
- Clearly condemn the violations by Russian forces in Syria, many of which constitute war crimes.

#### **OHCHR**

- Issue a statement condemning the violations by Russian forces in Syria on the occasion of the five-year anniversary of Russia's military intervention in Syria, clarify the catastrophic repercussions on the Syrian people and state resulting from that intervention, and condemn Russia's use of the veto in favor of the Syrian regime.

#### **UN Special Envoy to Syria**

- Call for accelerating the completion of the political transition process and set a strict timetable not exceeding one year in duration; if the consultations continue at the current pace, we will need years simply to draft a constitution, and decades to achieve a political transition.
- Condemn the perpetrators of crimes and massacres and those who were primarily responsible for clearly violating Security Council resolutions, foremost among which are the Russian and Syrian regime forces.

#### **The Russian regime:**

- Stop supporting the current Syrian regime and apologize to the Syrian people for all violations committed by Russian forces.
- Supporting a genuine political transition away from the dynastic dictatorship of one family and its brutal security services is the only way to achieve security, stability and reconstruction.
- Launch investigations into the incidents included in this report, make the findings of those investigations public to the Syrian people, and hold those who were involved accountable.
- Compensate all the damaged centers and facilities, rehabilitate them, and provide reparations for all the families of those killed or wounded by the current Russian regime.
- Completely cease the bombing of hospitals, protected objects, and civilian areas, and respect customary humanitarian law.

### **European States and the European Union**

- Apply economic sanctions on Russia befitting the severity of the crimes against humanity and war crimes it has perpetrated in Syria.
- Support recently displaced victims in northwestern Syria, mainly through providing potable drinking water and usable water for other purposes, with more than 1.6 million Syrians currently in urgent need of assistance, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic conditions.

### **Acknowledgment and Condolences**

We extend our most sincere and heartfelt condolences to the victims' families and to all those affected who we got to know and whose names we have documented. We would also like to sincerely thank the residents, local activists, and victims' families whose contributions made our database and this report possible.



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