

The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in the First Half of 2019

Documentation of nearly 43 Cluster Munitions Attacks and 17 Incendiary Weapons Attacks by Syrian-Russian Alliance Forces in the Fourth De-Escalation Zone

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Thursday, July 4, 2019

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.

Contents

- I. Introduction and Methodology
- II. Outline of the First Half of 2019
- III. The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in the First Half of 2019
- IV. Attachments
- V. Conclusions and Recommendations

I. Introduction and Methodology

Syria has seen an unprecedented number of violations since the start of the popular uprising for democracy in March 2011. Extrajudicial killings, arrests, torture and enforced disappearances are the most prevalent of the long list of violations inflicted on Syrian citizens. While the Syrian regime and its affiliated militias were the sole perpetrators of these violations for the first seven months or so of the uprising, other parties subsequently joined in, also violating the rights of Syrian citizens. The SNHR has continued to document every incident that its team members are able to verify, with these violations escalating very dramatically in 2012 and 2013, prompting us to expand our publication of periodic monthly reports recording and highlighting the continued suffering of the Syrian people, which subsequently grew to eight reports on different issues issued at the beginning of each month. In the course of our work, SNHR has compiled a massive database cataloguing hundreds of thousands of incidents, each of which involves a pattern of violations that we have been able to document.

By the end of 2018, with a reduction in the level of violence compared to previous years, we changed our previous strategy and now compile our reports into a single monthly report featuring the most prominent violations in Syria which we have been able to document in the preceding month.

This month's report focuses on the human rights situation in Syria in June and in the first half of 2019, and catalogues the record of civilian victims who we documented as being killed by the main parties to the conflict during the same period, as well as the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearance. The report also highlights indiscriminate attacks and the use of outlawed weapons (cluster munitions, chemical weapons, barrel bombs, incendiary weapons) and attacks on civilian objects.



The report also includes documentation of violations distributed according to the perpetrator parties responsible for each one. Accurately ascribing responsibility sometimes requires more time and investigation than usual, especially in the case of joint attacks. On some occasions, when we are unable to definitively assign responsibility for specific attacks to one particular party, as in the case of air strikes by Syrian or Russian warplanes, Syrian-Iranian attacks, or attacks by Syrian Democratic Forces and International Coalition forces, we indicate that responsibility for these attacks is held jointly by the parties in question until we are able to establish with greater certainty which one of the parties was likely responsible, or it's proved that the attack was a joint initiative carried out in coordination between the two parties.

This report draws upon the ongoing daily monitoring of news and developments by SNHR's team, and on our extensive network of relations with various sources that have been built up over the course of our work since 2011. When we receive information or learn some news about violations via the internet or media outlets, our team works to follow up these reports and attempts to verify information and collect evidence and data. In some cases, researchers are able to visit the incident location promptly, although this is a rarity in light of the incredibly high security risks involved, and given the frequency of daily incidents and the scarcity of human and material resources to carry out this work. Therefore, the opportunities available to access evidence vary between one case and another, and consequently the level of certainty in classification of each incident also varies. SNHR's customary policy in such cases is to rely on accounts from survivors who experienced the violation firsthand, in addition to analyzing available materials from open sources such as the Internet and media outlets. We also talk with medical personnel who treated the injured in these incidents, examined the deceased victims' bodies, and identified the cause of death.

SNHR also analyzed videos and photographs that our team has documented, or which were posted online, or submitted by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media platforms. These videos and photos show, amongst other things, the sites of attacks, and the bodies of the deceased victims and the injured, the scale of destruction, and the remnants of the incendiary and cluster munitions and other munitions used, whilst other photos may show victims killed under torture, and victims amongst medical and media personnel who died in attacks carried out by parties to the conflict. We also retain copies of all the videos and photographs included in these reports, which are also reviewed in this report, in a confidential electronic database, as well as keeping hard disk backup copies, and we ensure always that all these data are stored with their original source. We do not claim, however, that we have documented all cases, given the severe prohibitions, restrictions and persecution by the Syrian Regime forces and some other armed groups. Readers are welcome to find out more about our methodology. ¹

¹"Syrian Network for Human Rights Methodology", Syrian Network for Human Rights, <http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR_Methodology_en.pdf>



This report only represents the bare minimum of the actual severity and magnitude of the violations that occurred. Also, it doesn't include any analysis of the profound social, economic, and psychological ramifications.

II. Outline of the First Half of 2019

The first half of 2019 saw a number of military campaigns in northern and eastern Syria, causing changes in control areas, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of civilians, and committing many massacres and displacement movements towards safer areas.

The violations committed in the first half of 2019 were concentrated in the fourth and final de-escalation zone where clashes broke out between Hay'at Tahrir al Sham and factions of the Armed Opposition at the beginning of this year, with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham aiming to tightening control over most areas by transferring control of the administrative authorities to the Salvation Government affiliated with it, and imposing itself as the party responsible for oversight of all local councils.

The ground attacks by Syrian Regime forces on the villages and towns of the northern suburbs of Hama and the southern suburbs of Idlib haven't ceased despite the entry into force of the Sochi Agreement on September 17, 2018. In February, we recorded the Syrian regime's use of its air force in bombing the fourth de-escalation zone, as well as using cluster munition weapons for the first time since the Sochi Agreement entered into force. We have issued [a report](#) on the use of cluster munitions in the Idlib de-escalation zone by Syrian-Russian alliance forces since the Sochi Agreement.

In conjunction with the 12th round of the Astana Conference in the Kazakh capital of Nur-sultan (Astana) on April 25-27, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) monitored a military escalation by Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the fourth de-escalation zone, accompanied by the use of barrel bombs by Syrian Regime forces in the fourth de-escalation zone on April 30 for the first time since the Sochi Agreement entered into force. In May, we also recorded the use of chemical weapons by Syrian-Russian alliance forces for the first time since the Sochi Agreement entered into force. The chemical attack carried out by Syrian Regime forces on May 19 in Latakia governorate was the first since the attack on Douma city in Damascus Suburbs governorate in April 2018. Since May, we have recorded the use of incendiary weapons with unprecedented intensity, causing fires in large tracts of agricultural land and substantial damage to property.



At the beginning of the year, we recorded the continuation of the military campaign launched by Syrian Democratic Forces with air support by International Coalition forces under the pretext of eliminating ISIS in Deir Ez-Zour governorate, targeting the last villages of Hajin area, which ended with the declaration by Syrian Democratic Forces of eliminating ISIS in the last areas under its control, al Baghouz town in Deir Ez-Zour eastern suburbs, on March 23, following a fierce military campaign by the alliance forces (the International Coalition and Syrian Democratic Forces) on a camp in al Baghouz town, which lasted between March 15 and March 19.

Insecurity was the predominant characteristic of the areas outside the control of Syrian Regime forces in the first half of the year, which was manifested in assassinations and bombings for which we could not definitively identify the perpetrators, with these crimes resulting in the deaths of hundreds of civilians and damage to vital civilian facilities.

The arrests were virtually daily and incessant at the hands of all parties in all parts of Syria in the first half of the year. January saw the highest monthly rate of arbitrary arrests during the first half of 2019 due to Syrian Regime forces arresting those with whom it had previously concluded settlement agreements, concentrated in the areas of southern Syrian, in the Eastern Ghouta in Damascus Suburbs governorate, and in areas of the northern suburbs of Homs.

In the first half of 2019, we documented at least 435 attacks on vital civilian facilities in Syria, 375 of which were carried out by Syrian-Russian alliance forces, all in the fourth de-escalation zone, with 258 of these occurring during the recently launched and still continuing military campaign which has gone on since April 26, 2019. Seventy-nine of these attacks were on schools, 57 on places of worship, 37 on medical facilities and 24 on vital Civil Defense centers. In a number of incidents, we have monitored the deliberate targeting and bombardment of vital facilities, with many being bombed repeatedly. We issued [a special report](#) on the attacks by Syrian-Russian alliance forces on medical facilities in the fourth de-escalation zone during this campaign.

The aforementioned military attacks resulted in further massive forced displacement in northern and eastern Syria, causing a humanitarian crisis due to the increasing number of displaced persons, either to formal camps or to the more secure agricultural areas, as relief organizations were unable to cover their needs. The severe thunderstorms in the first quarter of the year caused considerable material damage to the camps in northern Syria as a result of heavy flooding and gale-force winds, with hundreds of tents washed away or blown away. The high level of displacement of civilians and of the families of the fighters of ISIS and some of its fighters to al Hawl Camp in the eastern suburbs of Hasaka, which lasted until mid-March, caused the deterioration of living conditions there.



June 2019 saw the continuation of the military campaign by Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the de-escalation zone, extending the target areas to deeper areas within the Idlib governorate, which reached the outskirts of Idlib city, Ma'aret Misreen town, and Sarqeb city in the northern suburbs of Idlib, and included areas in the western suburbs of Aleppo. The military operations during battles concentrated on the contact lines between Syrian Regime forces on the one hand and factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on the other, in an attempt by each of these parties to make military progress.

The toll of civilian victims killed by Syrian-Russian alliance forces in the fourth de-escalation zone in June declined slightly compared to May, with almost complete displacement of residents of areas under bombardment by this alliance to the far north of Syria, where thousands of displaced families are suffering from dreadful humanitarian conditions, living in the open under trees in agricultural land without even tents to shelter them.

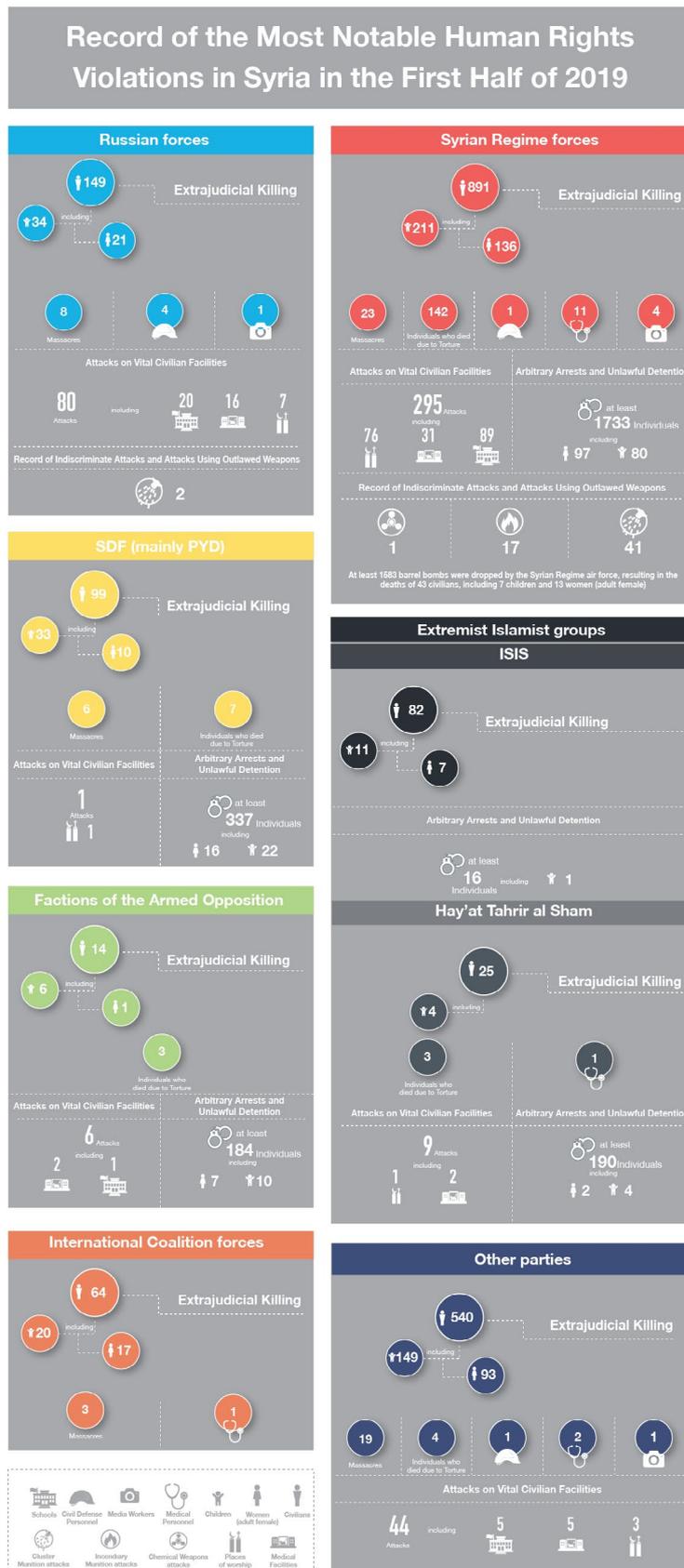
Syrian Regime forces were again far ahead of all other parties in terms of arbitrary arrests carried out in June, being responsible for at least 255 cases of arbitrary arrests during this period, mostly of people with whom the regime had concluded settlement agreements, and those previously displaced and returning to their areas of origin, and of anyone criticizing the living conditions under and policies of the Syrian regime in its areas of control. Syrian Democratic Forces were responsible for the second highest number of arbitrary arrests during this period, carrying out 43 such arrests in its areas of control, targeting activists and families supposedly on the pretext of belonging to ISIS.

The fires in agricultural land continued in most Syrian regions for the second consecutive month, causing the loss of thousands of hectares of crops. Some of these fires were caused by bombing by Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the fourth de-escalation zone. Meanwhile, the eastern region witnessed the burning of dozens of acres of crops, especially in the governorates of Raqqa and Hasaka, as well as in the Ghouta area without knowing the causes of the outbreak of those fires, which caused the deaths of dozens of civilians while many others suffered burns during their attempts to put fires out.



III. The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in the First Half of 2019:

This report outlines the most notable human rights violations that were documented by the SNHR in the first half of 2019 at the hands of the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria.

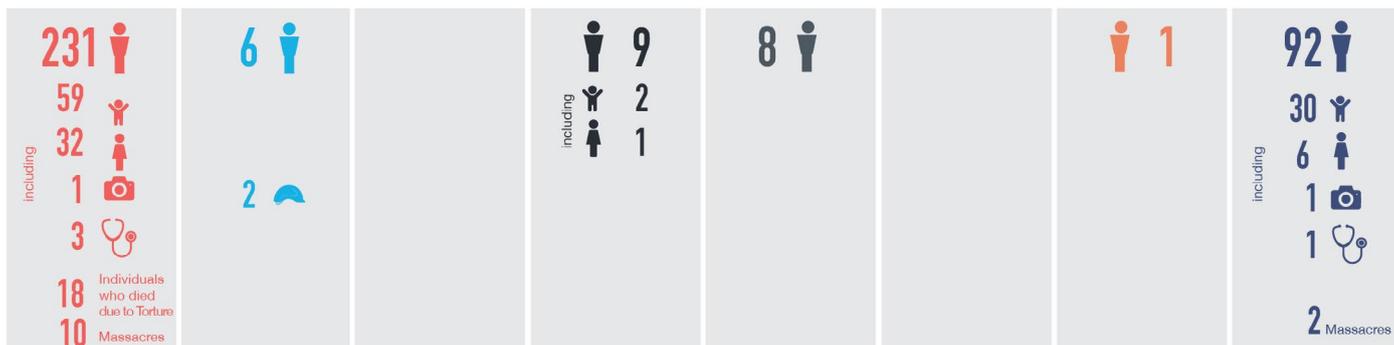


As well as outlining the human rights violations documented in June 2019

Record of the Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in June 2019

Syrian Regime forces	Russian forces	SDF (mainly PYD)	Extremist Islamist groups ISIS Hay'at Tahrir al Sham		Factions of the Armed Opposition	International Coalition forces	Other parties
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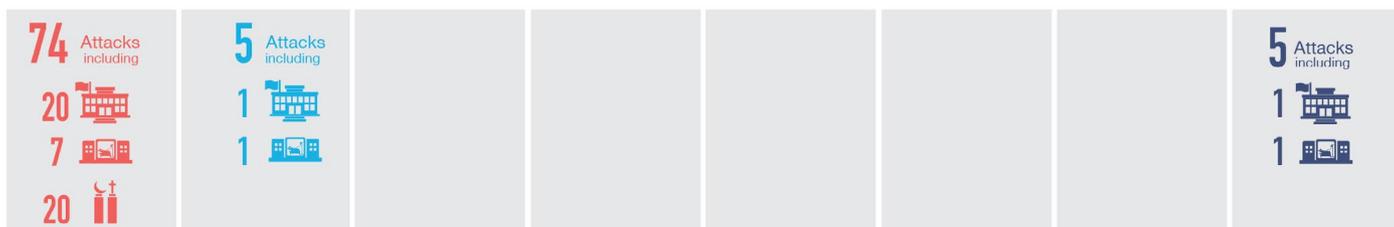
Extrajudicial Killing



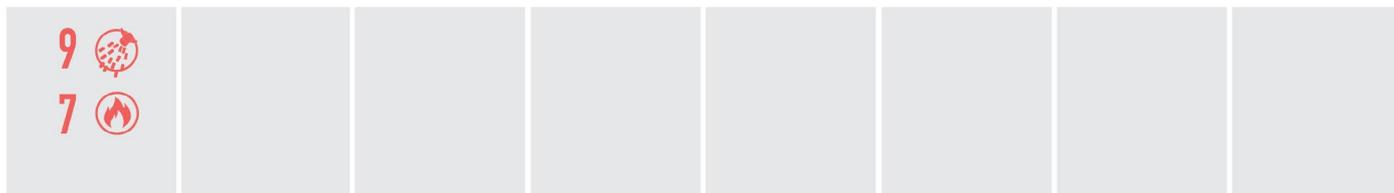
Arbitrary Arrests and Unlawful Detention



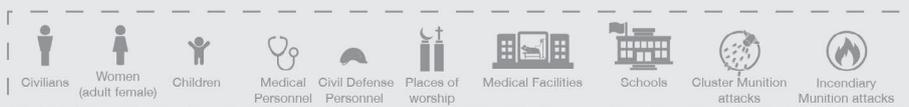
Attacks on Vital Civilian Facilities



Record of Indiscriminate Attacks and Attacks Using Outlawed Weapons



At least 622 barrel bombs were dropped by the Syrian Regime air force, resulting in the deaths of 24 civilians, including 2 children and 1 women (adult female)



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As documented by SNHR



A. Extrajudicial killing:

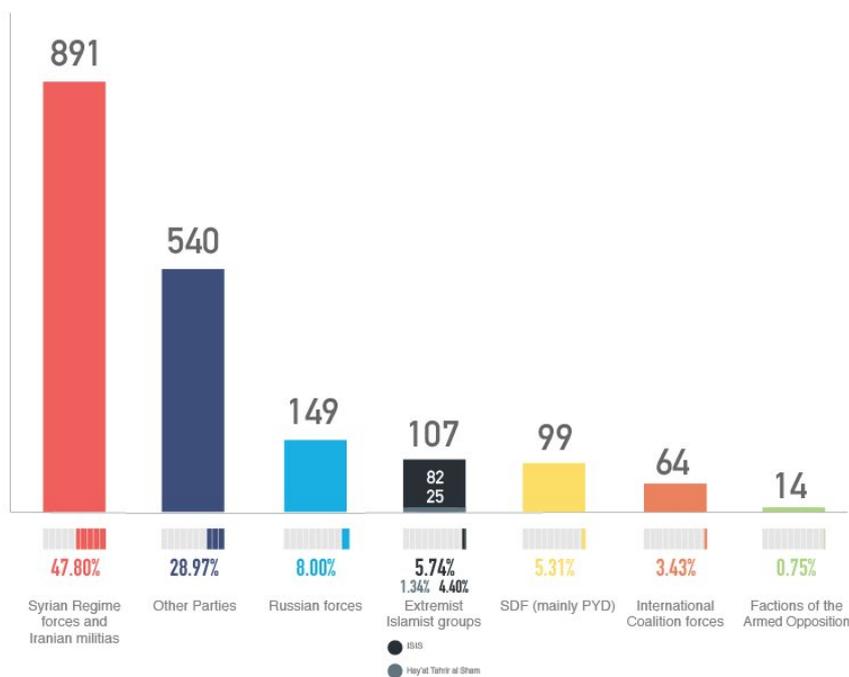
1. In the first half of 2019:

In the first half of 2019, SNHR documented the deaths of 1,864 civilians, including 468 children and 285 women (adult female); this total includes 15 medical personnel, six media workers, and six members of the Civil Defense personnel, with the highest rate of killings being carried out at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance forces. We also documented the deaths of 159 individuals due to torture, and at least 59 massacres. We issued a report on the first of this month detailing the civilian victims documented killed at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria.

The death toll of civilian victims was distributed by the main perpetrator parties as follows:



Distributed as follows:

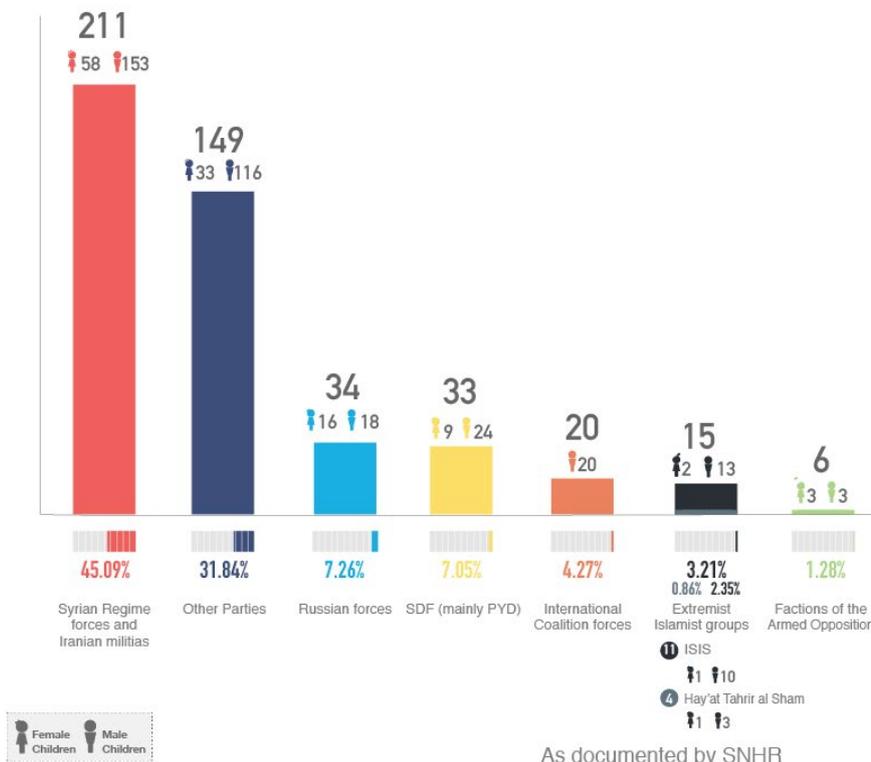


1864
civilians
were killed
at the hands
of the main
parties to the
conflict in Syria
in the first half of
2019

As documented by SNHR

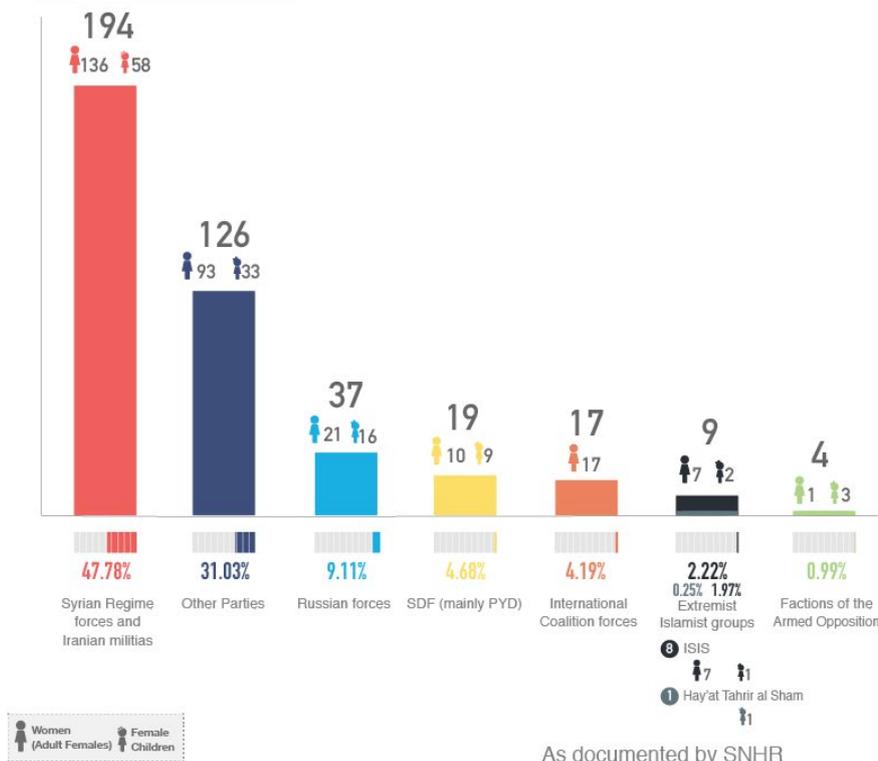


Distributed as follows:



468
Children
were killed
at the hands
of the main
parties to the
conflict in Syria
in the first half of
2019

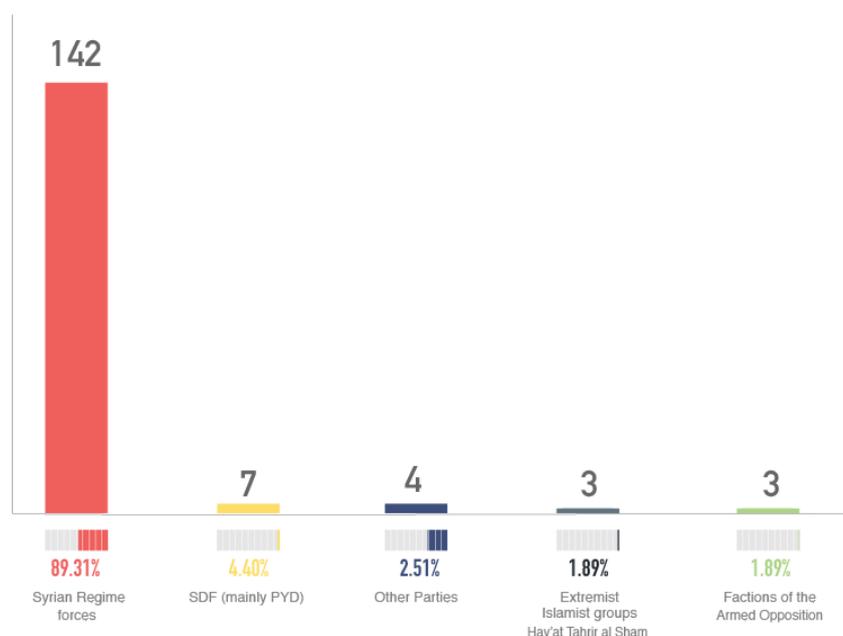
Distributed as follows:



406
females
were killed
at the hands
of the main
parties to the
conflict in Syria
in the first half of
2019



Distributed as follows:



159
individuals
died due to torture
at the hands of
the main parties to
the conflict in Syria in
the first half of
2019

As documented by SNHR

- **Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):** 891, including 211 children and 136 women.
- **Russian forces:** 149, including 34 children and 21 women.
- **Extremist Islamist groups:** 107, including 15 children and seven women, divided between:
 - o **ISIS (the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State'):** 82, including 11 children and seven women.
 - o **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition):** 25, including four children.
- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** 14, including six children and one woman.
- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):** 99, including 33 children and 10 women.
- **International Coalition forces:** 64, including 20 children and 17 women.
- **Other parties:** 540, including 149 children and 93 women.

2. In June 2019:

In June 2019, SNHR documented the deaths of 347 civilians, including 91 children and 39 women (adult female); this total includes four medical personnel, two media workers and two members of the Civil Defense personnel, with the highest rate of killings being carried out at the hands of Syrian-Russian alliance forces. We also documented the deaths of 18 individuals due to torture, and at least 12 massacres.



The death toll of civilian victims was distributed by the main perpetrator parties as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 231, including 59 children and 32 women.
- **Russian forces:** Six.
- **Extremist Islamist groups:** 17, including two children and one woman, divided between:
 - o **ISIS:** Nine, including two children and one woman.
 - o **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** Eight.
- **International Coalition forces:** One.
- **Other parties:** 92, including 30 children and six women.

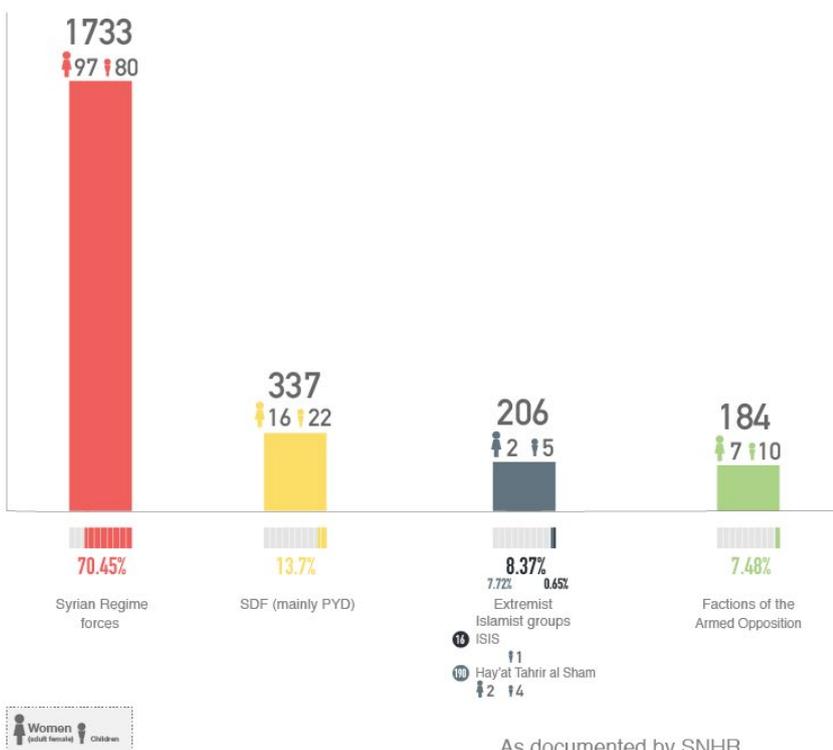
B. Arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance:

1. In the first half of 2019:

SNHR documented in the first half of 2019 at least 2,460 cases of arbitrary arrests, including 117 children and 122 women (adult female), at the hands of the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria. The largest number of arrests was carried out by Syrian Regime forces in the governorates of Damascus Suburbs, Aleppo and Damascus. We issued a report on the second of this month detailing the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearances at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria.

These arrests are distributed according to the main perpetrator parties, as follows:

Distributed as follows:



At least
2460
cases of arbitrary
arrests at the hands of
the main parties to the conflict
in Syria in the first half of
2019



- **Syrian Regime forces:** 1,733, including 80 children, and 97 women.
- **Extremist Islamist groups:** 206, including five children and two women, divided between:
 - o **ISIS:** 16, including one child.
 - o **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** 190, including four children and two women
- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** 184, including 10 children and seven women.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 337, including 22 children and 16 women.

2. In June 2019:

SNHR documented in June 2019 at least 336 cases of arbitrary arrests, including 14 children and 10 women (adult female), at the hands of the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria. The largest number of arrests was carried out by Syrian Regime forces in the governorates of Damascus Suburbs and Damascus.

These arrests are distributed according to the main perpetrator parties, as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 255, including nine children and seven women.
- **Extremist Islamist groups:**
 - o **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** 21.
- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** 17, including one child and one woman.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 43, including four children and two women.

C. Attacks on vital civilian facilities:

1. In the first half of 2019:

SNHR documented in the first half of 2019 at least 435 attacks on vital civilian facilities, 87 percent of which were carried out at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance forces, all in the fourth and final de-escalation zone (consisting of Idlib governorate and parts of the governorates of Hama, Aleppo and Latakia).

Among these attacks, 115 were on schools, 56 were on medical facilities and 88 others were on places of worship.

These attacks are distributed according to the main perpetrator parties as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 295
- **Russian forces:** 80
- **Extremist Islamist groups:**
 - o **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** Nine.
- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** Six
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** One
- **Other parties:** 44

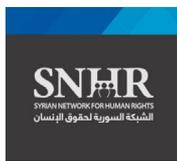


The record of attacks documented in the first half of 2019 on vital civilian facilities is distributed according to the perpetrator party as follows:

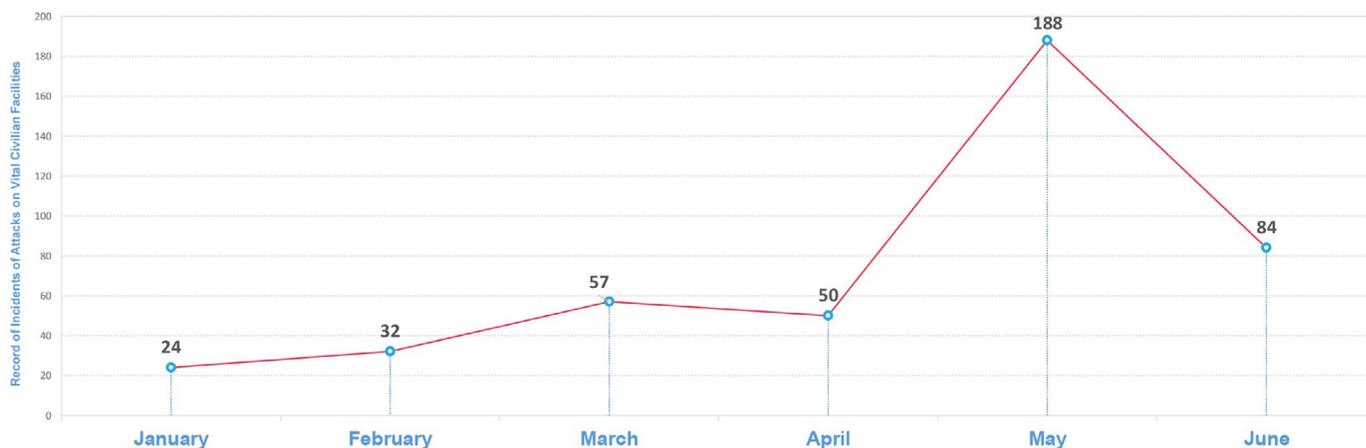
Perpetrator Party	Syrian Regime Forces	Russian Forces	Extremist Islamist Groups	Factions of the Armed Opposition	Syrian Democratic Forces	Other Parties
Attacked Facility			Hay'at Tahrir al Sham			
Places of Worship						
Mosques	76	7	1	-	1	3
Vital Educational Facilities						
Schools	89	20	-	1	-	4
Universities	1	-	-	-	-	-
Educational Institutions	1	-	-	-	-	1
Nurseries	2	-	-	-	-	-
Vital Medical Facilities						
Medical Facilities	31	16	2	2	-	5
Ambulances	3	2	-	-	-	4
Vital Cultural Facilities						
Archeological sites	1	2	-	-	-	-
Museums	2	-	-	-	-	-
Communal Facilities						
Gardens	1	-	-	-	-	2
Markets	18	-	-	-	-	7
Playgrounds and stadiums	1	-	-	-	-	-
Infrastructure						
Power stations and energy facilities	1	2	-	2	-	-
Civil Defense centers	26	12	-	-	-	3
Water facilities and related resources	5	1	-	-	-	-
Official Headquarters	13	9	4	-	-	4
Means of transport	1	-	1	1	-	-
Bakeries	12	5	-	-	-	1
Domestic animal farms	-	3	-	-	-	-
Grain silos	-	1	-	-	-	-
Industrial facilities	2	-	1	-	-	-
Civil society organizations	3	-	-	-	-	1
Media outlets	1	-	-	-	-	-
Refugee Camps						
Refugee camps	5	-	-	-	-	8
Total	295	80	9	6	1	44



Also, the record of attacks on vital civilian facilities in the first half of 2019 was distributed by month as follows:



At least 435 incidents of attacks on vital civilian facilities in Syria in the first half of 2019



As documented by SNHR

The previous chart shows that the largest number of recorded attacks took place in May followed by June, following the military campaign by Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the fourth and final de-escalation zone.

The most notable attacks on vital civilian facilities that were documented in the first half of 2019: On Tuesday, January 1, 2019, gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham used machine-guns to open fire directly on al Fardous Hospital in the west of Darat Ezza city in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, causing minor material damage to the hospital building following clashes on the hospital campus between the group and elements of the National Front for Liberation, one of the Armed Opposition factions. The village, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the preparation of this report.

On Saturday, February 16, 2019, a number of missiles landed at the Misyaf National Hospital in [Misyaf](#) city in the western suburbs of Hama governorate. We believe that the source of the missiles was a missile launcher stationed in an area controlled by factions of the Armed Opposition. The attack caused [moderate material](#) damage to the [hospital's garage](#) and claddings. The city was under the control of Syrian Regime forces at the time of the incident.



On Tuesday, February 19, 2019, Syrian Regime artillery forces fired a shell at al Rawda bakery in the center of Khan Sheikhoun city in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, [igniting a fire](#) in the [fuel tanks](#) on the [bakery's roof](#), as well as causing severe [material damage](#) to the building, putting it out of service. The city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



On Saturday, March 2, 2019, Syrian Regime artillery forces fired a number of shells at [al Rawda Mosque](#) in al Sharqi neighborhood in Khan Sheikhoun city in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, resulting in [partial material](#) damage to [the building](#), as well as [moderate material](#) damage to the mosque furnishings, putting it out of service. We also note that the mosque had been materially damaged by bombardment by the same forces the previous day. The city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Material damage inflicted by Syrian Regime artillery forces' shelling of al Rawda Mosque in Khan Sheikhoun city, Idlib – March 2, 2019 – By: Saed al Din Zaidan

On Sunday, April 21, 2019, gunmen fired indiscriminately at Shamarekh IDP camp near Izaz city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, killing one child, as well as inflicting moderate material damage to a number of tents. We were unable to determine who was responsible for the shooting up to the time of the preparation of this report. The area was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.

On Thursday, May 2, 2019, at around dawn, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles near the [Sarjila historical area](#), which includes ancient Roman-era palaces and tombs, to the east of al Bara village in Jabal al Zaweya area in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, causing [extensive material](#) damage to the [historical facilities](#) in the area. The area was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Damage in Sarjila historical area, Idlib, in a Russian air raid – May 2, 2019

On Monday, May 13, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles in two installments directly at the Civil Defense Center in Kafranbel city in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, injuring two Civil Defense personnel, [in addition to severely destroying](#) the [center's building](#), as well as [inflicting extensive](#) material damage to the furniture, equipment and three vehicles belonging to the center ([fire truck](#), a rescue vehicle and [a bulldozer](#)), putting it out of service. The city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident. [The Syrian Civil Defense](#) published a news report on the targeting of the Kafranbel Center on its official 'Twitter' account.

2. In June 2019:

SNHR documented in June at least 84 attacks on vital civilian facilities, 79 of which were carried out at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance forces, all in the fourth de-escalation zone.

Among these attacks, 22 were on schools, nine were on medical facilities and 20 others were on places of worship.

These attacks are distributed by the main perpetrator parties as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 74
- **Russian forces:** Five
- **Other parties:** Five



The record of attacks documented in June on vital civilian facilities is distributed according to the perpetrator party as follows:

Perpetrator Party	Syrian Regime Forces	Russian Forces	Other Parties
Attacked Facility			
Places of Worship			
Mosques	20	-	-
Vital Educational Facilities			
Schools	20	1	1
Vital Medical Facilities			
Medical Facilities	7	1	1
Ambulances	1	-	-
Vital Cultural Facilities			
Museums	2	-	-
Communal Facilities			
Gardens	1	-	1
Markets	2	-	-
Infrastructure			
Civil Defense centers	7	2	
Water facilities and related resources	1	-	-
Official Headquarters	6	-	1
Bakeries	7	1	-
Civil society organizations	-	-	1
Total	74	5	5



The most notable attacks on vital civilian facilities that were documented in June:

On Sunday, June 2, 2019, a car bomb exploded in the main street in front of Izaz Court building, known as al Saray Building, in the middle of [Izaz](#) city in Aleppo governorate northern suburbs. The explosion took place 30 meters from the court, inflicting a massacre, in addition to inflicting moderate material damage to the court building. We were unable to identify the responsible party up to the time of the preparation of this report, given the difficulty in identifying the perpetrators of bombings. Izaz city was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.

On Monday, June 3, 2019, fixed-wing MiG-23 Syrian regime forces' warplanes fired a number of missiles at the entrance of the local market in the center of Ma'aret al Numan city in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, [causing human losses](#), as well as [inflicting significant material damage](#) to a [number of shops](#) and [market facilities](#). The city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Damage inflicted by Syrian regime air attack on the local market in the center of Ma'aret al Numan city, Idlib – June 3, 2019 – By Mu'az al Abbas



On Tuesday, June 4, 2019, fixed-wing Syrian Regime forces' warplanes fired a number of missiles near the Civil Defense team, Ma'aret Harma Center, in Ma'aret Harma village in the Idlib governorate southern suburbs, causing moderate material damage to two vehicles belonging to the team (an ambulance and a [fire vehicle](#)). We note that the Civil Defense team was stationed inside a house within the village, with the Civil Defense Organization distributing its teams and vehicles in different areas for fear of being bombed. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, June 5, 2019, fixed-wing SU-22 Syrian Regime forces' warplanes fired a number of missiles near the bakery of al Wafaa Association for Relief and Development in al Dar al Kabira village in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, [partially destroying](#) the building, as well as [inflicting moderate material damage](#) to the bakery equipment. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Sunday, 9 June 2019, fixed-wing SU-24 Syrian Regime forces' warplanes fired a number of missiles at the Morek al Kabir Mosque, known as [al Gharbi Mosque](#), in Morek town in Hama governorate northern suburbs, [partially destroying](#) the [mosque building](#), as well as inflicting significant [material damage](#) to the furniture. Morek town was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



On Friday, June 14, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles near an emergency medical point in Kafr Zita city in Hama governorate northern suburbs, causing moderate material damage to the point building. We note that the point is headquartered in the Cultural Center building in Kafr Zita. Kafr Zita city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Saturday, June 15, 2019, fixed-wing Syrian Regime forces' warplanes fired a number of missiles near the Martyr Hasan al Mdawar Primary School in al Bara village in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, inflicting a massacre, as well as [partially damaging](#) the school building and perimeter wall, and inflicting moderate material damage to the furniture. Al Bara village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Destruction caused by Syrian regime air attack on Martyr Hasan al Mdawar Primary School in al Bara village, Idlib – June 15, 2019



On Saturday, June 15, 2019, fixed-wing Syrian Regime forces' warplanes fired a number of missiles near the Heesh dispensary in Heesh village in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, causing severe destruction to the building, as well as inflicting [moderate material](#) damage to [the equipment](#). We note that the dispensary management has suspended work at the facility due to the continuing military campaign carried out by Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the fourth de-escalation zone. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



On Sunday, June 23, 2019, Syrian Regime forces artillery fired a shell at the Jazraya al Kabir Mosque, known as Omar Bin al Khattab Mosque, in Jazraya village in Aleppo governorate southern suburbs. The shell directly targeted the mosque minaret, partially damaging the minaret, as well as [inflicting moderate material damage](#) to the building. Jazraya village was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, June 26, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles near the Civil Defense team, Khan Sheikhoun Center, in al Beira neighborhood in northeast of Khan Sheikhoun city in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, while the rescue workers were aiding civilians injured in previous bombardment by Syrian



Regime fixed-wing warplanes at the same location, resulting in the deaths of two members of the Civil Defense team and the injury of another, in addition to inflicting [significant material damage](#) to [an ambulance](#) belonging to the team. We note that the same forces repeated the bombing on the same site while [another team](#) of [Civil Defense personnel](#) from the same center was trying to reach it, which resulted in the injury of three members of the team, [in addition to](#) inflicting [moderate material damage](#) to [an ambulance](#) belonging to the team. Khan Sheikhoun city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



D. Record of indiscriminate attacks and attacks using outlawed weapons:

1. In the first half of 2019:

Syrian-Russian alliance forces have renewed the use of cluster munitions in their recent military campaign on the fourth de-escalation zone. Although these munitions do not cause widespread and massive destruction in the same way as barrel bombs, Scud missiles and vacuum missiles, they can cause serious damage to property, and can ensure the killing and injury of as many people as possible in the area.



As monitors, it seems to us that the use of these munitions by Syrian Regime forces in the fourth de-escalation zone may not be part of a near-term military advance. Rather, it is our belief that the aim of using these weapons is to completely paralyze life in the areas under attack, with the areas targeted by Syrian-Russian alliance forces with cluster munitions being effectively transformed into minefields due to the presence of hundreds of cluster submunition bomblets that failed to explode on their initial impact. These remnants remain active until they either explode spontaneously or are triggered by anybody approaching them, meaning they can kill and maim dozens of innocent people.

SNHR documented in the first half of 2019 at least 43 cluster munitions attacks, most of which were carried out by artillery forces. These attacks were distributed as follows:

- Syrian Regime forces: 41 attacks, distributed across governorates as follows:

Idlib governorate: 40

Hama governorate: One

- Russian forces: Two attacks, one in Hama governorate, and the other in Idlib governorate.

These attacks resulted in the deaths of 38 civilians, including eight children and eight women (adult female), as well as injuring 77 individuals, all in attacks by Syrian Regime forces.

We also recorded in in the first half of 2019 at least 17 incendiary weapons attacks, all of which were carried out by Syrian Regime forces. These attacks took place in populated areas away from frontlines, distributed as follows:

Idlib governorate: 11

Hama governorate: Six

We also documented Syrian Regime forces using chemical weapon in one attack in Latakia governorate.

The Syrian Regime's air force, using both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, also dropped at least 1,583 barrel bombs, all within the fourth de-escalation zone. These attacks resulted in the deaths of 43 civilians, including seven children and 13 women, as well as damaging at least 28 vital civilian facilities.

The following are the most attacks that we were able to document in the first half of 2019:

On Monday, March 18, 2019, Syrian Regime forces, stationed at Abu Dali area used a missile launcher to fire a number of Urgan-9M27K missiles loaded with [cluster munitions](#) at al Sharqi neighborhood of Ma'aret al Numan city in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, injuring many civilians. The city was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



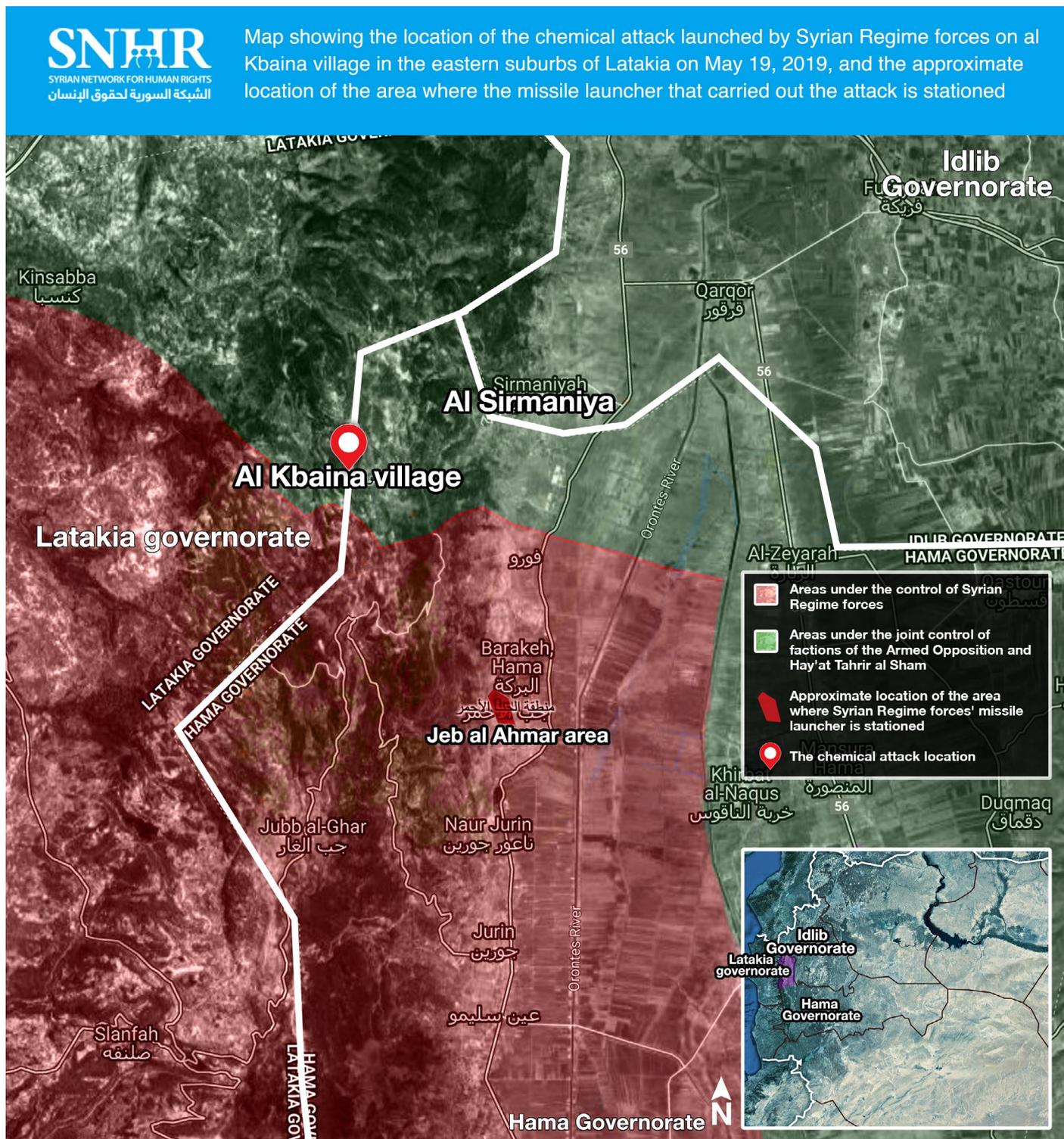
On Sunday, April 7, 2019, Syrian Regime forces, stationed in Abu al Duhour area in the eastern suburbs of Idlib, used a missile launcher to fire [two SMERCH-9m55k missiles](#) loaded with 9n235 [cluster submunitions](#) at al Janoubi neighborhood in al Nayrab village in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The explosion of the munitions resulted in the deaths of seven civilians, including two children and one woman, all of whom were killed in different parts of al Janoubi neighborhood, while six others were injured. We also documented an explosion of several submunitions near the Mus'ab Bin Omair Primary School building while the students were inside the school. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, May 8, 2019, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on [Heesh](#) town in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, resulting in the deaths of three civilians from one family of IDPs from Helfaya city in Hama governorate northwestern suburbs, including one female child. The town was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.

On Sunday, May 19, 2019, Syrian Regime forces stationed in the Jeb al Ahmar area to the south of al Kbaina village in the eastern suburbs of Latakia, used a missile launcher to fire three missiles loaded with poison gas which targeted a base used by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on a hill in the southwestern outskirts of al Kbaina village, resulting in the injury of four of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham's fighters, who exhibited symptoms of breathing difficulty, redness of the eyes and tearing. We issued [a report](#) on the incident.



Map showing the location of the chemical attack launched by Syrian Regime forces on al Kbaina village in Latakia governorate eastern suburbs on May 19, 2019:



2. In June 2019:

SNHR documented in June at least nine cluster munitions attacks, all of which were carried out in Idlib governorate at the hands of Syrian Regime forces. These attacks resulted in the deaths of four civilians, including one woman, and injured at least four others. These attacks were distributed as follows:

We also recorded in June at least seven incendiary weapons attacks, all of which were carried out by Syrian Regime forces. These attacks took place in populated areas away from frontlines, distributed across governorates as follows:

Idlib governorate: Five

Hama governorate: Two

The Syrian Regime's air force, using both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, also dropped at least 622 barrel bombs on the governorates of Idlib, Hama and Latakia. These attacks resulted in the deaths of four civilians, including two children and one woman, all in Idlib governorate, as well as damaging one vital civilian facility.

The following are the most notable indiscriminate attacks and attacks using outlawed weapons that we were able to document in June:

On Wednesday, June 5, 2019, Syrian Regime forces, stationed in the camp of Braidij village in Hama governorate northern suburbs, used a missile launcher to fire nearly [15 missiles](#) carrying [incendiary weapons](#) at Kafr Sajna village in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, leading to the outbreak of fires in civilian houses and agricultural lands. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Monday, June 10, 2019, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to fire a number of 9m27k missiles carrying cluster munitions at Sfahun village in Idlib southern suburbs, causing material damage to properties there. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Remnants of a cluster 9m27k incubator fired by Syrian Regime forces using a missile launcher at Sfuhun village, Idlib – June 10, 2019

On Sunday, June 23, 2019, Syrian Regime forces, stationed in the camp of Braidij village in Hama suburbs, used [a missile](#) launcher to fire a number of missiles carrying incendiary weapons at al Shamali and al Shraqi neighborhoods in Khan Sheikhoun city in Idlib southern suburbs, leading to the outbreak of fires in residential buildings and agricultural lands there. The city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Tuesday, June 25, 2019, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to fire a number of missiles carrying cluster munitions at al Ahrash area west of Ma'aret al Numan city in Idlib southern suburbs, leading to the outbreak of fires there. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

IV. Attachments

[1,864 Civilians, Including Six Media Workers and 21 Medical and Civil Defense Personnel, Documented Killed in Syria in the First Half of 2019](#)

[At least 2,460 Cases of Arbitrary Arrests Documented in Syria in the First Half of 2019](#)



V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions:

- The evidence we have gathered indicates that attacks continue to be directed against civilians and civilian objects. Syrian-Russian alliance forces have committed various crimes, including extrajudicial killings, arrest, torture, and enforced disappearance. In addition, the indiscriminate bombardment and other attacks carried out caused the destruction of facilities and buildings. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the war crime of attacking civilians has been committed in many cases.
- The Syrian government has not only violated international humanitarian law and customary law, but has also breached a number of UN Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2139, resolution 2042 on the release of detainees, and resolution 2254, all without any accountability.
- We could find no record of any warnings being issued by the Syrian Regime, or by Russian or International Coalition forces prior to any attack in accordance with the requirements of international humanitarian law. This has been the case since the beginning of the popular uprising for freedom, providing another blatant demonstration of these forces' total disregard for the lives of civilians in Syria.
- The magnitude and frequency of the violations, the disproportionate use of military force, the indiscriminate manner of the bombing, and the coordinated approach of these attacks leads to the inescapable conclusion that these acts are wholly deliberate and based on high-level orders, and as such constitute a part of state policy.
- The indiscriminate and disproportionate bombardment carried out by the alliance of International Coalition forces and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces is considered to be a clear violation of international humanitarian law, with indiscriminate killings amounting to war crimes.
- Extremist Islamist groups have violated international humanitarian law, causing the death of many civilians, as well as damage to vital civilian facilities.
- All the attacks documented in this report, particularly bombings, caused massive collateral damage that involved loss of lives, injuries, or significant damage to civilian objects. There are strong indicators suggesting that this damage was excessive compared to the anticipated military benefit.
- The use of explosive arms to target densely populated areas reflects a criminal and wholly deliberate mindset, with the perpetrators clearly intending to inflict the greatest possible number of deaths, which is a clear contravention of international human rights law and a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention (arts. 27, 31, 32).



Recommendations:

Security Council

- The Security Council must take additional steps following its adoption of Resolution 2254, which clearly insists that “ all parties immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such.”
- The Syrian issue should be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible for violations should be held accountable including the Russian regime whose involvement in war crimes has been repeatedly proven.
- Ensure peace and security and implement the principle of responsibility to protect civilians’ lives and to save the Syrian people’s heritage and historical artefacts from destruction, looting and vandalism.
- The Security Council should adopt a resolution banning the use of cluster munitions in Syria, similar to the existing prohibition on the use of chemical weapons, and include advice on how to safely remove the remnants of such dangerous weapons.
- The four other permanent member states should put pressure on the Russian government to end its support for the Syrian regime, which uses chemical weapons, and to expose its involvement in this regard.
- Request that all relevant United Nations agencies make greater efforts to provide food, medical and humanitarian assistance in areas where fighting has ceased, and in internally displaced persons camps, and to follow-up with those States that have pledged voluntary contributions.

International Community

- In light of the split within the Security Council and its utter inability to take any effective action, action should be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people by protecting them from daily killing and lifting sieges, as well as increasing support for relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction should be enacted in local courts regarding these crimes in order to conduct fair trials for all those who were involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ in dozens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) after all political channels through the Arab League’s plan and then Mr. Kofi Annan’s plan have proved fruitless, along with the Cessation of Hostilities statements and Astana agreements that followed. Therefore, steps should be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, while the norm of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, should be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.



- Renew pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- Work on fulfilling justice and achieving accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and to activate the principle of universal jurisdiction.

OHCHR

- The OHCHR should submit a report to the Human Rights Council and other organs of the United Nations on the incidents mentioned in this report since these attacks were perpetrated by the parties to the conflict.
- Train Syrian organizations to undertake clearance of mines and other unexploded ordnance, and raise local awareness of the dangers of such ordnance.
- Establish a platform that brings together a number of Syrian organizations active in documenting violations and humanitarian assistance, in order to facilitate an exchange of skills and experiences within Syrian society.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI)

- Launch investigations into the cases included in this report and previous reports. SNHR is willing to cooperate and provide further evidence and data.

International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

- Collect further evidence about the crimes documented in this report.

The United Nations special envoy to Syria

- Condemn the perpetrators of crimes and massacres, and those who were primarily responsible for dooming the de-escalation agreements.
- Re-sequence the peace process so that it can resume its natural course despite Russia's attempts to divert and distort it, and empower the Constitutional Commission prior to the establishment of a transitional government.

The Syrian regime

- Stop indiscriminate shelling and targeting of residential areas, hospitals, schools and markets, and end the use of outlawed weapons and barrel bombs.
- End the acts of torture that have caused the deaths of thousands of Syrian citizens in detention centers.
- Reveal the fate of some 82,000 Syrian citizens arrested by the security services whose fate has been concealed to date.
- Ensure compliance with UN Security Council resolutions and customary humanitarian law.



The Russian regime

- Launch investigations into the incidents included in this report, make the findings of these investigations public for the Syrian people, and hold the those responsible accountable.
- Compensate all the damaged centers and facilities, rebuild and rehabilitate them, and compensate all the families of victims who were killed by the current Russian regime, as well as all the wounded.
- Completely cease the bombing of hospitals, protected objects, and civilian areas, and respect customary international law.
- As a guarantor party in Astana talks, the Russian regime must stop thwarting de-escalation agreements, and apply pressure on the Syrian regime in order to end all indiscriminate attacks and to allow unconditional passage of humanitarian aid to besieged areas.
- Stop using incendiary weapons in populated areas, compensate the victims and their families for all human and material damage caused by the use of these weapons, and provide treatment for dozens of civilian casualties.
- Provide detailed maps of sites where Russian forces have launched cluster munition attacks, issue these to the United Nations and inform the Syrian public about them, thus facilitating the safe disposal of unexploded ordnance.
- Begin to achieve a breakthrough in the issue of detainees by revealing the fate of 82,000 people forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime.

The Coalition (international coalition forces and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces)

- The states of the coalition must unequivocally and sincerely acknowledge that some of their bombing operations have resulted in the deaths of innocent civilians. Rather than attempting denial, these states should take speedy steps to launch serious investigations, and immediately compensate and apologize to the victims and all those affected.
- The states supporting the SDF should apply pressure on these forces in order to compel them to cease all of their violations in all the areas and towns under their control.
- The states supporting the SDF should cease all forms of support until the SDF commits itself to complying with the rules of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. This is primarily the responsibility of the supporting states. Providing the SDF with weapons and support while knowing that the SDF violates the rules of international humanitarian law can be seen as a contribution to these violations.
- All forms of support, military and all others, should be ceased until the SDF commits itself to complying with the previous recommendations. This is primarily the responsibility of the supporting states. Providing the SDF with weapons and support while knowing that these can be used in perpetrating war crimes or crimes against humanity can be seen as a contribution to these crimes.



- Syrian Democratic Forces must immediately stop conscripting children, hold the officers involved in such violations accountable, and pledge to return all children who have been arrested for conscription immediately.

Armed Opposition factions

- Armed Opposition factions must ensure the protection of civilians in all areas under their control. These forces should also take care to distinguish between civilians and military targets and cease any indiscriminate attacks.
- Pledge to cease any arbitrary arrests, and investigate incidents that have resulted in violations of international humanitarian law.
- Take punitive action against those who commit violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

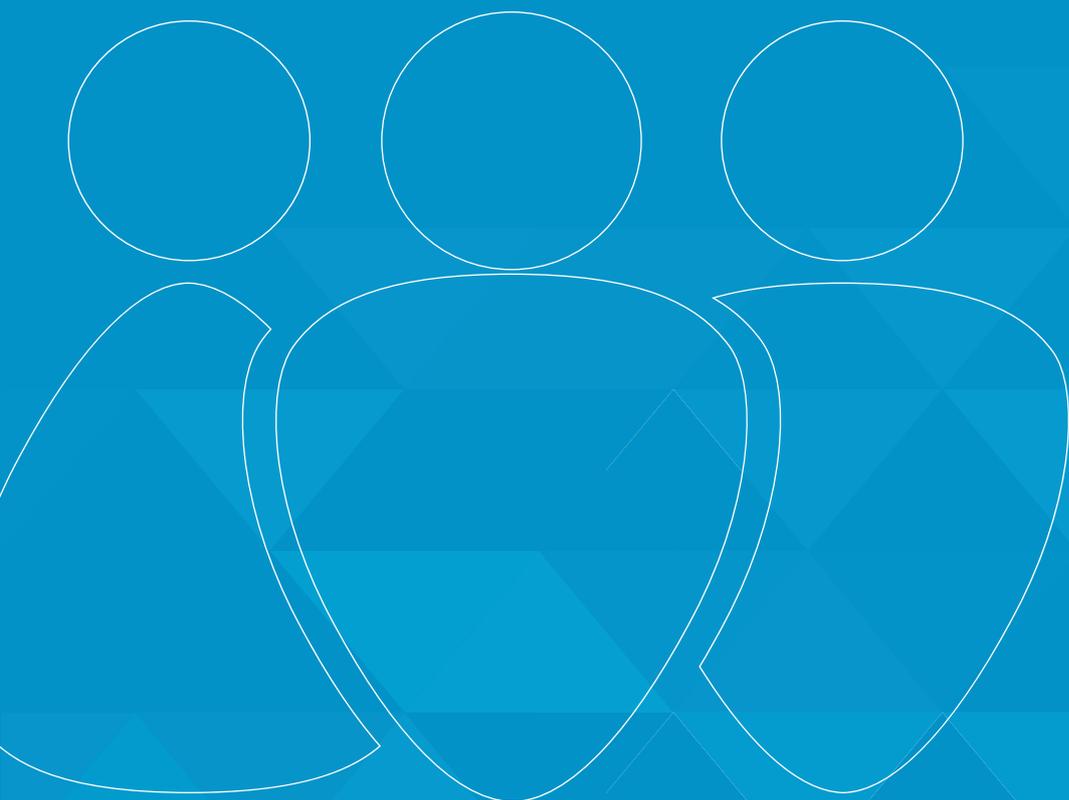
Humanitarian Organizations:

Develop urgent operational plans to secure decent shelter for internally displaced persons.

Acknowledgments

We thank all family members, relatives and friends of the victims, as well as eyewitnesses and local activists, all of whose contributions have enriched this report.





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