

## Third Update on the Death Toll of Syrians

Who Died As a Result of the Earthquake and Humanitarian Assistance Deficiencies, We Have Documented a Total of

**10,024 Deaths,**

One-Third of Them Women and Children



Photo showing the Civil Defense (White Helmets) and residents searching for survivors and victims under the rubble of devastated buildings in Millis village in the suburbs of Idlib governorate following the earthquake that hit northern and northwestern Syria on February 6, 2023

**Tuesday , March 28, 2023**

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. Methodology .....	1
II. A Total of 10,024 Syrians Died Due to the Earthquake and the Late Arrival of UN and International Humanitarian Assistance .....	1
III. The Syrian Regime Has Displaced and Abandoned Millions of Syrians, Then Pillaged the UN Relief Aid Intended for Them.....	5
III. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	6
Acknowledgment and Condolences .....	7

## I. Introduction and Methodology

This is the third report issued to date by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) updating the documented toll of Syrians who died as a result of the February 6 Earthquake and shortcomings in the delivery of humanitarian aid. SNHR released the [first of these reports on February 15](#), and the second on February 28. Although SNHR's victim documentation work focuses particularly on documenting those victims who were extrajudicially killed in violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, SNHR felt there was an imperative need to respond to this extraordinary event and to document the massive number of Syrians who died due to the earthquake, and how the late arrival of humanitarian assistance may have led to the preventable deaths of more Syrians. As such, we took it upon ourselves to undertake this onerous task that posed additional challenges. Indeed, even with our team's wealth of experience and our network of members and relations spread across Syria, the work involved in documenting such a massive number of victims proved to pose an unprecedented challenge to our teams.

Readers can find details of our work [methodology on this link](#). As our methodology explains, all of our publications are the results of our efforts and our team's rigorous documentation in compliance with international documentation protocols and the standards we follow.

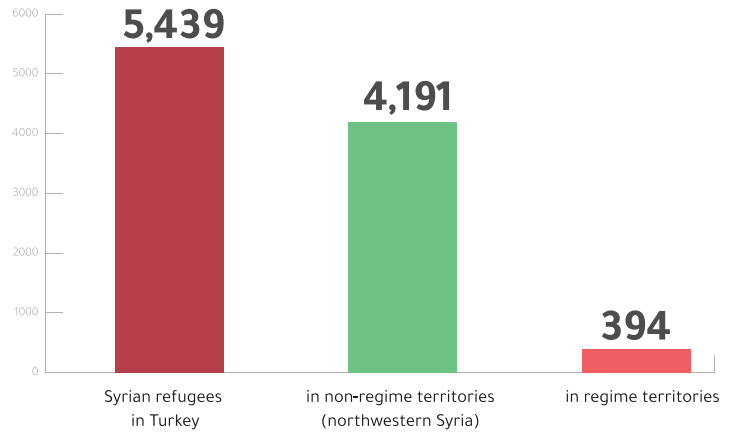
**Fadel Abdul Ghany, Executive Director of SNHR, says:**

“We have expended all of this effort in order for relief organizations, especially UN bodies, to be able to access and utilize the lists of victims to compensate the victims' families. However, this will not happen if relief aid keeps going to organizations that are designed to steal UN relief aid. We also cannot forget that the Syrian regime and its allies are responsible for displacing millions of Syrians to northwestern Syria. Not only have the Syrian regime and its allies cut off their access to water, electricity, and services, but they have also continued to target them in their bombing operations for years. It is simply inconceivable that after all of this, the Syrian regime will, with honesty and integrity, deliver aid to the very people it targeted.”

## II. A Total of 10,024 Syrians Died Due to the Earthquake and the Late Arrival of UN and International Humanitarian Assistance

SNHR has documented the deaths of 10,024 Syrians, including approximately 2,267 children and 1,627 women, due to the earthquake and the late arrival of UN and international humanitarian assistance. Those are distributed according to the various controlling forces' area of control as follows:

- 4,191 deaths in non-regime areas (northwestern Syria).
- 394 in regime areas.
- 5,439 Syrian refugees in Turkey.

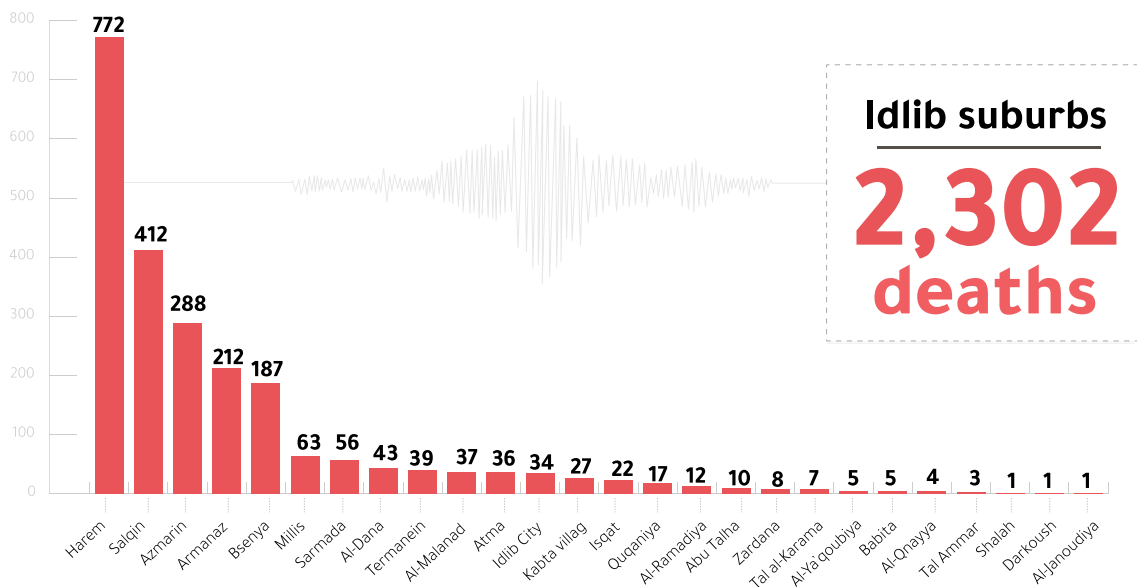


The victims are distributed according to the location of their deaths as follows:

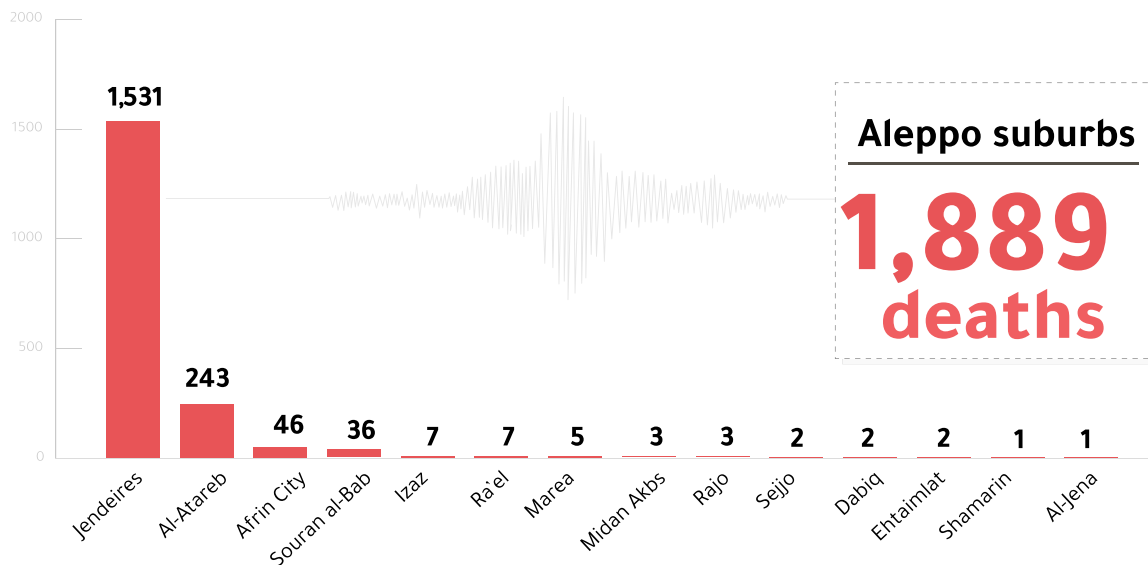
### 1. Non-regime areas

SNHR's team has documented 4,191 deaths in northwestern Syria, which is under the control of armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA) and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). The deaths are distributed as follows:

**A. Idlib suburbs:** We recorded 2,302 deaths distributed according to the cities, towns, and surrounding areas where they took place, as follows:



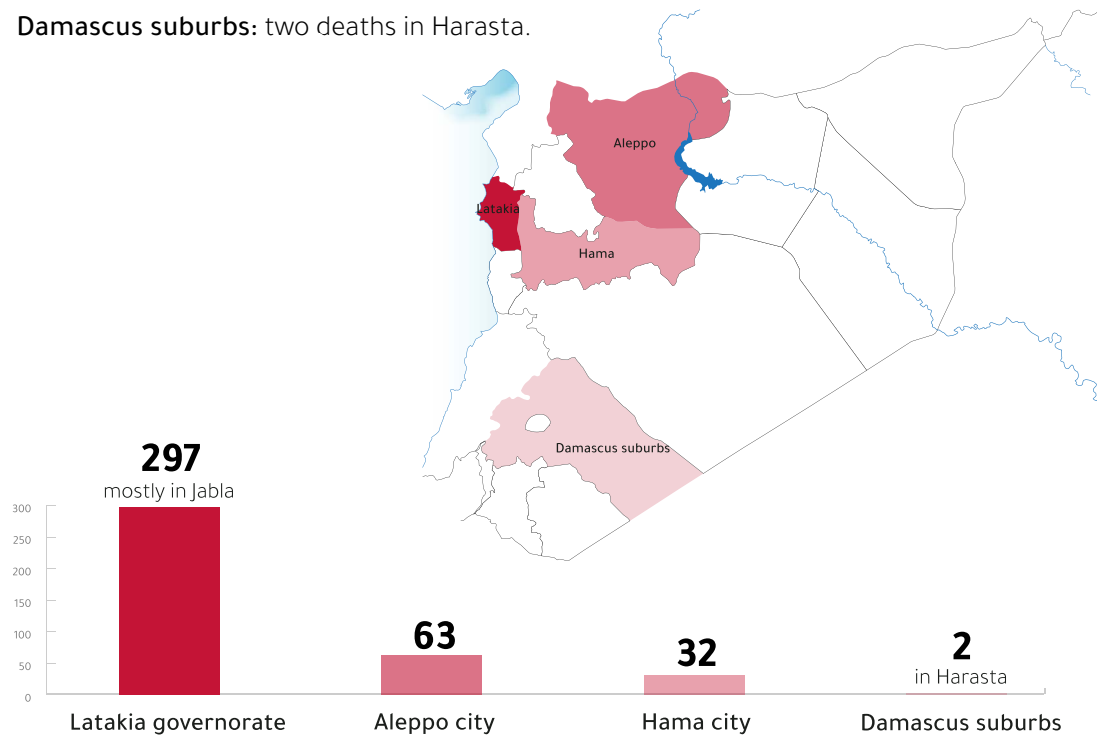
**B. Aleppo suburbs:** We recorded 1,889 deaths distributed according to the cities, towns, and the surrounding areas where they took place, as follows:



## 2. Regime areas

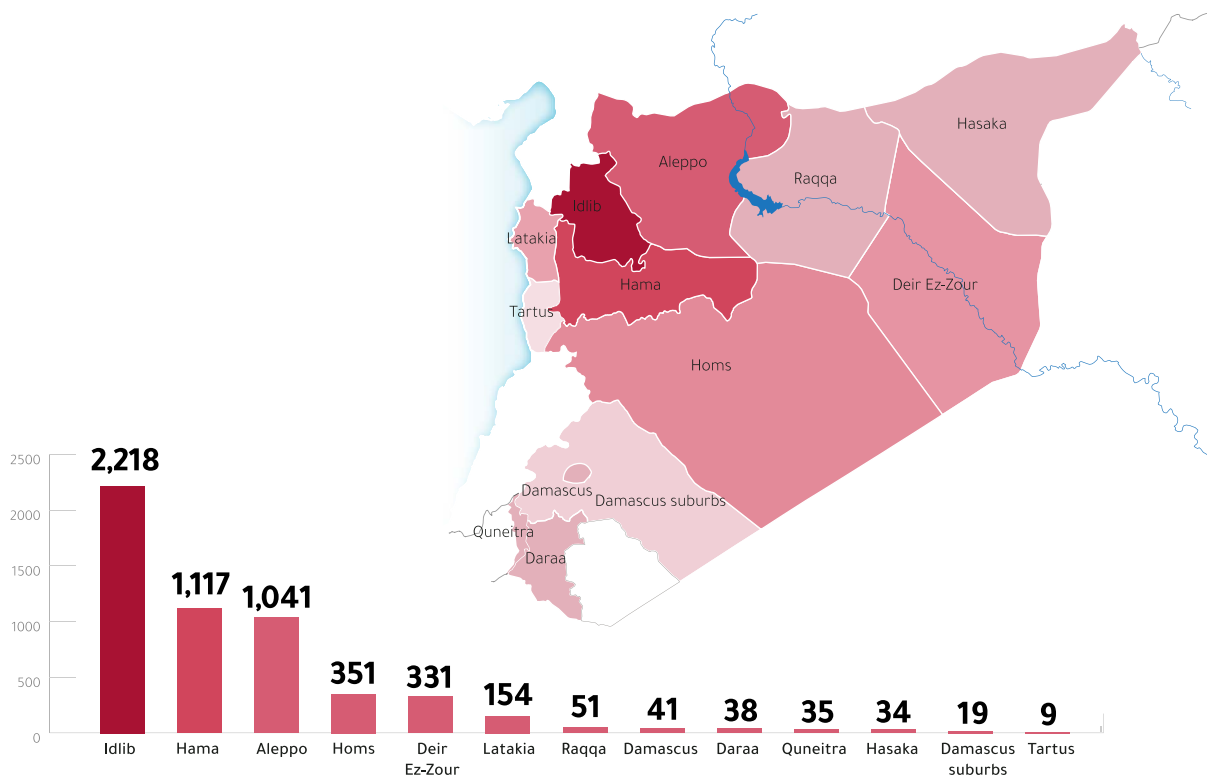
SNHR's team recorded 394 deaths in areas under the control of Syrian regime forces. Those deaths are distributed according to the locations where they took place, as follows:

- Latakia governorate: 297 deaths, most of which were in Jabla
- Aleppo city: 63 deaths.
- Hama city: 32 deaths.
- Damascus suburbs: two deaths in Harasta.



## 3. In Turkey

We recorded the deaths of 5,439 Syrians in Turkey. These are distributed by the victims' governorate of origin in Syria, rather than by the location of their deaths in Turkey, as follows:



- **Deaths among medical personnel, media workers, and the Civil Defense**

- **Medical personnel**

We have documented the deaths of 73 medical personnel as a result of the earthquake that hit northwestern Syria and southern Turkey on February 6, 2023.

- **Media workers**

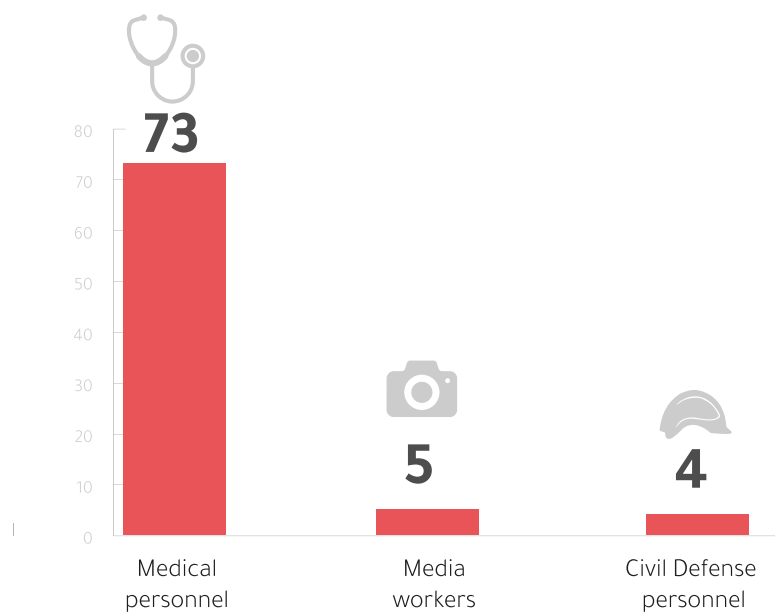
We have documented the death of five media workers as a result of the earthquake that hit northwestern Syria and southern Turkey on February 6, 2023.

- **Civil Defense personnel**

SNHR has documented the death of four Civil Defense personnel as a result of the earthquake that hit northwestern Syria and southern Turkey on February 6, 2023.

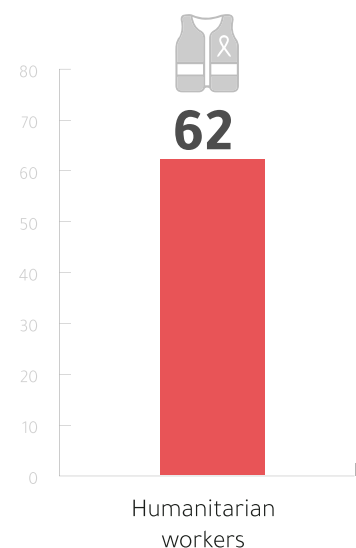
- **Humanitarian workers**

SNHR has documented the death of 62 workers with humanitarian organizations as a result of the earthquake that hit northwestern Syria and southern Turkey on February 6, 2023



- **Deaths among humanitarian workers**

SNHR has documented the death of 62 workers with humanitarian organizations as a result of the earthquake that hit northwestern Syria and southern Turkey on February 6, 2023





### III. The Syrian Regime Has Displaced and Abandoned Millions of Syrians, Then Pillaged the UN Relief Aid Intended for Them

The area worst hit by the earthquake in Syria is the northwestern region, which contains a vast number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). In this context, two points must be emphasized:

**First. Fewer than two percent of IDPs returned to their original areas, despite these being only a few kilometers from their tents, due to well-founded fear of the Syrian regime**

The region of northwestern Syria houses approximately 3.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) from across Syria. Those people fled the murderous brutality and multiple violations of the Syrian regime and its allies, namely Iran and Russia. Women and children account for approximately 75 percent of the total population of IDPs. Since 2011, no more than two percent of all IDPs have returned to their original areas despite these being located only a few kilometers away from the tents where they now live, simply because they are justifiably afraid of further violations by the Syrian regime. In fact, the 'temporary' displacement of Syrians is the longest such displacement in modern history. The prolonged character of this displacement can be explained by the multiple crimes perpetrated against IDPs in their areas of residence in displacement and the declining level of international support for IDPs.

The suffering of IDPs has not been limited to this traumatic displacement alone. In fact, we have documented hundreds of deliberate attacks by the Syrian regime and its allies against civilians and vital infrastructure in the areas to which they fled. Furthermore, international observers often turn a blind eye to the fact that the Syrian regime has deliberately cut off IDPs' access to all basic services, including water and electricity, even while insisting that it should be the sole recipient and distributor of all UN humanitarian assistance due to its control of the Syrian state, despite its shameful history of deliberately obstructing the delivery of aid and stealing the overwhelming majority of this aid. All these reasons led to the establishment of the cross-border relief aid delivery mechanism without the need for obtaining the Syrian regime's permission, and they still very much exist. We have even documented Syrian regime attacks on areas that were affected by the earthquake shortly after it took place, which provide yet more harrowing demonstrations of the regime's unparalleled brutality and viciousness.

**Second: The Syrian regime's 'humanitarian' bodies - the Syria Trust for Development, the civil defense, and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent - are all involved in stealing the overwhelming majority of relief aid**

A vast number of authoritative investigations, studies and reports published by various international bodies since 2015, including by humanitarian groups such as the Human Rights Watch (HRW) and newspapers such as The Guardian (some of which we contributed to), have all confirmed that the overwhelming

majority of the aid provided to help ease Syrians' suffering, as much as 90 percent of the total, does not reach those affected for whom it's intended. This is because the Syrian regime has coordinated and engineered the theft of relief aid in an orchestrated and calculated manner that relies on its being distributed through official organizations which are, in reality, completely subservient to the regime; the most notable of these are: the Syria Trust for Development, the Civil Defense, and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. One of the most obvious indicators strongly implying that these organizations steal vast quantities of aid is the fact that none of them release financial transparency reports. There is no way to discover the amount of funding these organizations receive, or how and where these funds are spent. Those organizations also do not disclose any managerial or organizational hierarchy and employ individuals with close ties to the Syrian regime and to the heads of its security agencies. majority of the aid provided to help ease Syrians' suffering, as much as 90 percent of the total, does not reach those affected for whom it's intended. This is because the Syrian regime has coordinated and engineered the theft<sup>1</sup> of relief aid in an orchestrated and calculated manner that relies on its being distributed through official organizations which are, in reality, completely subservient to the regime; the most notable of these are: the Syria Trust for Development, the Civil Defense, and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. One of the most obvious indicators strongly implying that these organizations steal vast quantities of aid is the fact that none of them release financial transparency reports. There is no way to discover the amount of funding these organizations receive, or how and where these funds are spent. Those organizations also do not disclose any managerial or organizational hierarchy and employ individuals with close ties to the Syrian regime and to the heads of its security agencies.

## IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

- The region of northwestern Syria houses the largest proportion of IDPs who have been displaced as a result of the multiple crimes of the Syrian regime and its allies, who have also cut off these people's access to basic services, blatantly and completely abandoning all responsibility for the consequences of these criminal actions. In addition to these crimes, Syrian regime forces have also bombed the areas housing these already traumatized IDPs throughout their years-long displacement up to the current day and, above all of these shameful actions, have deliberately obstructed the delivery of humanitarian relief aid and stolen the overwhelming majority of it.
- The earthquake exacerbated an already abysmal humanitarian situation. We cannot rely on the same entity that caused the displacement of millions of IDPs, abandoned its responsibilities to them, and bombed their camps and the areas to which they fled, i.e., the Syrian regime, to deliver UN humanitarian assistance and compensate victims and their families.
- The provision of humanitarian assistance, which is a noble endeavor, should not be debased by being turned into a means of funding and supporting a regime involved in crimes against humanity against its people.

1. When we note that the Syrian regime steals 90 percent of all relief aid and should not be trusted to distribute aid, we do not mean that the people in regime-controlled areas should not receive relief aid. These areas host massive numbers of people already suffering due to regime policies, who are effectively hostages. Our message is that there is an urgent need to work on devising recommendations and plans that ensure the delivery of at least 60, 70, or 80 percent of relief aid to those affected, in a way that ensures that the intended recipients receive most of it and the Syrian regime is unable to steal as much of it, rather than stopping relief aid altogether.



## Recommendations to the UN and donor states

- Establish an international support platform to handle the coordination of humanitarian assistance in northwestern Syria. Such a body would be an alternative channel to the UN.
- Establish a branch of this platform for the specific goals of negotiating with the Syrian regime as one entity and supervising the distribution of relief aid in regime areas.
- Increase, both in quantity and quality, the relief aid sent to those Syrian relief organizations which have demonstrated their honesty and integrity, especially in the form of providing shelter, focusing particularly on meeting the needs of women and children.
- Ensure the delivery of aid to affected individuals

## Acknowledgment and Condolences

We extend our most sincere and heartfelt gratitude to the families and activists who have worked with us despite their own difficult conditions. May the victims of the earthquake rest in peace. Our most heartfelt condolences go to their families and friends. stances. May the victims of the earthquake rest in peace. We express our most heartfelt condolences to their families and friends.



[www.snhr.org](http://www.snhr.org) - [info@snhr.org](mailto:info@snhr.org)