

On World Children's Day: SNHR's 13th Annual Report on Violations Against Children in Syria

At Least **30,293 Children** Have been Killed in Syria Since March 2011, Including **225** Who Died due to Torture, While **5,298 Children** Are still Detained and/or Forcibly Disappeared

At Least

30,293

Children Have been
Killed in Syria

Wednesday 20 November 2024

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 analyzes in Syria.

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I. GROSS VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN PERSIST FOR 13 YEARS

On World Children's Day, observed on November 20 each year, [the Syrian Network for Human Rights \(SNHR\) releases its annual report on violations against children](#). As in previous years, SNHR's 13th annual report documents the loss and damage suffered by Syria's children as a result of the terrible violations they've endured over the 13 years to date of the ongoing conflict. The report also sheds light on the profound impact of these violations on children's lives and fundamental rights.

Since March 2011, children, as well as adults, have been grappling with the escalating and increasing levels of serious violations by the various parties to the conflict. These violations have created an extremely unsafe environment for children who live under the constant threat of violence, undermining their fundamental rights and daily lives. Due to the indiscriminate nature of these violations, children have endured the same atrocities as are committed against adults, ranging from death and severe injury resulting in permanent disfigurement, to arbitrary arrest of hundreds of children, as well as enforced disappearance, with thousands of children classified as 'missing' for years, with their desperately worried families unable to obtain any information about their fate. Other violations include various types of torture, child conscription by the warring parties, and sexual violence which is one of the most horrendous forms of violation suffered by children in the course of the conflict. Furthermore, the environment created by the conflict has deprived children of education and healthcare in light of the repeated attacks on vital infrastructure.

Most crucially and regrettably, these violations are still continuing to this day after 13 years of conflict, meaning that children are still being born and growing up in an endless spiral of suffering. These violations don't only threaten children's physical wellbeing, but also leave deep psychological scars, with many children grappling with multiple, unimaginable traumas that are difficult to overcome. Needless to say, in such conditions, children are stripped of any hope for a better future in which their rights are respected and protected, meaning that an entire generation of children is under serious threat.

UN Secretary-General report: Serious violations against children in Syria in 2023

On June 3, 2024, [the UN Secretary-General issued his annual report on children and armed conflict](#), noting that the UN had verified **1,574 grave violations** against children in Syria in 2023. The report, which covers the year 2023, added that the most widely documented violation was child conscription, with Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) recruiting the most children - 477 in all, followed by Syrian National Army (SNA) and opposition forces with 282 children and then Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and SDF-aligned factions with 231 children, and finally regime forces with 73 children. Most of these children were deployed in combat tasks.

Moreover, the report notes that **475 children** were killed or maimed in 2023, including **325** who were killed or maimed by regime forces, while 139 were killed or maimed by unidentified parties. Meanwhile, eight children were killed or maimed by SDF, two by SNA, and one by Turkish forces.

As the report further notes, the UN also documented the detention of **10 children** by the SDF over their alleged association with other parties to the conflict. More notably, a total of **800 children**, including foreign children, remained in detention by the end of 2023, over their alleged association with armed groups, primarily ISIS, while about **29,000 children** are still imprisoned and denied freedom in the al-Hawl and al-Rawj camps in northeastern Syria because of their suspected family ties to ISIS.

The violations highlighted by the report also include **19 attacks** on schools and one attack on hospitals, with the regime responsible for 18 of these attacks. In addition, **33 schools** and one hospital were used for military purposes. The SDF was responsible for the military use of 31 of these facilities, while the regime, HTS, and the SNA were each responsible for one case.

Intensive efforts by SNHR to document violations against children and feed data to the UN

SNHR has worked diligently and tirelessly to document gross violations against children by all parties to the conflict in Syria. The group also regularly submits thoroughly verified and wholly accurate reports and information on these violations to the UN, in compliance with the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Children's Rights in Conflict (MRM), which was established in accordance with UN Security Council resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#) and subsequent resolutions, which were invoked in Syria in 2014.

In its documentation efforts, SNHR always complies with its own rigorous methodology, based on collecting first-hand accounts from survivors, victims' families, and eyewitnesses, and analyzing the evidence gathered in the field by members of SNHR's team scattered across Syria. This methodology has enabled the human rights group to build a comprehensive and thorough database which we use to monitor the trajectory of violations and identify those responsible. SNHR's endeavors to regularly update our data and ensure that it is always wholly dependable and compliant with the highest international standards put in place for documenting human rights violations are a key part of our mission. One notable indicator of SNHR's internationally acknowledged trustworthiness is the UN Human Rights Council's (HRC) citation of SNHR's data in a statement issued on October 10, 2024, in which the HRC noted that over **5,000 children** are still detained or forcibly disappeared by the parties to the conflict in Syria.

In addition to this, SNHR works closely with numerous international and UN institutions working to protect children's rights in Syria and to combat the violations committed against them. These institutions include the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI), the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), UNICEF, and the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. The group also coordinates with the UN Special Rapporteur on torture, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health.

Through these pivotal partnerships, SNHR collects and analyzes data on violations against children and supplies it to the international community in the forms of verified, reliable reports that gives a sense of the magnitude of these violations, in addition to making recommendations on how best to limit these violations and protect children, including taking action to impose sanctions on those responsible for these ongoing violations.

As Fadel Abdulghany, SNHR Executive Director, says:

“ This report is a horrendous testimony that reflects the terrible enormity of the suffering endured by Syria's children since March 2011. Thousands of children in the country have faced gross and systematic violations that have robbed them of their natural childhood innocence, with children being killed, maimed, arbitrarily arrested, tortured, and conscripted. We, at SNHR, assert our absolute commitment to continuing to document these violations and to conveying the voice of Syria's children as widely as humanly possible, while also affirming the need to hold those responsible for these heinous crimes accountable and to ensure the protection of children's rights and dignity. Syria's children, like all children, deserve a safe future free of fear and violence. ”

II. CHILDREN SIBLINGS AHMED AND SENA ZEER NOMINATED FOR THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S PEACE PRIZE

SNHR has nominated the two siblings, brother and sister Ahmed and Sena Zeer for the 2024 International Children's Peace Prize in appreciation of their extraordinary efforts in supporting their fellow children and highlighting their suffering in the midst of, and despite ongoing violations and armed conflict in Syria. Ahmed and Sena are among 170 boys and girls from across the world to be nominated for this great honor. Ahmed and Sena, who were the only Syrian children to be nominated this year, have advanced to the shortlist that include 30 nominees. [SNHR recently released a statement highlighting the two children's outstanding activism and achievements.](#)

[SNHR has nominated a number of Syrian children for the International Children's Peace Prize.](#)

A girl named Sirin Mathloun Na'san was nominated for the 2022 prize and a boy named Muhammad Nour al-Asmar for the 2021 prize. SNHR did not submit any nominations in 2023 due to the devastation resulting from the February 6, 2023, earthquakes that hit Türkiye and northern Syria.

The International Children's Peace Prize is awarded annually by the Nobel Prize Laureates to a child who fights courageously for children's rights, and to honor children who have demonstrated courage and positivity in the face of adversity. The prize was inaugurated by Marc Dullaert, Chairperson of the KidsRights Foundation, during the 2005 World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates at the Capitol in Rome. The purpose of the prize is to provide a platform for children to express their ideas and showcase their personal involvement in defending children's rights. All the prizewinners have shown a remarkable commitment to combating the problems faced by millions of children worldwide.

As part of our continued commitment to supporting children's rights and shed light on their suffering in the course of the ongoing violations and armed conflict in Syria, SNHR has ensured that children from Syria are nominated for this prestigious award every year. Through this, SNHR seeks to attract the attention of the international community to the grueling conditions under which Syria's children live, and to work to achieve justice for them and ensure their protection from the numerous traumatic violations they face.

III. DETAILED ACCOUNT OF VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN AS DOCUMENTED ON SNHR'S DATABASE

Violations against Syrian children vary in terms of their severity, spread, and ramifications. Extrajudicial killing remains the most serious and prominent of these violations due to the rising number of child victims. Next come arbitrary detention and abduction, which usually result in the child victims becoming forcibly disappeared persons; this is followed by torture. Other violations include child conscription and attacks on educational and healthcare facilities. The data collected in this report shows that the Syrian regime far exceeds all parties to the conflict in terms of the number and intensity of violations, being the party responsible for by far the largest number of these violations.

A. Extrajudicial killing

SNHR has documented the of **30,293 children** at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria since March 2011 up until November 20, 2024. These are distributed as follows:

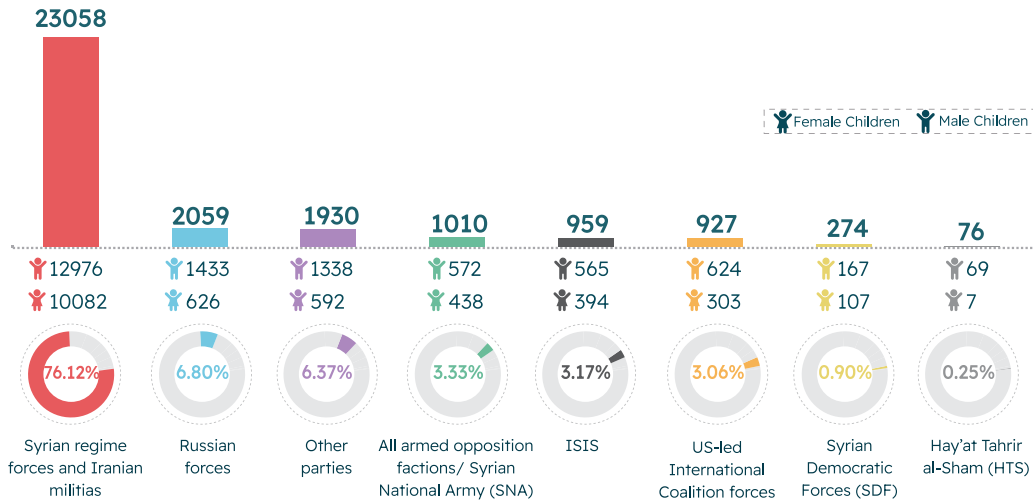
- **Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)¹:** 23,058 children - 12,976 male children and 10,082 female children.
- **Russian forces:** 2,059 children - 1,433 male children and 626 female children
- **ISIS (the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State'):** 959 children - 565 male children and 394 female children.
- **Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham/HTS (an alliance composed of Fateh al-Sham Front and a number of armed opposition factions):²** 76 children - 69 male children and seven female children.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** 274 children - 167 male children and 107 female children.
- **All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA):³** 1,010 children - 577 male children and 438 female children.
- **US-led International Coalition forces:** 927 children - 624 male children and 303 female children.
- **Other parties:** 1,930 children - 1,338 male children and 592 female children.

1. We generally use the term 'the Syrian regime' rather than 'the Syrian government', because the nature of the ruling power in Syria is that of a totalitarian dictatorship where power is concentrated in the hands of a small circle of individuals, namely the President of the Republic and the heads of the regime's security apparatus. As a result, the ministers, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior, play a restricted, largely ceremonial role, which is limited to implementing precisely what the ruling regime orders, with no real decision-making power or active role of their own. Syria is under autocratic/dynastic dictatorial rule, with no independent decision-making structure. Rather, the government is an empty façade that exists merely for show. The Minister of Interior receives orders from the security branches over which he supposedly presides. The Minister of Justice cannot even summon a low-ranking security office, let alone a security branch head. Syria is ruled by the president assisted by the heads of the security branches.

While we are aware that the United Nations and its agencies use the term 'the Syrian government', we believe that this is a completely inaccurate and misleading term in the Syrian context.

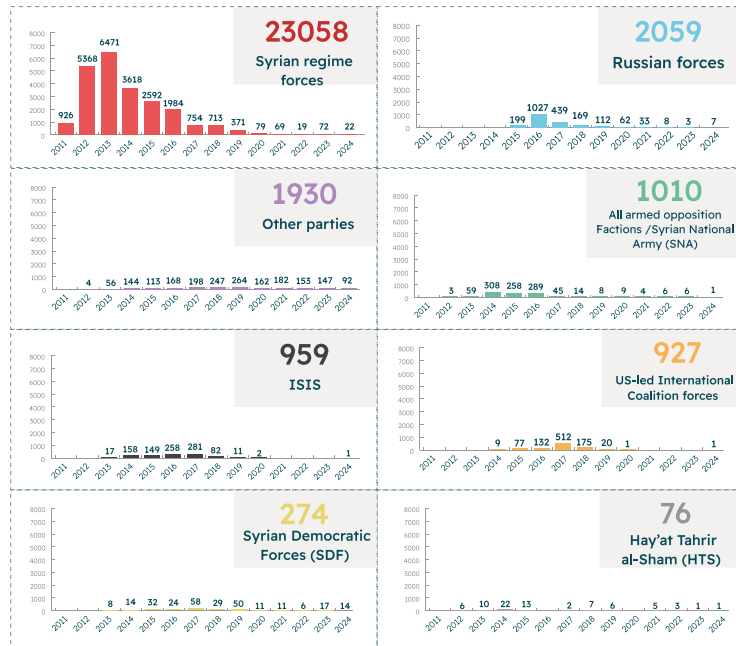
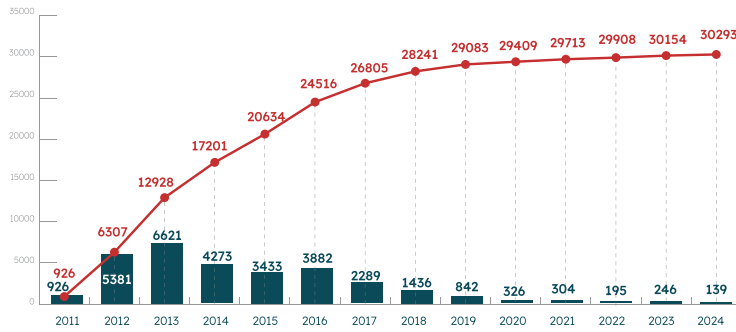
2. Designated as a terror group by the UN.

3. Armed opposition factions founded since 2011 across Syria. Many of those formations are no longer active, and many were not structured around a central command. Towards the end of 2017, the Syrian National Army (SNA) was founded as an umbrella formulation that incorporated all active armed opposition factions at the time.



As shown above, the Syrian regime is responsible for roughly 76% of all cases of extrajudicial killing involving children. This suggests that the Syrian regime has been targeting children in a deliberate and calculated manner. In terms of the number of victims, the regime is followed by Russian forces and then ISIS. Male children account for about 82 percent of the total of child victims.

Child deaths at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria is distributed by year as follows:

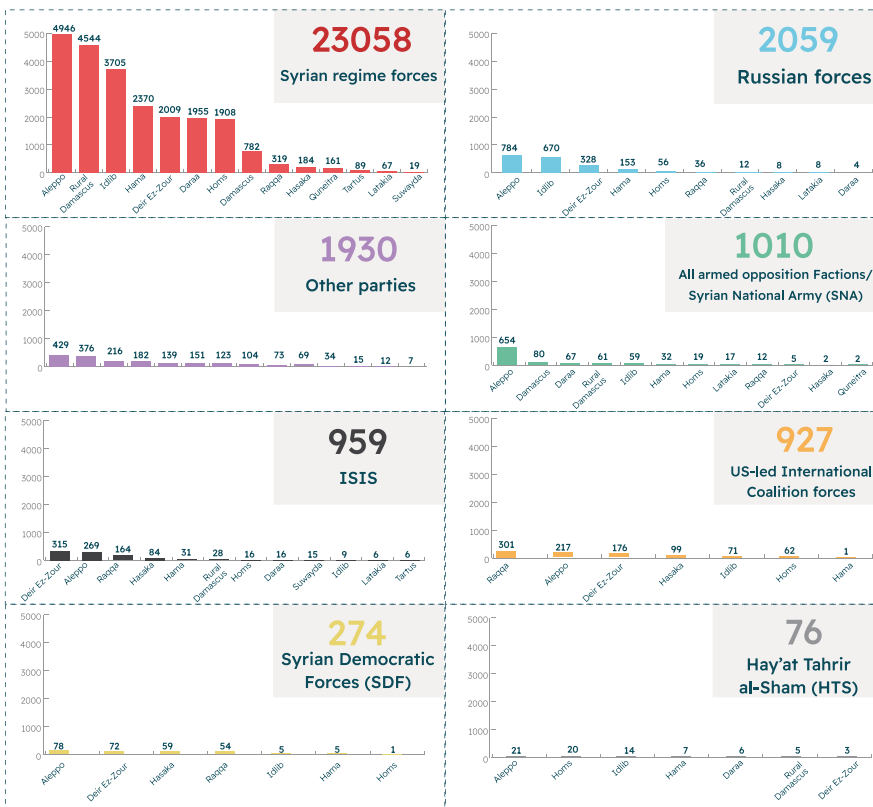
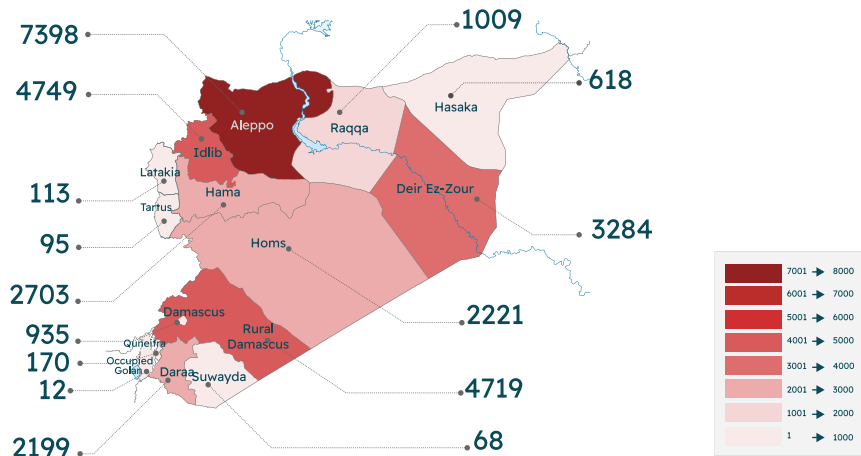


● Total ● Running Count

As shown on the chart, 2013 was the worst year to date in terms of the number of children's deaths, most of which were at the hands of Syrian regime forces; this was followed by 2012, then 2014, and then 2016. The Syrian regime was responsible for over half of all the children's deaths we recorded in every one of these years, which suggests a deliberate and systematic targeting of children as a military strategy by the regime.

Distribution of child deaths across Syrian governorates

The table below shows the distribution of children killed by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria according to the governorate where these violations took place. This distribution aims to give an idea of the level of child losses in each governorate amid the ongoing conflict. It also highlights how certain areas were particularly affected by the conflict and violence.

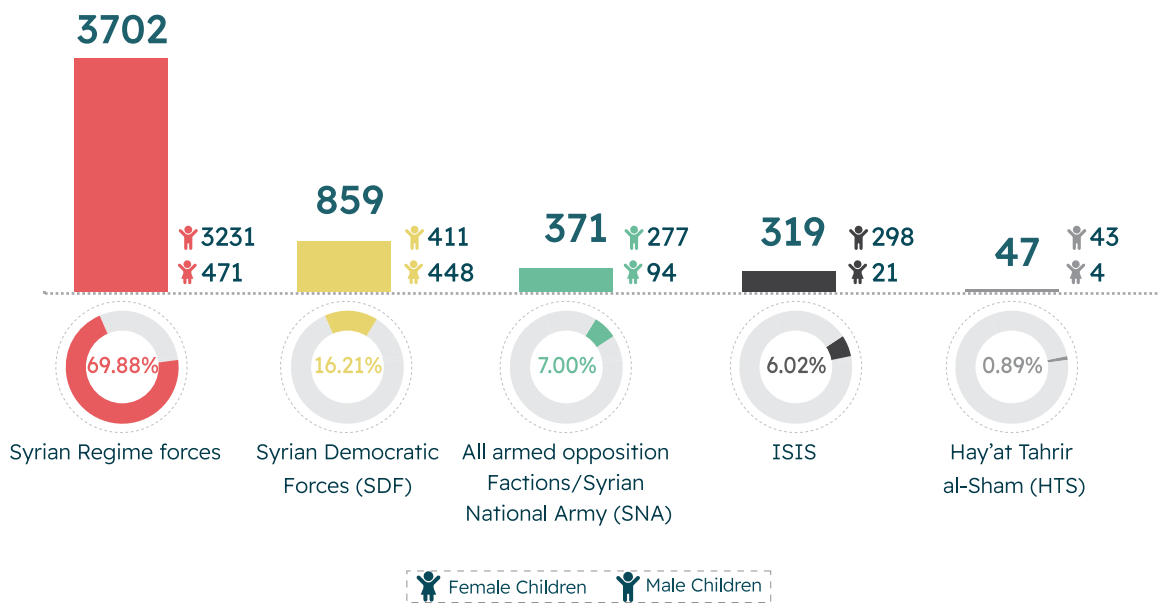


The map above shows that Aleppo governorate has seen the highest number of child deaths, followed by Idlib, then Rural Damascus, and then Deir Ez-Zour. Another noteworthy insight is that the overwhelming majority of child deaths occurred in areas outside the regime’s control.

B. Arbitrary arrest/detention and enforced disappearance

As SNHR’s database attests, no fewer than 5,298 of the children arrested, detained, and/or forcibly disappeared by the parties to the conflict and controlling force in Syria since March 2011 are still under arrest, in detention or forcibly disappeared as of November 20, 2024, distributed as follows:

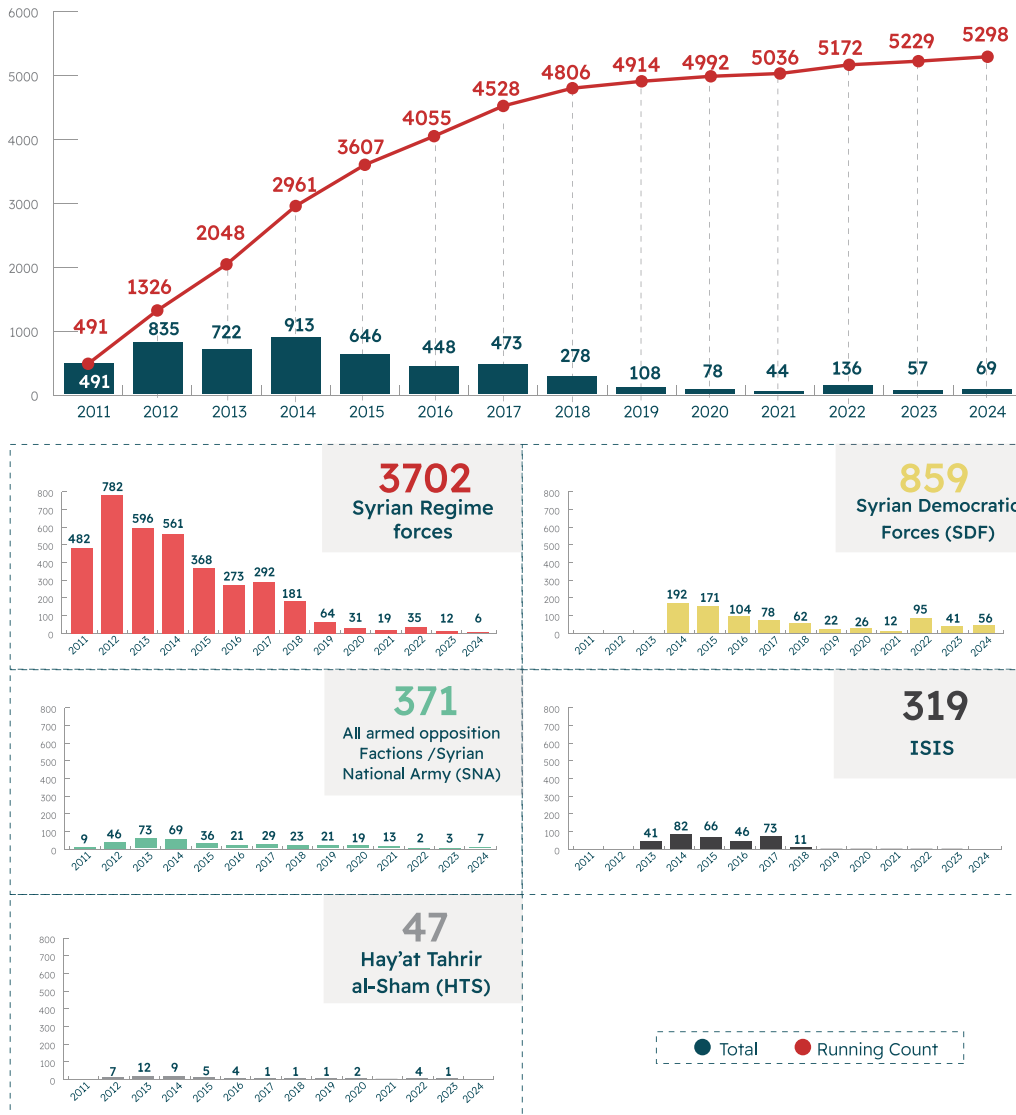
- **Syrian regime forces:** 3,702 children – 3,231 male children and 471 female children.
- **ISIS:** 319 children - 298 male children and 21 female children.
- **Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS):** 47 children - 43 male children and four female children.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** 859 children - 411 male children and 448 female children.
- **All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA):** 371 children - 277 male children and 94 female children.



As shown above, the Syrian regime is responsible for approximately 70 percent of all documented arrests and enforced disappearances involving children. This indicates that the Syrian regime continues to arrest and detain children in a systematic way as part of a wider military strategy.

Distribution of child detainees and/or forcibly disappeared children by year and according to the parties to the conflict

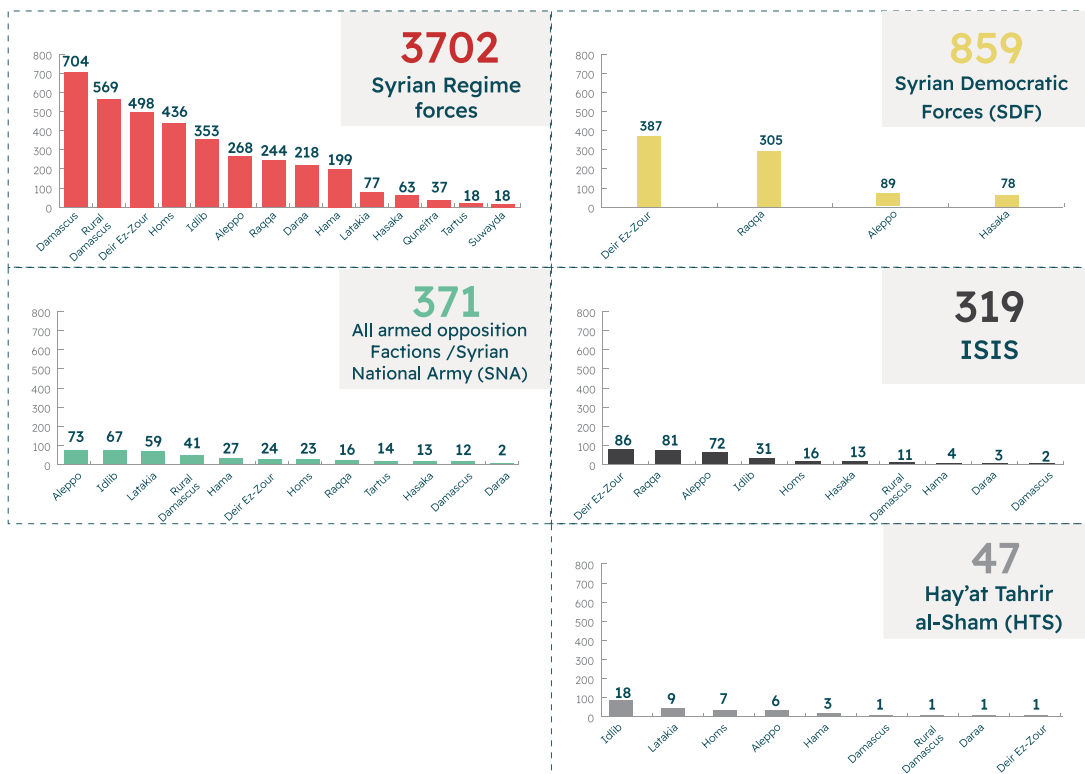
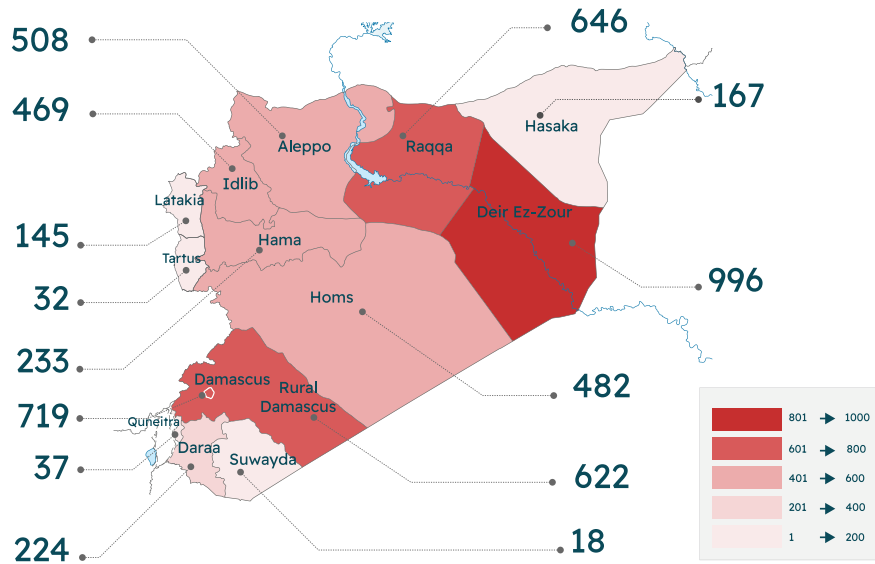
Cases of arrest, detention, or enforced disappearance involving children are distributed by year since the start of the conflict as follows:



As the chart above shows, 2014 was the worst year in terms of arrests and detentions targeting children, with roughly 70 percent of all arrests of children that year being carried out by Syrian regime forces, followed by 2012, then 2013, and 2015. The Syrian regime was responsible for over half of all the arrests of children which we documented in all of these years.

Distribution of child detainees and/or forcibly disappeared children by governorate and according to the parties to the conflict

Cases of arrest, detention, or enforced disappearance involving children are distributed by governorate as follows:

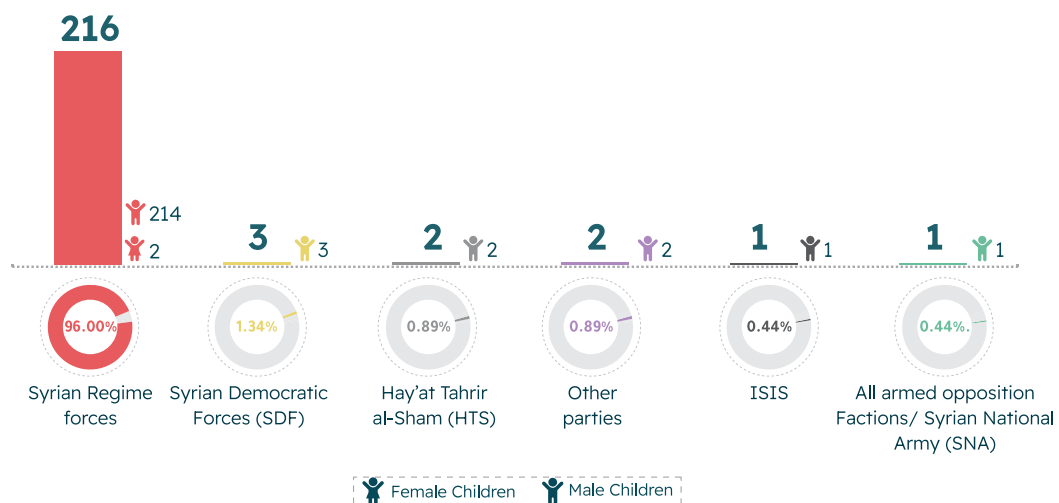


As the map shows, the highest number of child arrests was documented in Deir Ez-Zour governorate, followed by Damascus, Raqqa, and then Rural Damascus.

C. Child deaths due to torture

SNHR has documented the deaths of at least 225 children due to torture in the detention centers operated by the parties to the conflict in Syria since March 2011 up until November 20, 2024. Thess deaths are distributed as follows:

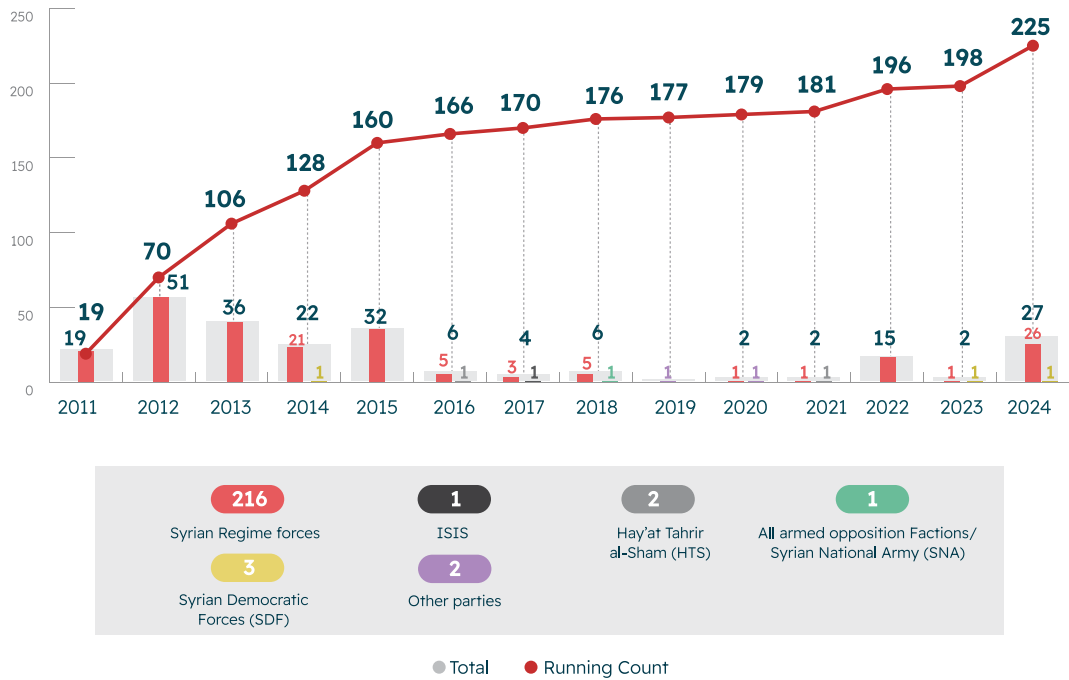
- **Syrian regime forces:** 216 child deaths due to torture - 214 male children and two female children.
- **ISIS:** One child death due to torture.
- **Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS):** Two child deaths due to torture.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** Three child deaths due to torture.
- **All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA):** One child death due to torture.
- **Other parties:** Two child deaths due to torture.



As shown above, Syrian regime forces are responsible for approximately 96 percent of all child deaths due to torture in detention centers, which suggests that children have not been spared from torture in regime detention centers.

Distribution of child deaths due to torture by year

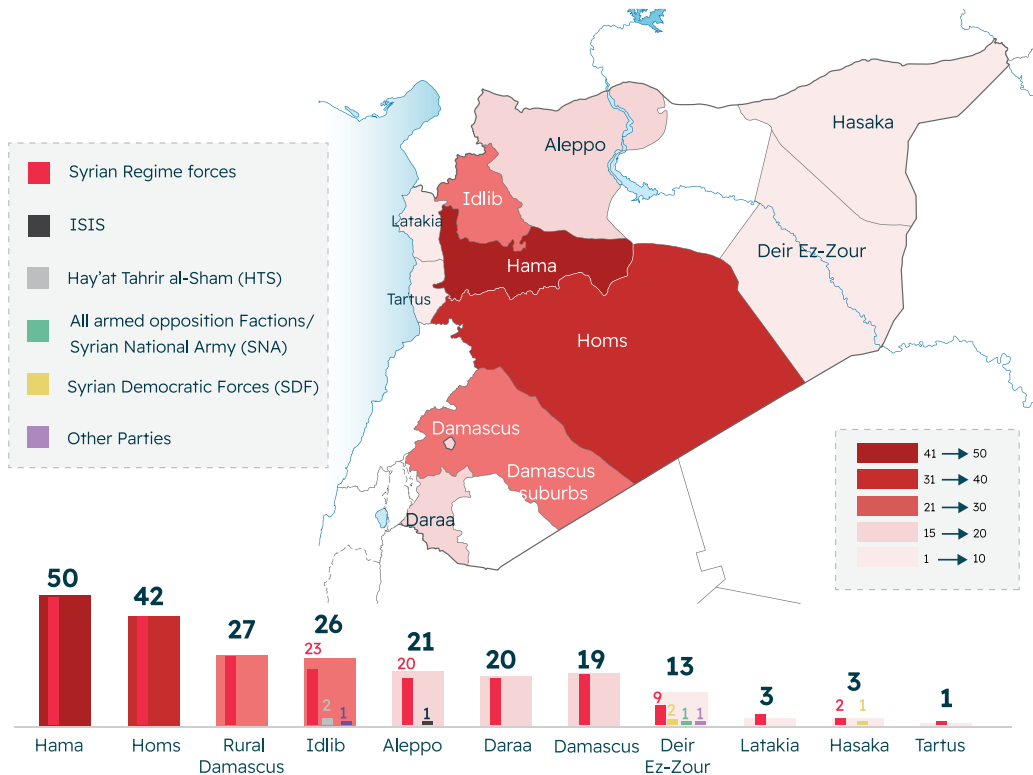
Child deaths due to torture are distributed by year since the start of the conflict as follows:



As the chart above shows, 2012 was the worst to date in terms of child deaths due to torture, with Syrian regime forces being responsible for all deaths documented that year. The year 2012 is followed by 2013, then 2015, and then 2014. In all of these years, the Syrian regime was the party responsible for all cases of child death due to torture except for a very few.

Distribution of child deaths due to torture by governorate

Child deaths due to torture are distributed by the victims' governorate of origin as follows:



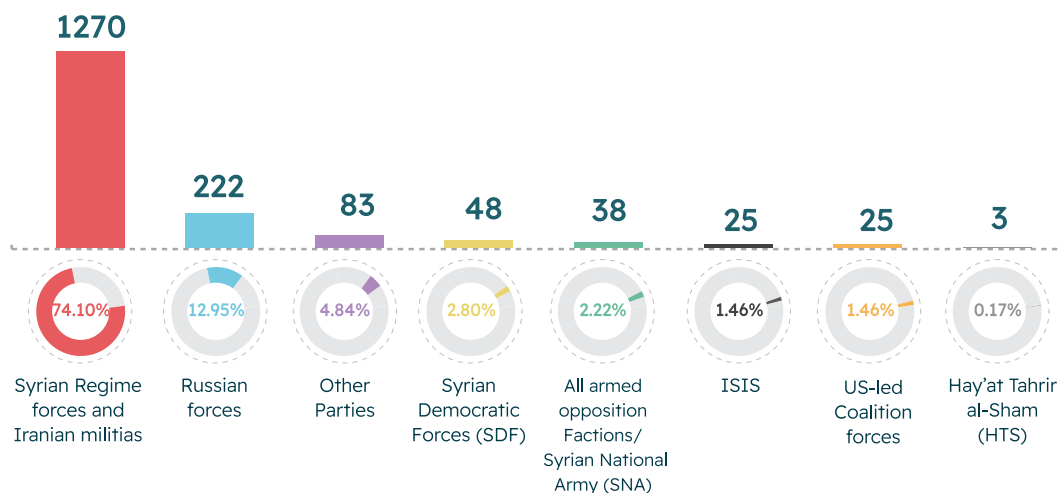
As shown on the chart, Hama governorate saw the highest number of cases of child deaths due to torture during this period, followed by Homs, then Rural Damascus, and then Idlib. The Syrian regime was the party responsible for the overwhelming majority of child deaths due to torture in all of these governorates.

D. Attacks on schools, kindergartens, and medical facilities

1. Schools and kindergartens

SNHR has documented that at least **1,714 schools** and kindergartens in Syria have been subjected to attacks since March 2011 up until November 20, 2024. These facilities are distributed as follows:

- **Syrian regime forces and Iranian militias:** 1,270 facilities.
- **Russian forces:** 222 facilities.
- **ISIS:** 25 facilities.
- **Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS):** Three facilities.
- **All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA):** 38 facilities.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** 48 facilities.
- **US-led International Coalition forces:** 25 facilities.
- **Other parties:** 83 facilities.

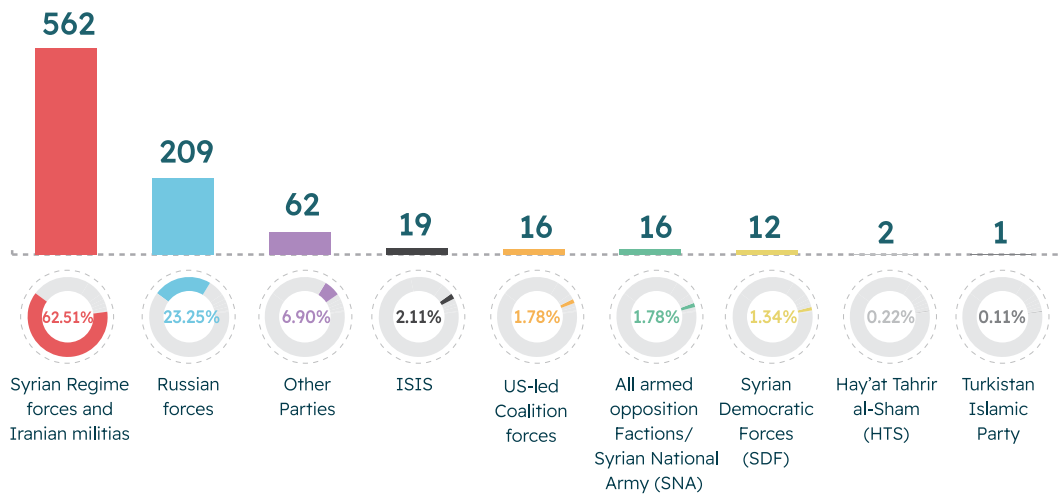


Syrian regime forces are responsible for approximately 75 percent of all attacks that targeted schools and kindergartens in Syria.

2. Medical facilities

SNHR has documented no fewer than 899 attacks on medical facilities at the hands of the various parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria since March 2011 up until November 20, 2024. These attacks are distributed as follows:

- **Syrian regime forces:** 562 attacks.
- **Russian forces:** 209 attacks.
- **ISIS:** 19 attacks.
- **Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS):** Two attacks.
- **Turkistan Islamic Party:** One attack.
- **All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA):** 16 attacks.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** 12 attacks.
- **US-led International Coalition forces:** 16 attacks.
- **Other parties:** 62 attacks.

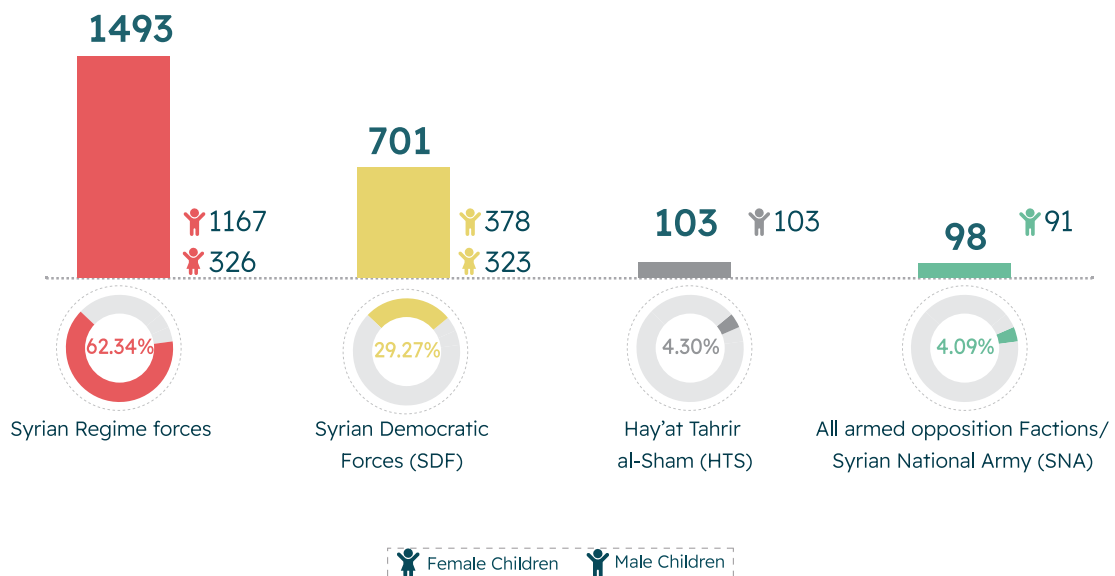


As shown in the chart above, Syrian regime forces have been responsible for about 63 per-cent of all attacks on medical facilities in Syria, which suggests an escalating approach to targeting healthcare facilities by the regime.

E. Child conscription

SNHR has documented at least **2,395 cases** of children being subjected to military conscription at the hands of the various parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria since March 2011 up until November 20, 2024. These cases are distributed as follows:

- **Syrian regime forces:** 1,493 cases, with 1,317 children still actively serving.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** 701 cases, with 494 children still actively serving.
- **Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS):** 103 cases, with 56 children still actively serving.
- **All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA):** 98 cases, with 79 children still actively serving.

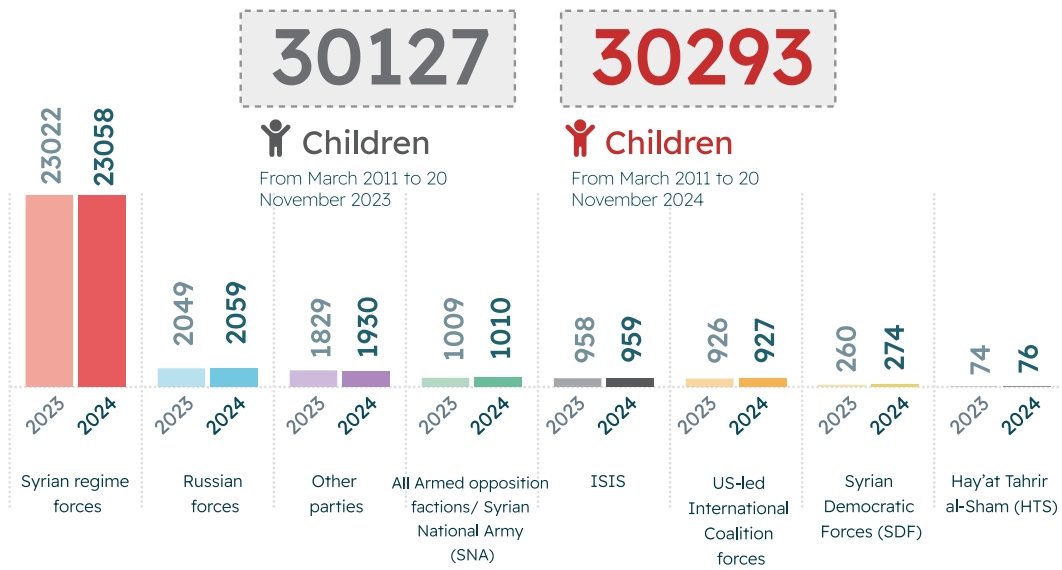


As shown above, Syrian regime forces are responsible for approximately 63 percent of all child conscription cases, followed by the SDF, with children making up a significant portion of their forces.

Comparison between the most prominent types of violations against children between March 2011 and World’s Children Day 2023, and between March 2011 and World’s Children Day 2024

1. Child deaths

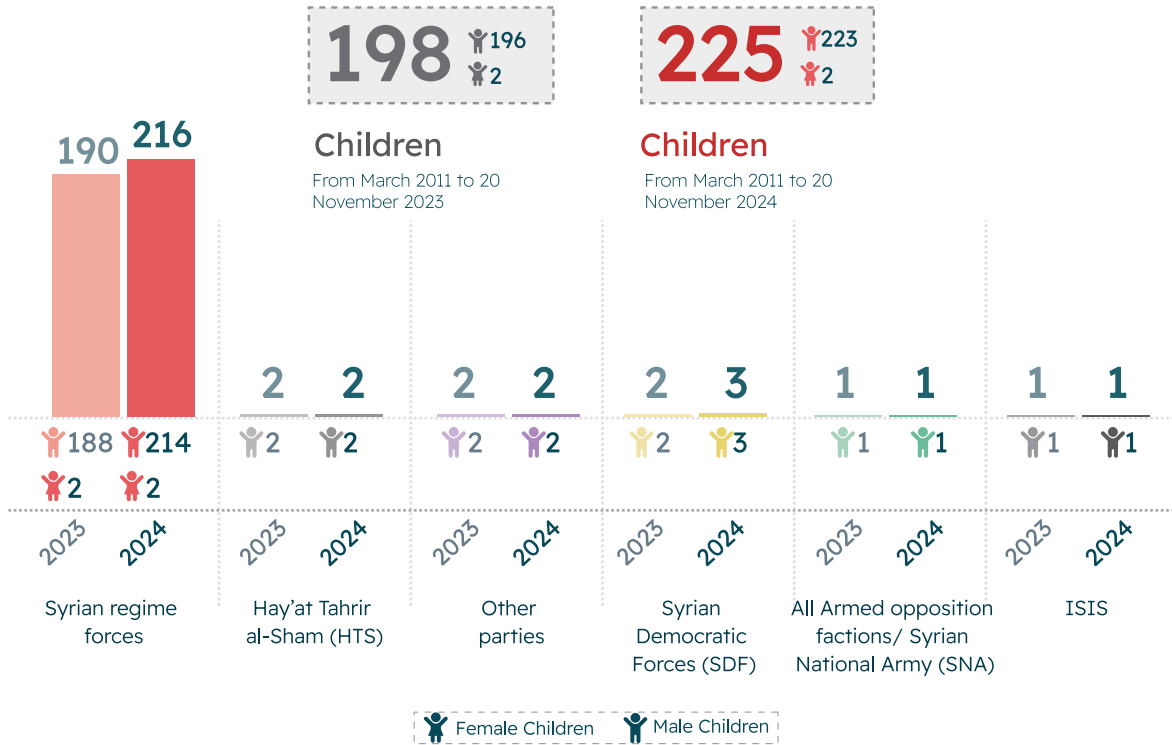
The graph below compares the number of children who have been killed by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria since March 2011 as of November 20, 2023, and as of November 20, 2024



As shown above, the comparison shows an increase in the number of child deaths in 2024 compared to 2023. This increase is caused by attacks by unidentified parties, which include bombings, landmines, and stray gunfire. Meanwhile, Syrian regime forces and Russian forces come next as perpetrators of child killings, through bombardments of populated areas that exhibited a retaliatory character, with many civilians killed in these attacks, including children.

2. Child deaths due to torture

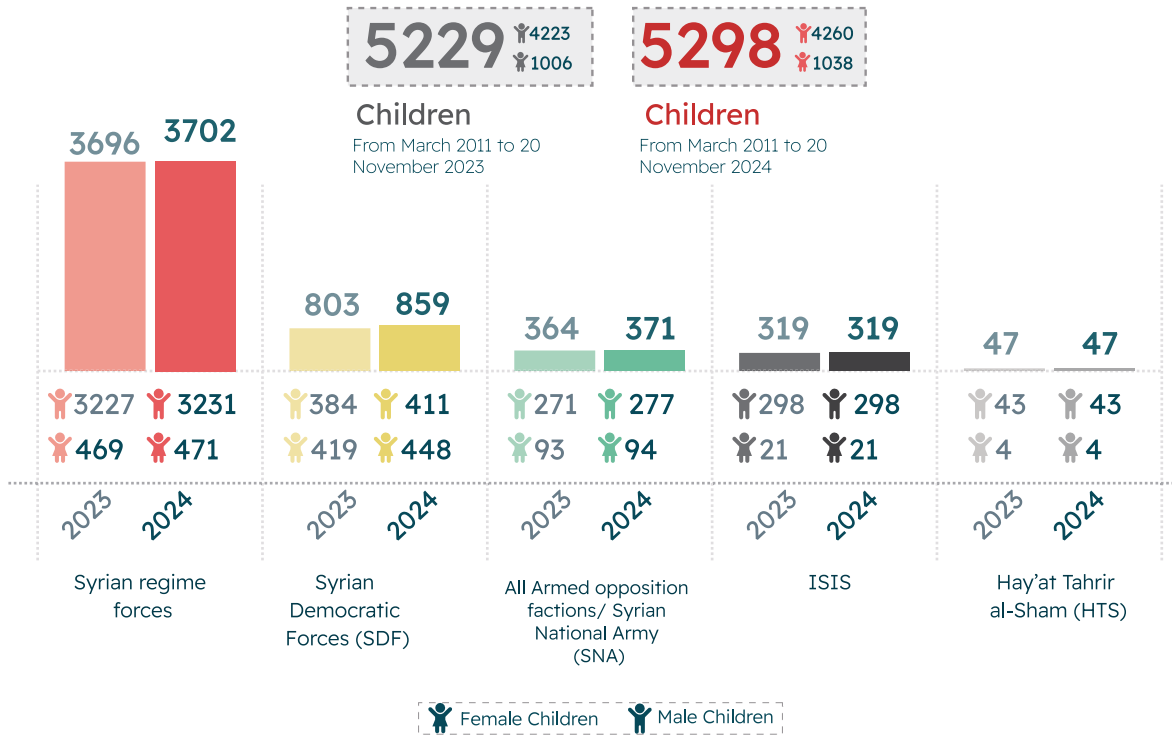
The graph below compares the numbers of child deaths due to torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria that have been documented between March 2011 and November 20, 2023, and as of November 20, 2024



As the chart shows, the number of documented child deaths due to torture increased by 27 cases between 2023 and 2024. Most of these child deaths were at the hands of regime forces who are responsible for 216 child deaths due to torture in total. This suggests that regime forces continue to use torture against detained children in a systematic way. Furthermore, the number of deaths due to torture saw an overall increase after SNHR obtained hundreds of death certificates for persons forcibly disappeared by regime forces, including children.

3. Children still under arrest/detention and/or forcibly disappeared

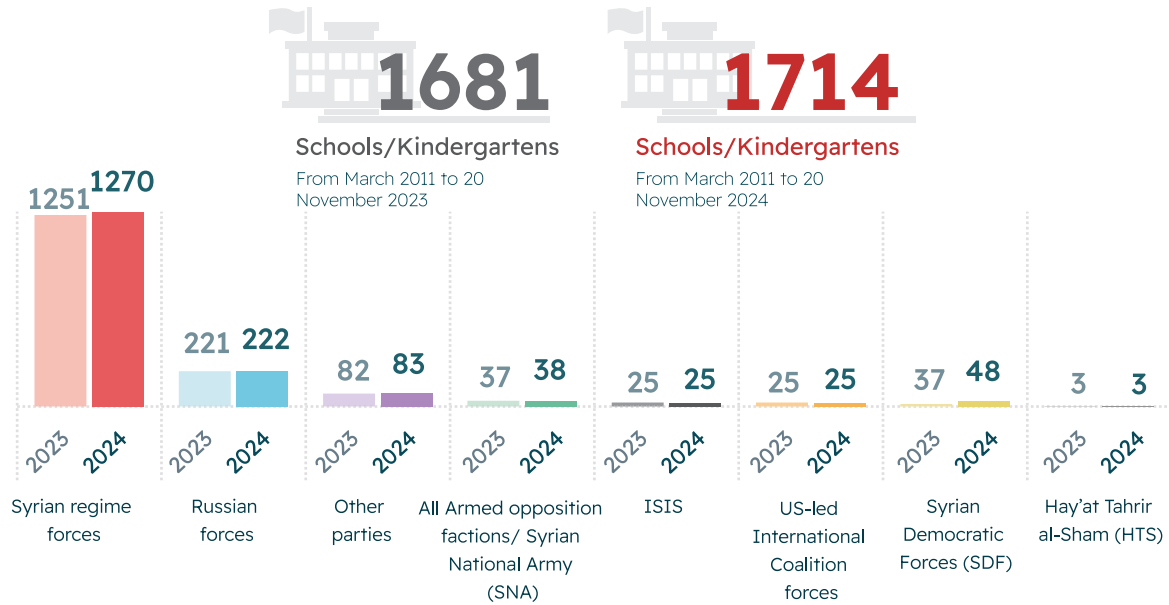
The graph below compares the numbers of children who have been arrested by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria since March 2011 who are still under arrest/detention and or forcibly disappeared as of November 20, 2023, and those arrested since March 2011 who are still under arrest/detention and/or forcibly disappeared as of November 20, 2024



As shown above, the number of children currently under arrest/detention and/or forcibly disappeared increased by 69 in 2024 from 2023, with this increase concentrated in detention centers operated by **Syrian regime forces** and the **SDF**. The number of children currently documented as being under arrest/ detained and/or forcibly disappeared in regime detention centers increased by six and rose by 56 in SDF detention centers. This suggests an escalation in the continued detention of children, particularly in the areas under the control of regime forces and SDF.

4. Attacks on school and kindergartens

The graph below compares the number of attacks on schools and kindergartens that have been documented since March 2011 up to November 20, 2023, and up to November 20, 2024



As shown above, a total of 33 new attacks were recorded in 2024 as compared to 2023. **Syrian regime forces** continue to be the party responsible for most of these attacks, with 19 attacks by regime forces documented in 2024. This suggests that regime forces continue to target educational facilities in civilian areas. Meanwhile, the number of attacks by the SDF saw a notable increase with SNHR documenting 11 more attacks by the group in 2024 as compared to 2023.

IV. OUTLINE OF THE MOST NOTABLE TYPES OF GROSS VIOLATIONS BY THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT AGAINST CHILDREN SINCE MARCH 2011 UP UNTIL 2024

Gross violations against children by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria persisted in 2024. These violations ranged from killing, inflicting serious injuries, and maiming, to conscription, arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, and torture. The incidents recorded this year confirm that children continue to suffer horrendous violations on a daily basis, while still grappling with the devastating impact of the conflict on their lives and future. Below is an outline of the patterns of violations by each of the parties to the conflict.

A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

1. Extrajudicial killing

In 2024:

More extrajudicial killings were recorded in 2024, with Syria remaining one of the most dangerous places in the world for civilians, especially children, to live. The attacks by regime forces and their allies that resulted in child deaths so far this year have been marked by a number of main characteristics:

- **Indiscriminate bombing continues:** Regime forces have targeted populated areas under the control of other parties, particularly in the governorates of Idlib and Aleppo in northwestern Syria, leading to child deaths.
- **Deaths from previously sustained injuries:** In early-2024, a number of children died as a result of injuries they had sustained earlier in an artillery attack on a school in Afis village in eastern rural Idlib.
- **Deaths caused by explosive residuals:** A number of child deaths were caused by the explosion of remnants of rockets fired by the regime to intercept Israeli airstrikes on regime military sites in Homs governorate.
- **Indiscriminate and escalated offensives:** The military escalation at the hands of regime forces and their allies resulted in more child deaths, particularly in areas under the control of armed opposition factions and HTS.

Consistent regime approach to kill children since March 2011

Children have accounted for at least 16 percent of all victims killed by regime forces over the past 13 years. Over the course of these years, the regime has used various methods for killing in a systematic manner, including intensified ground and aerial attacks on populated areas, as well as attacks involving the use of barrel bombs, rockets, chemical weapons, incendiary munitions, and cluster munitions. There was also a suffocating siege blocking the delivery of food supplies and humanitarian aid. Below is the toll of child deaths resulting from regime forces' use of various weapons:

- **Barrel bombs:** Killed at least 1,821 children since July 2012 up until November 20, 2024.
- **Chemical weapons:** Killed 214 children due to asphyxiation since December 23, 2012, up until November 20, 2024.
- **Cluster munitions:** Killed at least 339 children since July 2012 up until November 2024.
- **Siege and starvation:** Resulted in the deaths of many children due to food shortages and the obstruction of the delivery of humanitarian aid to besieged areas.
- **Remnants of war:** Children were killed by explosive remnants of ar.

Between March 2011, and November 20, 2024, SNHR documented the killing of no fewer than 23,058 children at the hands of Syrian regime forces, divided between 12,976 male children and 10,082 female children.

2. Arrests/detentions, enforced disappearance, and torture

In 2024:

Syrian regime forces have continued arbitrarily arresting children in territories under their control in 2024. These arrests are carried out by the various regime's security agencies, including the Military Security Intelligence Directorate, State Security Directorate, Air Force Intelligence Directorate, and Political Security Directorate, as well as military units such as the Fourth Division and local militias. As SNHR's database attests, at least six of the children arrested in 2024 are still in detention and/or forcibly disappeared as of November 20, 2024. The arrests targeting children were carried out in a number of contexts, including:

- **Putting pressure on detainees' relatives:** Some arrests targeted children and their families to pressure certain other relatives into surrendering themselves. These arrests were concentrated in Damascus city.
- **Child refugees deported from Lebanon:** Some detentions targeted child refugees forcibly repatriated from Lebanon by the Lebanese Army and the Lebanese General Security, who were arrested as soon as they entered Syria.
- **Children returning from opposition-held areas:** SNHR documented arrests targeting children, along with their parents and other family members, as they were attempting to return to regime-held areas. These arrests were concentrated at checkpoints erected at the entry points to Damascus. Most of these arrested were released after being detained for a few days in security branches in Damascus city.

Consistent regime targeting of children for arrest and enforced disappearance since March 2011

Since the start of the conflict, the Syrian regime has adopted a deliberate, calculated strategy to target children for arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance, as part of its policies of oppression and collective punishment imposed on all civilians, particularly children. SNHR has documented that no fewer than 3,702 of the children arrested between March 2011 and November 20, 2024, divided between 3,231 male children and 471 female children, are still under arrest and/or forcibly disappeared. All of these children are being held under cruel conditions, which include physical and psychological torture. Some children have also been subjected to secret trials and received harsh sentences, including death.

- **Causes of arrest:** Some children have been arrested for family members' political activism, while others have been arrested in raids. Other children faced terror charges, which surely go beyond their cognitive comprehension.
- **Torture and medical negligence:** under the harrowing imprisonment conditions in regime detention centers, at least 192 children have died due to torture or medical negligence since March 2011 up until November 20, 2024.

New deaths of forcibly disappeared persons acknowledged, and new cases documented

Since 2018, SNHR has been documenting cases of forcibly disappeared persons being registered as dead in the civil registry records by the regime, without disclosing the cause of death or returning the dead bodies to their families. In 2024, new death certificates for forcibly disappeared children surfaced, increasing the number of documented cases of child death due to torture. Since 2018 to date, at least 50 cases of forcibly disappeared children being registered as dead have been documented, all with no details about the cause of death.

Leaked Caesar photos and identifying victims

SNHR has managed to identify four children who appeared in the leaked Caesar photos that were leaked from the Syrian regime's military hospitals since 2015. These four children are among **6,786 victims** who have been documented in these photos.

3. Sexual violence

Children who are detained in regime detention centers have been subjected to various forms of sexual violence, which is one of the worst methods of torture. These violations include forcible stripping, beating genitals, harassment, and rape, as well as verbal and physical violence. SNHR faces numerous challenges in documenting these violations for a range of reasons, not the least of which is victims' hesitation to reveal what they have experienced in detention. Since 2011, SNHR has documented **539 cases** of sexual violence against children. While no incidents of sexual violence have been documented in 2024, this does not mean that the Syrian regime has stopped practicing sexual violence against children. On the contrary, all the evidence suggests that the Syrian regime continues to commit such violations under horrendous imprisonment conditions, but the difficulties in accessing information limit the ability to document such violations.

4. Attacks on schools, kindergartens, and medical facilities

Since March 2011, the ongoing bombardment by regime forces has destroyed, partially or completely, no fewer than 1,270 schools and kindergartens, most of which have been rendered out of commission, while no fewer than **562 attacks** were carried out on medical facilities by regime forces. These attacks have directly affected children and those working at these facilities. Besides the severe injuries and deaths resulting from these attacks, education and primary healthcare services have been halted as a result of these attacks, adversely affecting children's mental and physical wellbeing. Furthermore, these attacks have created an environment of fear and mental disorder, driving many children away from schools or hospitals in fear of being targeted.

5. Conscription

The Syrian regime has used various means to recruit and conscript children and minors and used them in its military operations, due to viewing them as being less costly than adult combatants. Despite the difficulty faced in documenting cases of conscripting children into the formal military structures, i.e., the army, security, and police, a great deal of unofficial child recruitment has been carried out under the direct support, supervision, and planning of these entities, including the Baath Party, 'Ṭalā'i' al-Baath' ['The Seeds of the Baath'], and 'Shabybah althawrah' ['The Youth of the Revolution'], as well as state media and many pro-regime figures with official positions in the regime and its government institutions or the People's Assembly of Syria.

SNHR has documented no fewer than **1,493 cases** of child recruitment by regime forces, divided between 1,167 boys and 326 girls. Of these, no fewer than 67 child recruits are known to have been killed in battle. Moreover, no fewer than 109 children have been discharged, while the remaining 1,317 are still actively serving with regime forces (1,083 boys and 234 girls). These 1,493 cases concern children (i.e., juveniles aged under 18). Given the high number of children recruited and the low number of children discharged, the number of children who are militarily active have not changed greatly during this period. When a child reaches the age at which they are required to begin their military service, they are redeployed from the militias wearing the same clothes they wore which they were serving to the formal regime army.

Meanwhile, SNHR has documented the conscription of no fewer than **86 children** by Iranian or pro-Iranian regime militias, mainly the Liwa Fatemiyoun and the Liwa al-Quds; 24 of these children were killed in battle, especially in the Syrian badiya, or desert, primarily during clashes with ISIS.

B. Russian forces

1. Extrajudicial killing

In 2024:

Russian forces' attacks were limited to aerial attacks by fixed-wing warplanes. While the rate of Russian attacks has dropped since late-2023, Russian forces still carried out some intermittent attacks, mainly targeting areas in the Syrian desert 'badiya' and Idlib governorate. These attacks were carried out suddenly with no prior warning, posing a serious threat to civilians' lives and properties in the areas that have been targeted. Since the start of 2024 up until November 20, 2024, seven children have been killed in Russian attacks.

Children have been consistently targeted since the launch of the Russian intervention in 2015

Since the launch of the Russian intervention in September 2015, child victims have accounted for 30 percent of all civilians killed in Russian attacks in Syria, reflecting a consistent, direct and deliberate targeting of children. As SNHR's database attests, Russian attacks have **killed 2,059 children**, divided between 1,433 male children and 626 female children, since the launch of the Russian intervention on September 30, 2015, up until November 20, 2024.

SNHR has also recorded no fewer than **237 cluster munition attacks** carried out by Russian forces since the launch of their military intervention on September 30, 2015, up until November 20, 2024, with these attacks resulting in the deaths of 67 children, which shows the heavy use of these internationally prohibited weapons, and Russia's continued targeting of civilians, including children.

2. Attacks on medical and educational facilities

Data shows that Russian forces have repeatedly targeted schools, kindergartens, and health-care facilities in Syria. In other words, these essential facilities have been a primary target for Russian forces who have used both guided and non-guided weapons in these attacks, which led to the partial or complete destruction of numerous facilities, as well as the death of children and workers at these facilities.

Since the launch of the Russian intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015, up until November 20, 2024, SNHR has documented the targeting of no fewer than **222 schools** and 209 medical facilities by Russian forces. These attacks have halted the provision of education and healthcare services for children, exacerbating their suffering and intensifying the adverse effects on their mental and physical wellbeing, in addition to perpetuating the environment of fear and insecurity in the Syrian society.

C. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)

1. Extrajudicial killing

In 2024:

SNHR documented the killing of one boy at the hands of HTS in one of indiscriminate rocket launcher attacks carried out by the group on homes in the towns of Nebbel and al-Zahra in western rural Aleppo governorate using rocket launchers. These two towns, which are under the control of regime forces, are inhabited by civilians of Shiite affiliation.

Children killed in HTS military operations

Some of the military operations carried out by HTS in the course of clashes with other parties to the conflict have resulted in civilian deaths, including of children. These attacks involve indiscriminate bombardment and the use of non-guided weapons, as well as opening fire indiscriminately during raids and inspections. As SNHR's database attests, a total of 76 children, divided into 69 children and seven women, have been killed in HTS' military operations since the group was founded as Jabhat al-Nusra in January 2012 up until November 20, 2024.

2. Arrests/detentions, enforced disappearance, and torture

In 2024, HTS has continued targeting civilians through arbitrary arrests, which included children. SNHR has documented several cases of children being detained during raids or at checkpoints in Idlib governorate. Moreover, the group targeted children who participated in anti-HTS demonstrations. While some children were released a few hours after being detained, others including IDP children, were kept in detention over their refusal to leave their homes to move to camps.

Various pretexts for detention

Since its foundation, HTS has arbitrarily arrested children under various pretexts, including violating local laws or participating in anti-HTS demonstrations. The group has also seized children as hostages of war during military operations, and levied various charges against children, ranging from treason to committing religious offenses. Children have been detained in cruel conditions alongside adults, and have been subjected to torture, solitary confinement, and degradation. In many cases, children have been separated from their mothers, especially if the children were seven years of age or older.

SNHR has documented that **47 of the children** arrested between January 2012 and November 20, 2024 - 43 males and four females - are still detained and/or forcibly disappeared in HTS detention centers. SNHR has also documented the deaths of two children due to torture in HTS detention centers in the same period.

3. Conscription

HTS has actively worked to conscript children. Initially, HTS began with the conscription of children from HTS members' families, focusing on camps in particular. HTS has encouraged children to join its ranks through outreach campaigns, which take the form of religious and media campaigns. The children who join are then taken to military training camps. Following training, these children are deployed to the fronts, where they are assigned a wide range of tasks, including guard duty, transferring ammunition, and establishing checkpoints. HTS also takes advantage of the economic hardships suffered by most residents in areas under the group's control by offering financial inducements to attract and recruit children.

SNHR has documented no fewer than **103 cases** of child conscription by HTS, all of male children. At least four of these child conscripts were killed in battle, while about 43 others have been discharged, with 56 children still actively serving with HTS.

4. Attacks on schools, kindergartens, and medical facilities

HTS has taken over many schools in areas under its control, which it subsequently turned into other civilian facilities, such as religious schools, or into military facilities. In either case, normal educational activities have been suspended in these schools and their curriculum is changed to conform to HTS' ideology. As of November 20, 2024, HTS has carried out attacks on three schools and two medical facilities, adversely affecting children's access to education and healthcare in HTS-held areas.

D. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

1. Extrajudicial killing

In 2024

There have been no significant changes to SDF policies in areas under the group's control in 2024. In other words, the SDF continued to commit grave violations against civilians, against children. SNHR has detected a number of patterns in the extrajudicial killings committed by the SDF:

- **Targeting children with live bullets:** A number of children were shot and killed by SDF patrol officers, in some cases being hit by stray bullets while the SDF were pursuing civilians.
- **Victims of clashes:** A number of civilians, including children, were killed during clashes between the forces of the SDF and the Deir Ez-Zour Military Council, which is backed by Arab tribes fighters.
- **Civilians killed in landing operations:** Some of the landing operations carried out jointly by SDF and US-led International Coalition forces have resulted in civilian deaths, including of children. These operations usually target civilian houses because of their alleged affiliation with ISIS. These operations have been concentrated in Deir Ez-Zour governorate.

Since the start of 2024, up until November 20, 2024, SNHR has documented the killing of at least four children by SDF.

SDF practices that resulted in child deaths

The SDF has been responsible for a number of practices that resulted in civilian deaths, including of children, such as:

- Indiscriminate bombardment of areas under the control of the parties.
- Clashes in populated areas.
- Indiscriminately opening fire during raids.
- Snipers targeting civilians close to the dividing lines between SDF-controlled territories and territories under the control of other parties.

As SNHR's database attests, these practices have resulted in the deaths of at least **274 children**, divided into 167 male children and 107 female children, since the group was initially founded as the People's Protection Units (YPG) in July 2012, up until November 20, 2024.

The situation in al-Hawl Camp

Detainees in al-Hawl Camp, including children, are grappling with extremely dire humanitarian conditions, such as lack of healthcare, education, and security. The camp is under the SDF's control, meaning that the group is responsible for providing a safe environment for children. However, SNHR has documented numerous incidents of violence and killings involving children in the camp.

2. Detention, enforced disappearance, and torture

In 2024:

the SDF has continued to implement policies of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, characterized by mass operations involving indiscriminate shooting and assaults on civilians. The key patterns documented during the year included:

- **Detention of children during anti-SDF protests:** A number of children have been arrested for participating in demonstrations objecting to the educational curriculum imposed by the SDF in Manbij city in rural Aleppo.
- **Arresting children to pressurize their families:** A number of cases were documented in which women and their children were detained to pressurize their husbands into surrendering themselves.
- **Detention of child laborers in oil fields:** There were a number of arrests targeting children working in oil fields in Deir Ez-Zour.

As SNHR's database attests, at least **56 of the children** who have been arrested in 2024 are still detained and/or forcibly disappeared as of November 20, 2024.

Targeting children through abductions and detention

The SDF has carried out widespread detentions targeting children, especially in its battles against ISIS and following the group's defeat. Many of these children were accused of ISIS affiliation, leading to their enforced disappearance. Additionally, the SDF detained children from ISIS-affiliated families in camps, separating them from their mothers and transferring them to detention centers where they were held with adults under the pretext of preventing their exploitation in acts of violence. US-led International Coalition forces have been involved in a number of these detentions.

The SDF has also carried out extensive abductions targeting children for the purpose of conscription. These children are abducted from schools, in the street, or while they were playing near their homes. SNHR recorded cases where children were detained during raids to pressurize their families or use the children as hostages in tribal negotiations. Children were also detained at checkpoints, with some released upon payment of a ransom.

In SDF detention centers, children endure harsh conditions, including severe food shortages, extreme malnourishment, and denial of medical care, which have led to deteriorating mental and physical health. Children are often held in facilities not designed for them, alongside adults, and are subjected to strict punishments such as being denied family visits or placed in solitary confinement for extended periods. Those detained in ISIS family camps face even harsher conditions, including overcrowding, sleeping in unsuitable places, sustaining injuries due to torture or fights, all with a lack of any medical treatment.

As SNHR's database attests, no fewer than **859** of the children detained by SDF personnel since the group's initial emergence in July 2012, when it was known as the YPG, up until November 20, 2024, are still under arrest and/or forcibly disappeared in SDF detention centers, divided between 411 male children and 448 female children. SNHR has also documented the deaths of three children due to torture or medical negligence in SDF detention centers in the same period.

3. Conscription

In 2024:

The SDF continued the widespread recruitment of children in 2024, which includes abductions for the purpose of conscription. Families of conscripted children were often threatened to deter them from filing complaints with human rights organizations. SNHR documented at least **83 cases** of child conscription by SDF since the beginning of 2024, with four children released while 79 remain enlisted in SDF ranks.

Children are a key component of SDF

The SDF has systematically recruited children, making them an integral part of its military forces under the supervision of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The group has carried out such practices since its initial formation as the YPG in 2012 and expanded significantly across areas under SDF control. Some of the entities primarily responsible for child conscription include the Revolutionary Youth and the Women's Protection Units, which abduct children from schools and public spaces or lure them with financial incentives.

The SDF has established training camps for children, often in remote areas far from their homes, sometimes transferring them to PKK-controlled areas in Iraq. SDF personnel prevent contact between the conscripted children and their families for extended periods, sometimes years, while families attempting to visit their children face threats or expulsion from their homes.

SNHR has documented no fewer than **701 cases** of child recruitment by the SDF, divided into 378 male children and 323 female children, since the group's founding as the YPG in July 2012 up until November 20, 2024. No fewer than 30 of these child recruits were killed in battle, while about 307 others have been discharged, with 394 children still actively serving with the SDF, divided into 242 male children and 152 female children.

4. Targeting schools, kindergartens, and medical facilities

SDF caused significant damage to schools and kindergartens through indiscriminate bombing or by seizing them and turning them into military outposts. As of November 20, 2024, SNHR has documented attacks on at least **48 schools** and 12 medical facilities by the SDF, leaving a severely adverse effect on children's rights to education and healthcare.

E. All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA)

1. Extrajudicial killing

In 2024:

SNHR documented the killing of one boy by all armed opposition factions/SNA in an indiscriminate artillery attack that targeting the area dividing the SNA's territories and SDF's territories in Aleppo governorate.

Indiscriminate bombardments and clashes have dire ramifications on children

All armed opposition factions and the SNA frequented relied on unguided and locally manufactured weapons for indiscriminate bombing, causing civilian casualties, including children. These operations have been conducted both as part of military offensives and as retaliation for attacks on areas under their control. Infighting in densely populated areas has also resulted in injuries, alongside incidents of indiscriminate gunfire during public altercations.

As of November 20, 2024, the SNHR has recorded the killing of no fewer than **1,010 children**, divided between 572 male children and 438 female children, at the hands of all armed opposition factions/SNA.

2. Arrests, enforced disappearance, and torture

In 2024

All armed opposition factions/SNA carried out campaigns of arbitrary detention and abductions targeting civilians, including children. Most of these incidents occurred against individuals arriving from regime-held areas into opposition-held territories, whether to visit relatives or while they were attempting to cross irregularly to Türkiye. Children were often detained for weeks or months in harsh conditions, without clear charges or trials.

Children and adult civilians were also detained on ethnic grounds in opposition-held areas of Aleppo, where factions conducted arrests without judicial authorization or police involvement. These detentions aimed to intimidate civilians, confiscate their property, or exert pressure. According to SNHR, at least seven children arrested in 2024 remain under detention and/or forcibly disappeared in detention centers operated by all armed opposition factions/SNA as of November 20, 2024.

Widespread targeting of children through abductions and detentions

All armed opposition factions/SNA have carried out extensive operations that involved abducting children and using them as hostages, leading to the enforced disappearance of many. These practices spiked peaked during 2013–2014 amid conflicts with the Syrian regime, before gradually declining. In many cases, children were released for large ransoms or used as leverage to pressurize their families into surrendering property or leaving their homes. Some of these abductions were concentrated in the Afrin region in rural Aleppo, and often were associated with ethnic motives. Additionally, children arriving in opposition areas with their mothers were detained under the pretext of background checks and kept in harsh conditions, while others were arbitrarily detained at checkpoints.

Detained children faced dire conditions in detention centers, often being held in military facilities lacking basic health care and adequate nutrition. They have frequently been confined with adult prisoners in overcrowded spaces and subjected to various forms of torture, including severe beatings, hanging, and forced labor, such as cleaning facilities and distributing food within military and civilian police detention centers.

As of November 20, 2024, SNHR has documented that at least **371 children**, divided into 277 male children and 94 children, of these arrested by all armed opposition factions/SNA have been arrested, with most cases amounting to enforced disappearances. Additionally, SNHR has documented one child's death due to torture or medical negligence in detention centers operated by all armed opposition factions/SNA have been documented.

3. Conscription

In 2024:

On June 3, 2024, armed opposition factions, including Ahrar al-Sham, Jaysh al-Islam, and others, signed an action plan with the UN to prevent violations against children. However, SNHR has observed no significant positive changes in terms of child conscription. On the contrary, families reported being subjected to threats and coercion to harass them into allowing their child to be conscripted, and children's ages have often been falsified to ensure their acceptance into factions.

All armed opposition factions widely relied on child conscription, exploiting families' dire economic and living conditions. Children were seen as cheaper to train and easier to control. In many cases, factions recruited children to bolster their ranks, especially smaller groups reliant on tribal or family ties. The absence of effective controls or mechanisms to prevent child recruitment persisted due to the lack of organizational structures in the recruitment process.

SNHR has documented no fewer than **98 cases** of child recruitment, all of male children, by all armed opposition factions/SNA. No fewer than 12 of these child conscripts were killed in battle, while about seven others have been discharged, with no fewer than 79 children still actively serving with armed opposition factions/SNA to date.

4. Targeting schools, kindergartens, and medical facilities

Indiscriminate bombardment and clashes by all armed opposition factions/SNA caused significant damage to educational and healthcare facilities. SNHR has documented attacks on at least **38 schools and 16 medical facilities** by all armed opposition factions/SNA since March 2011, up until November 20, 2024.

F. Other parties

1. Extrajudicial killing

SNHR's documentation contains various categories including killings that cannot be directly assigned to a specific party. This category includes deaths by bombings by unidentified parties, by gunshots by unidentified parties, by landmines of unidentified source, or by drowning, as well as those killed as a result of gunfire of attacks carried out by Jordanian, Turkish, Lebanese, or Israeli forces.

Within this category, SNHR has documented the killing of no fewer than **1,930 children**, divided between 1,338 male children and 592 female children, as of November 20, 2024.

2. Targeting schools, kindergartens, and medical facilities

Between March 2011 and November 20, 2024, SNHR documented that no fewer than **83 schools and medical facilities** were damaged in attacks by unidentified parties. These incidents adversely affected children's rights to education and healthcare, further exacerbating their mental and physical suffering, while also halting essential services in the areas that saw these attacks.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

International humanitarian law states that “Children shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected against any form of indecent assault. The parties to the conflict shall provide them with the care and aid they require.” In addition, the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴ defines the nature of children’s rights, whose aim is to protect children at all times. International humanitarian law also provides general protection to children as civilians who do not engage in hostilities,⁵ as well as special protection as members of vulnerable, and non-armed groups.⁶ Furthermore, Rule 135 of customary international humanitarian law states that “Children affected by armed conflict are entitled to special respect and protection.”⁷

Article 3 of the Geneva Convention I⁸ states that children as “Persons taking no active part in the hostilities... shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction.” In a more general sense, international legal instruments place emphasis on protecting children from hostilities and ensuring they receive the necessary care, aid, and protection, particularly in areas where armed conflicts are taking place.

Customary international law prohibits the conscription of children younger than 15 years of age. This prohibition, which was initially limited to international armed conflict, was later expanded to also include non-international armed conflicts. Meanwhile, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court establishes that “Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of fifteen years into the national armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities” and “Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of fifteen years into armed forces or groups or using them to participate actively in hostilities” are war crimes.⁹

On May 25, 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted an optional protocol that addresses the involvement of children in armed conflicts. In it, the minimum age for a child to join armed forces was raised from 15 years to 18 years. The same protocol bans conscription for children younger than 18 years of age.¹⁰ However, criminal prosecution is still limited to conscription of children below the age of 15.

4. United Nations (UN), Convention on the Rights of the Child
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>
5. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Geneva Convention (IV) on Civilians, 1949, Article 3
<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949>
6. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Geneva Convention (IV) on Civilians, 1949, Article 14
<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949>
7. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Rule 135 of the customary international humanitarian law
<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule135>
8. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Geneva Convention (I) on civilians, 1949, Article 3
<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949>
9. International Criminal Court (CC), Rome Statute, Article 8-2-b (26) and Article 8-2-e (7)
<https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf>
10. United Nations (UN), Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/opaccrc.aspx>

Armed groups outside the scope of the state are still bound by the rules of international human rights law, including Articles 1-4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Article 4 states, “**Armed groups that are distinct from the armed forces of a State should not, under any circumstances, recruit or use in hostilities persons under the age of 18 years.**”¹¹

Reality in Syria

Despite the abundance of international legal instruments as demonstrated above, violations against children in Syria have not stopped for over 13 years, with all parties to the conflict failing to respect any of these rules. The Syrian regime has not been deterred by these conventions, despite having ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, from committing violations against children, some of which qualify as crimes against humanity through acts of extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance, torture, while others qualify as war crimes when committed in the context of an armed conflict, as well as grave violations of international human rights law.

Most notable violations

1. **Arbitrary detention and torture:** Both are violations committed in a widespread way against children who are subjected to cruel conditions that conflict with the obligations entailed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
2. **Conscription:** Thousands of children have been conscripted by the various parties to the conflict. These children have been involved in combat operations with no protection or care.

Recommendations

All parties to the conflict

- **The Syrian regime's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The Syrian regime must uphold its commitment to compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the two International Covenants, and the Geneva Conventions, all of which the regime has ratified. The regime must ensure the protection of the rights of the child in its territory.

- **End targeting children and their residential areas**

The Syrian-Russian alliance, Iranian militias, and their subsidiaries must cease deliberately attacking schools, kindergartens, and areas populated by children and their families, as well as ceasing the killing and maiming of children.

- **Release detained children**

All parties to the conflict must release detained children immediately, especially those detained in the context of the armed conflict. The parties to the conflict must also uphold international laws on detaining children, including providing adequate and sufficient food, and access to education by allowing them to attend school, whether in detention or outside.

11. United Nations (UN), Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Article 4

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/opaccrc.aspx>

- **Cease torturing children and separate them from adults**

Torture against children must be ended. Children must be also separated from adults, as established in Rules 11-d and 112 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners,¹² and Article 10-2-B of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).¹³

- **Adopt Beijing Rules**

Adopt the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice when trying children. Those rules detail the guidelines regulating criminal responsibility for minors and punishments against children. Furthermore, those rules were complemented by the UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty.

- **End child conscription and discharge all children**

Completely cease the recruitment of children and release any children under 15 years of age from any and all military entities or missions.

- **Establish an international monitoring mechanism for children's rights**

The parties to the conflict must accept an independent monitoring mechanism, whether it was formed by the UN or international human rights organization. These mechanisms would focus on the situation of children in Syrian conflict zones, as well as conducting regular visits to detention centers to evaluate the conditions under which child detainees are held and submit periodic reports.

- **Cease the use of schools and healthcare facilities for military purposes**

The parties to the conflict must commit themselves to not use schools and healthcare facilities for military purposes, including turning them into military outposts. This would ensure that children can return to a safe educational environment with no military threats.

- **Provide psychological care services for conflict-affected children**

The parties to the conflict must work with humanitarian groups to provide psychological care and rehabilitation services for children affected by the conflict, including detained children, and children who were subjected to torture or sexual violence. Steps must also be taken to create safe spaces for children in conflict zones.

International community and UN Security council

- **Impose sanctions on individuals and entities implicated in violations against children**

Including travel ban and asset freeze.

12. "Rule 11: The different categories of prisoners shall be kept in separate institutions or parts of institutions, taking account of their sex, age, criminal record, the legal reason for their detention and the necessities of their treatment; thus:.... d. Young prisoners shall be kept separate from adults."

Rule 112: "1. Untried prisoners shall be kept separate from convicted prisoners. 2. Young untried prisoners shall be kept separate from adults and shall in principle be detained in separate institutions"

13. See: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNDOC). The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (The Nelson Mandela Rules). https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Nelson_Mandela_Rules-E-ebook.pdf
Article 10-2-b: "Accused juvenile persons shall be separated from adults and brought as speedily as possible for adjudication." See: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

- **Support protection and education programs for Syrian children in asylum countries**

Donor states and Syria's neighboring countries must collaborate to provide protection and educational programs for child refugees, with provision of special resources to develop educational and healthcare infrastructure, particularly in countries that host a large number of Syrian children.

- **Protection and aid for internally displaced children and refugee children**

Ensure the protection of and aid for forcibly displaced children, both IDPs and refugees, especially girls, and ensure their needs are met, particularly in regard to protection.

- **Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

All the world's states should ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and uphold their commitments to it, in order to hold to account and expose the Syrian regime and its crimes against the children of Syria, and should spare no effort to alleviate and put an end to the regime's crimes, including bringing cases before the International Court of Justice (ICJ)

- **Condemn the states supporting the Syrian regime**

Expose the states supporting the Syrian regime which are effectively trying to normalize and sponsor perpetrators of crimes against humanity and war crimes against the children of Syria.

- **Take action against perpetrators of violations**

Take every available legal, political, and financial measure against the Syrian regime and its allies, as well as against other perpetrators of violations against children

- **Meet financial pledges made to:**

- Support neighboring countries: Help neighboring countries and provide every bit of support to improve the level of education and healthcare for children refugees and support stability.
- Protect educational facilities: Devise mechanisms to stop the bombing of schools and kindergartens, protect those facilities, and work on creating a safe educational environment for civilians and children.
- Support schools and healthcare facilities: States must make sustainable efforts to support schools and healthcare facilities in Syria and refugee camps.

United Nations

- **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**

- Coordinate humanitarian assistance operations
Coordinate humanitarian assistance operations by focusing on the worst affected areas and avoid succumbing to pressure and efforts to exploit the situation by the Syrian regime, which attempts to solicit aid solely in its own favor.
- Secure the necessary resources to rehabilitate children
- Secure the necessary resources to enable the rehabilitation of children, placing special consideration on the special needs of girls who have been directly affected by violations and suffered sexual exploitation, particularly in the worst affected areas.

- Provide safe shelters and reception centers for children fleeing conflict zones
- Provide safe shelters and reception centers for children fleeing conflict zones with particular focus on children who are separated from their families due to the conflict, and provide urgent medical and psychological care for them, in addition to trying to re-establish contact with their families or to resettle them in safe environments.

International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI)

- **Investigate the incidents included in this report and shed more light on the suffering of the children of Syria.**

Supporting states and the European Union

- **Increase assistance for Syrian children**

Syria has been one of the world's worst affected countries in terms of many patterns of violations against children. As such, Syria needs more assistance than the majority of other states and regions, especially since grave violations are still ongoing up to the present day.

- **Fund UNICEF and monitoring mechanisms**

Accord more resources to UNICEF and the MRM and rely on its database in launching a process to rehabilitate children survivors.

Neighboring countries

- **Ensure Syrian refugees' rights**

Ensure Syrian refugees' ability to seek asylum is protected and respect their rights, including non-refoulement, accelerate the family reunion process. EU countries and other states must try and ease the burden of Syria's neighboring countries by taking in more Syrian refugees.

- **Support the UNHCR**

Steps must be taken to increase the aid accorded for the UN Office of the High commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and local organizations supporting Syrian refugees in neighboring countries

UNHCR

- **Create a stable and safe environment for Syrian child refugees**

Far greater efforts must be exerted to create a safe and stable environment for Syrian child refugees, as well as into integrating them into their communities through long-term psychological support.

- **Invest in education and healthcare**

Promote investments in education and healthcare programs to support child refugees and ensure a better future for them.

- **Create hotlines to protect child refugees**

Work on creating hotlines and call centers that children and their families can easily contact to report any violations or threats against them and ensure a swift response by the competent authorities in such cases.

Relief groups

- **Implement support and rehabilitation programs for survivors of violations**

Provide comprehensive support programs for children who survived detention, torture, sexual violence, and conscription, in order to assist these children to return to normal life and ensure that they are receiving the proper and necessary healthcare and psychological care.

- **Support teacher training initiatives in conflict zones**

Support training programs for teachers and education workers in conflict zones, in order to help children recover from the terrible trauma they've suffered and to receive education in a safe environment.

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No justice without accountability

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