

Statement

Summary of the Assad Regime's Crimes Against the Syrian People Over the Last 14 Years

Friday 20 December 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.



Fourteen years ago, with extraordinary heroism, the Syrian people rose up to liberate their homeland from the cruel grip of a tyrannical dynasty, which ruled over Syria with an iron fist for over five decades. The people of Syria aspired for a democratic state with governance based on free and fair elections, and to reclaim the dignity which had been cruelly stripped from them by the former regime's totalitarian security apparatuses.

On Sunday, December 8, 2024, a historic announcement shocked and amazed the world: the Assad regime had finally been vanquished, with a Military Operations Command taking control of Syria. Subsequently, a transitional caretaker government was formed to govern the country for the next three months.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has documented the violations perpetrated by the deposed regime, as well as by other parties, on a daily basis since 2011, building a comprehensive database of millions of incidents, reports and cases. Since those early days, the group has released over 1,800 reports and statements to date, including daily and monthly reports covering the protracted years of conflict.

With the fall of the Assad regime, it is appropriate to provide a very brief summary of the staggering human and material losses documented by SNHR in these 14 years, which have left deep scars on Syrian society and the state:

1. EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS

SNHR documented the killing of at least **202,000 civilians** at the hands of Bashar Assad's regime forces, including **23,058 children** and **12,010 women**.

2. ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

At least **96,321 cases** of enforced disappearance at the hands of Bashar Assad's regime forces are documented on SNHR's database, among them **2,329 children** and **5,742 women**.

3. DEATHS DUE TO TORTURE

At least **15,102 individuals died** under torture at the hands of Bashar Assad's regime forces, including **190 children** and **95 women**.

4. USE OF FOUR TYPES OF DESTRUCTIVE WEAPONS

- **Barrel bombs**

From July 2012, the Bashar Assad's regime's air force dropped at least **81,916 barrel bombs**, resulting in the deaths of **11,087 civilians**, including **1,821 children** and **1,780 women**.

- **Chemical weapons**

SNHR documented **217 chemical weapons** attacks by Bashar Assad's regime. The first attack was carried out in Homs's al-Bayyada neighborhood on December 23, 2012. These attacks killed **1,514 individuals**, **1,413** of whom were civilians, including **214 children**, and **262 women**, in addition to injuring 11,080 others.

- **Cluster munitions**

SNHR documented **252 cluster munition** attacks by Bashar Assad's regime forces from their first use of these weapons in July 2012. These attacks resulted in the deaths of **835 individuals**, including **337 children** and **191 women**.

- **Incendiary weapons**

SNHR recorded at least **51 incendiary** attacks on civilian areas from March 2011.

5. FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Between 2011 and 2024, extensive violations on a vast scale by the former Bashar Assad's regime and its allies, led to the internal displacement of approximately **6.8 million Syrians**, with **another seven million Syrian refugees seeking asylum abroad**, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The deposed regime and its allies not only inflicted incalculable levels of destruction and displacement, but also enacted laws violating fundamental human rights specifically to seize the properties of displaced persons and refugees.

We also documented numerous other types of violations, including the destruction of hundreds of vital facilities, such as hospitals, schools, mosques, churches, and many more.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future Syrian government

- **Commit to transitional justice principles**

Ensure fair and transparent trials for Bashar al-Assad and all those accused of grave violations against the Syrian people in a way that achieves justice and restores trust in the judicial system.

- **Separate the judiciary from the executive branch of government**

Guarantee judicial independence to ensure fair accountability for all parties responsible for human rights violations and prevent future crimes.

- **Compensate and rehabilitate victims**

Develop comprehensive programs to provide financial and moral compensation to victims and their families, including psychological and social support. Also, establish mechanisms to assist survivors of torture and enforced disappearance.

- **Rebuild affected areas**

Implement well-planned strategies for reconstruction of areas destroyed by the conflict, prioritizing the needs of local residents and ensuring their ability to return to their homes in a safe and dignified manner.

- **Form a national truth and reconciliation commission**

Establish an independent committee to collect facts about the violations that took place, taking care to involve survivors and representatives of civil society in order to ensure comprehensive documentation of all crimes, and provide recommendations for institutional reform.

Russian government

- **Re-evaluate the asylum granted to Bashar al-Assad**

Review the asylum status currently granted to Bashar al-Assad, as this contradicts the Russian state's international commitments to hold perpetrators of crimes against humanity accountable.

- **Cooperate with international justice efforts**

Assist in delivering Bashar al-Assad to future Syrian authorities or competent international courts in accordance with international law.

- **Compensate the Syrian people for the massive damage caused by Russian military intervention**

Contribute to Syria's reconstruction as part of its responsibility for the human and material losses resulting from its direct involvement.

International community

- **Lift sanctions on Syria and support credible and reliable civil society initiatives.**



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No justice without accountability

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