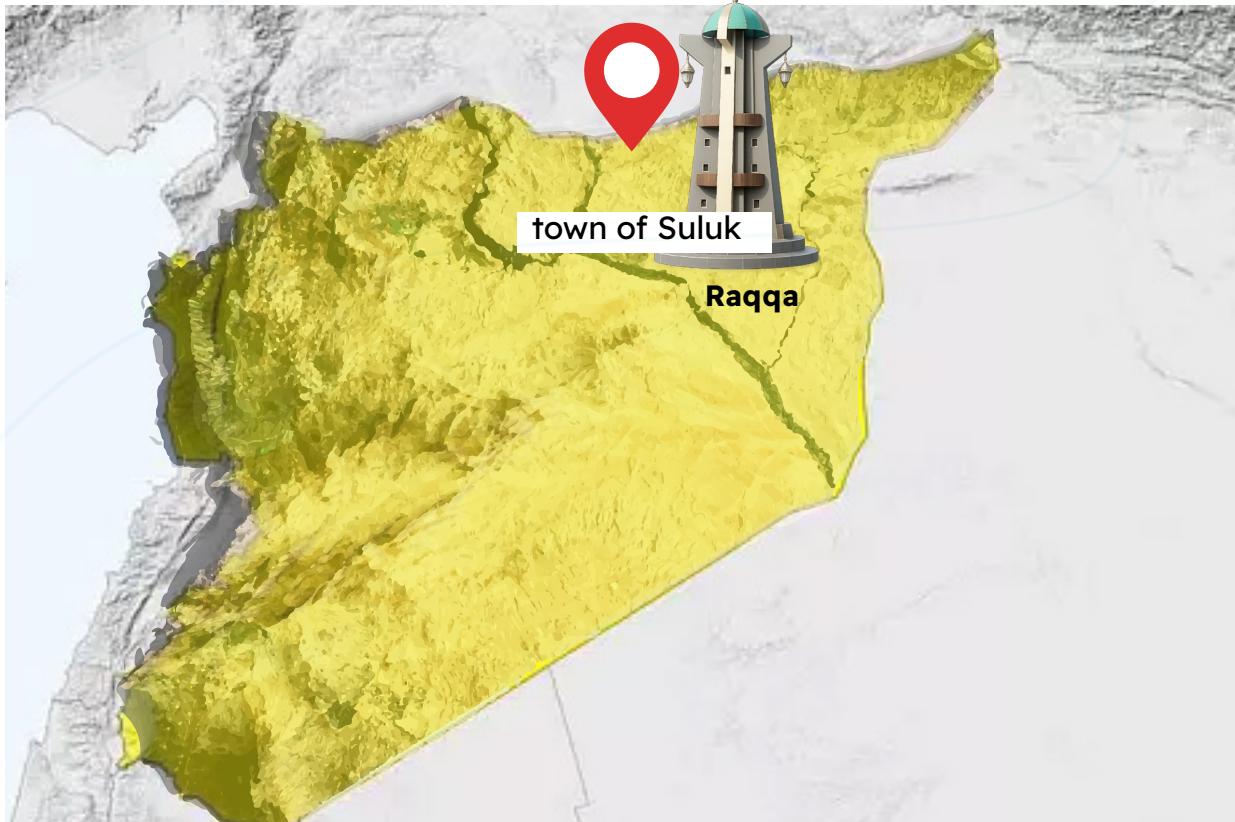


Statement

Documentation of the Killing of Four Civilians, Detentions, Displacement, and Attacks on Property in the Town of Suluk in the Raqqa Countryside between May 26 and 28

An Investigation Should Be Launched and Accountability Measures Must Be Taken Following the Involvement of the “Suqur al-Sunna” faction in Documented Incidents in the Town of Suluk

Friday 6 June 2025



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.

The town of Suluk, located in the northern countryside of Raqqa Governorate, witnessed a series of security incidents between May 26 and 28, 2025. The incident followed an assault attributed to a member of the «Suqur al-Sunna» faction against a civilian from the town. This led to protests that later developed into armed clashes between the faction and a number of the town's residents.

According to documentation by the Syrian Network for Human Rights, four civilians were killed, including two who were summarily executed, and eight others were injured. Additionally, detentions, the burning and looting of private civilian property were documented, as well as the displacement of a number of families from the town during the incidents.

Sequence of events between May 26 and 28, 2025

Monday, May 26, 2025: Tensions erupted in the town of Suluk following an attack attributed to a member of the “Suqur al-Sunna” faction on a civilian who was installing an air conditioner on the roof of his home. An exchange of gunfire ensued, followed by military movements by the faction within several residential neighborhoods, prompting residents to declare a general strike the following day.

Tuesday, May 27, 2025: Residents set up a sit-in tent in the town, demanding the removal of the “Suqur al-Sunna” faction from residential areas. In the evening, fighters from the faction entered the town, and a confrontation erupted with a number of protesters. This later developed into armed clashes with local residents. The clashes ended at midnight with the faction seizing control of the town, burning the sit-in tent, and detaining at least 15 young men. They were later released following the intervention of the 60th Division, affiliated with the Ministry of Defense of the transitional government.

May 28, 2025: Reinforcements arrived from other factions affiliated with the “National Army,” in addition to internal security forces affiliated with the Ministry of Interior in the transitional government, coming from the cities of Ras al-Ain and Tal Abyad. Military police were deployed throughout the town in an attempt to contain tensions and control the security situation.

According to information obtained by the Syrian Network for Human Rights, the “Suqour al-Sunna” faction is one of the military formations whose integration under the Ministry of Defense in the transitional government had not been announced at the time of writing this statement.

The most prominent violations that accompanied the “Suqur al-Sunna” faction’s attack on the town of Suluk between May 26 and 28, 2025:

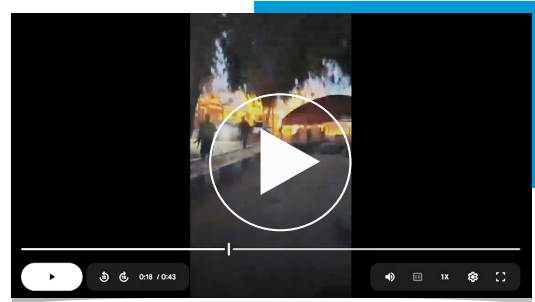
According to the initial findings we documented, the following violations were recorded:

- Two civilians were killed after being detained, under circumstances that suggest they there killing was field executions.
- Two other civilians were killed during clashes inside the town.
- Eight civilians were injured.
- Fighters from the “Suqur al-Sunna” faction arbitrarily detained at least 15 young men. They were later released.
- Three homes were burned, and a shop in the town’s market was looted.
- More than 20 families were displaced to more stable areas.
- Video footage documenting the detention of civilians based on their tribal affiliations, with threats to force them to make coerced statements.

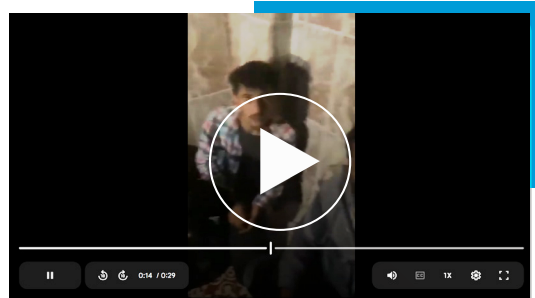
Preliminary analysis of visual media documenting violations:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights obtained video clips published via open sources, analyzed them, and verified their authenticity and filming dates. The following was revealed:

The first clip shows a moment of intense machine gun fire (the type and caliber of which were not identified) within a populated residential area. The gunfire occurred in long, random bursts. Several individuals participated in the shooting, using various individual weapons. The clip does not show any evidence of an actual clash or specific target. The angle of the camera and the movement of the gunmen indicate that the shooting occurred outside the context of direct combat and is likely related to celebratory behavior, posing a direct threat to the safety of civilians.



The second clip documents the moment a number of civilians were detained by members of the “Suqur al-Sunna” faction. They were later released following the intervention of the “60th Division” of the Ministry of Defense in the transitional government.



Legal Conclusions

Documented facts in the town of Suluk, during the period between 26 and 28 May 2025, indicate the possibility of multiple violations of international human rights law, as follows:

- 1. Extrajudicial killings:** Four civilians were documented killed, two during direct clashes and two after being detained by an unofficial entity. This likely constitutes a violation of Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which stipulates that “everyone has the right to life” and obliges states or authorities to investigate every death occurring during detention or security operations and to ensure that force is not used excessively or unlawfully.
- 2. Arbitrary detention:** At least 15 civilians were documented to have been detained without clear legal procedures or access to a judicial authority, in direct violation of Article 9 of the Covenant, which prohibits arbitrary deprivation of liberty and guarantees every detainee the right to be informed of the reasons for their arrest and to be brought promptly before a judge.
- 3. Coercive treatment in detention:** Video footage and field information revealed that some detainees were threatened and coerced into making statements, in violation of Article 7 of the Covenant, which prohibits subjecting anyone to torture, cruel treatment, or coercion to extract a statement.
- 4. Attacks on Private Property:** Three residential homes were burned, and a commercial store was looted, in violation of Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees everyone the right to own property and prohibits arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of property.
- 5. Use of Weapons in Populated Areas:** One video clip showed heavy gunfire from single-shot and medium-caliber weapons inside a residential neighborhood, in the absence of an apparent threat and without adherence to legal controls regarding the use of force in non-combat situations, which require respect for the principles of proportionality and necessity, and the presence of direct official supervision.
- 6. Internal displacement:** The documentation of the displacement of more than 20 families during the events reflects the impact of the deteriorating security situation on the population’s right to safe residence. This requires special protection under international human rights law, particularly with regard to the right to housing and freedom of movement.

Recommendations

Open an independent investigation to clarify the circumstances of deaths, particularly those associated with detention, and ensure that the investigation's findings are made public within a transparent legal framework.

- Review the detention mechanisms adopted by local formations and ensure their compliance with legal controls, including the need for judicial orders and administrative oversight, to limit unlawful detention.
- Refrain from any coercive practices against detainees, ensure respect for human dignity and freedom of expression, and document any violations and address them through the relevant authorities.
- Ensure the protection of private property and prevent attacks on individual property through effective preventative measures and compensate those affected in the event of violations.
- Control the use of weapons within residential areas and regulate their carrying through written instructions and ongoing training to avoid any uncontrolled use that could endanger civilians.
- Monitor the conditions of temporarily displaced families, document the reasons for displacement, and meet their needs, ensuring their right to safe return or access to alternatives that preserve their dignity.
- Strengthening preventive measures by disseminating codes of conduct, activating internal oversight units within local authorities, and ensuring the availability of transparent and civil grievance channels for residents.



SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



info@snhr.org
www.snhr.org

No justice without accountability

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