

Statement

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Strengthening Participation of Women in the Transitional Phase in Syria to Guarantee Their Rights and Justice

Tuesday 25 November 2025

The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented from March 2011 to November 25, 2025

killing of

29,358

women and girls in Syria

Bashar al-Assad's regime forces are responsible for approximately

%76

of extrajudicial killings

%83

of women arrested or forcibly disappeared

at least

11,583

incidents of sexual violence against women

at least

10,257

women

who remain detained or forcibly disappeared in Syria

the deaths of

118

women (adult females) due to torture in Syria

attacks on at least

919

medical facilities in Syria

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.

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Syrian Network for Human Rights issues a statement highlighting the extent of the losses and grave violations suffered by women and girls in Syria since March 2011. On this day, November 25th of each year, the Network issues annual reports on women that monitor the various patterns of violations against women and girls, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance, torture, sexual violence, forced displacement, harassment and discrimination, based on its documented database that is updated periodically.

These reports aim to provide a reliable database that can be used to support transitional justice processes, strengthen accountability mechanisms for violations, protect the rights of women and girls, and ensure that the grave violations they suffered during the transitional phase that Syria is going through after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime on December 8, 2024 are not repeated.

Despite the widespread and systematic violations against Syrian women, women have remained at the forefront of civil, human rights and humanitarian efforts; participating in documentation processes, supporting victims and their families, leading community and local initiatives, and engaging in political and civil work, while bearing a double burden as a result of displacement, loss of a breadwinner or additional family and economic responsibilities.

Women in Syria have made immense sacrifices throughout the years of struggle for political change, playing pivotal roles in this process. However, the current reality reveals limited representation of women in decision-making positions during the transitional phase, and a clear weakness in their presence within institutions and leadership roles. This reflects the fact that the opportunities offered by the transitional phase, however significant, have not yet translated into genuine and sufficient female participation in leadership and decision-making. This poses a major challenge to protecting women's rights and ensuring their equality within the political transition and state-building process.

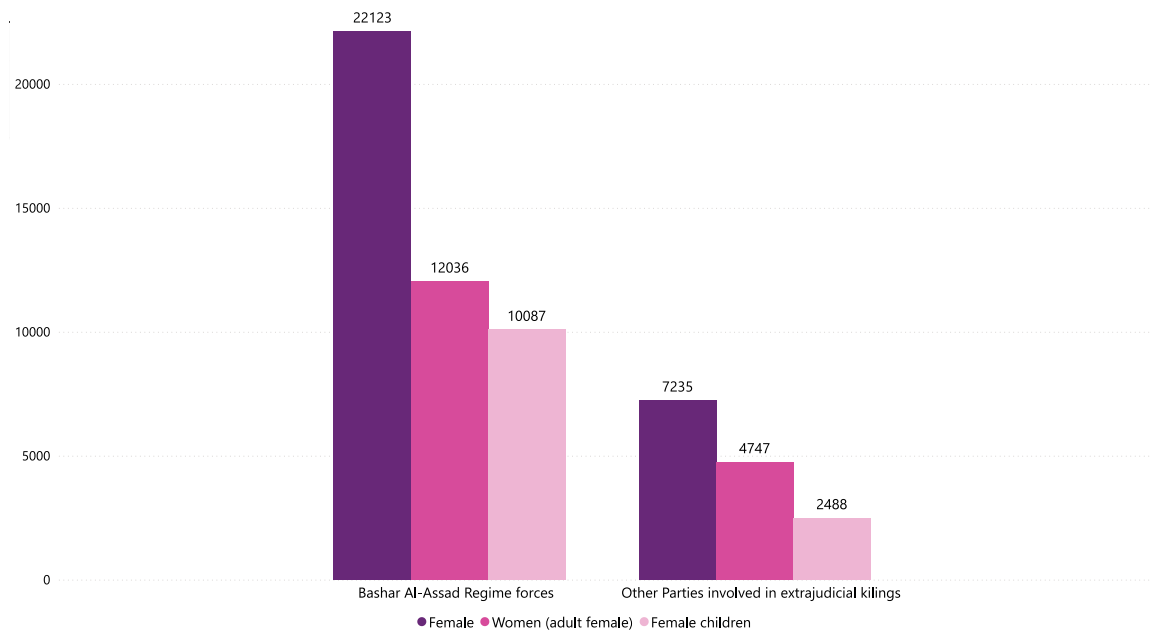
FIRST: TOLL OF VIOLATIONS AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SYRIA

The Syrian Network for Human Rights relies on a multi-source methodology to document violations in order to provide accurate and reliable data on what women and girls in Syria have been subjected to since March 2011. The data has shown a significant increase in the volume and diversity of serious violations. The following is a summary of the most prominent of these violations monitored by SNHR:

Extrajudicial killings:

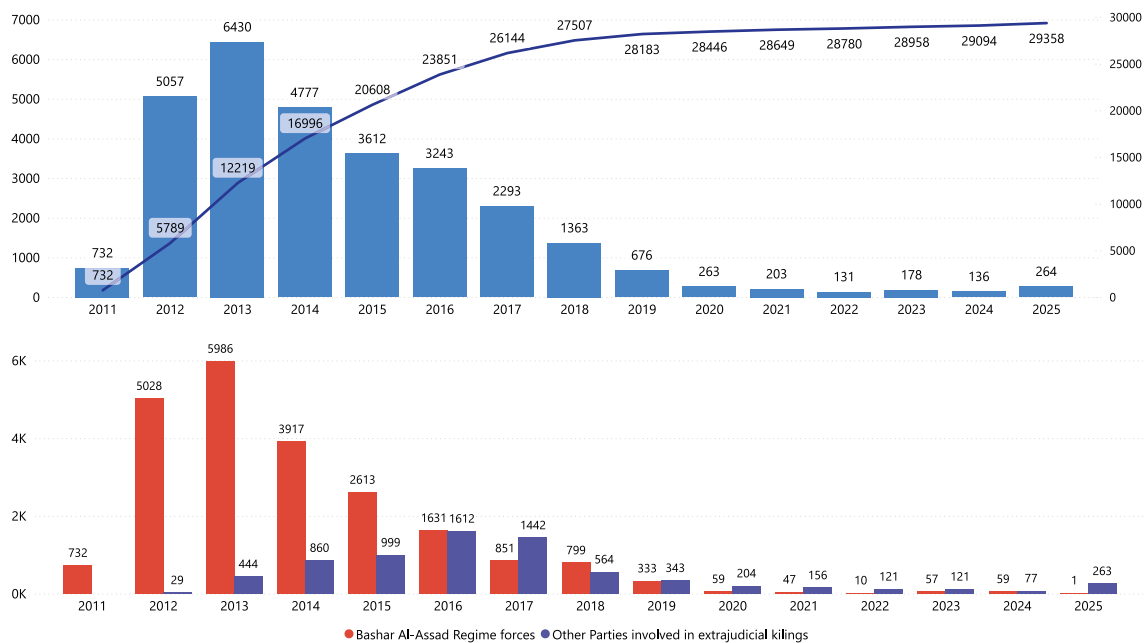
The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented the killing of 29,358 women and girls in Syria between March 2011 and November 25, 2025. These killings are distributed as follows:

- **Bashar al-Assad regime forces:** 22,123, comprising 12,036 adult women and 10,087 girls and children.
- **Other parties involved in extrajudicial killings:** 7,235, comprising 4,747 adult women and 2,488 girls and children.



Data indicates that Bashar al-Assad's regime forces are responsible for approximately 76% of extrajudicial killings, a percentage far exceeding that of all other parties involved. Furthermore, over 23% of the victims killed by the regime were girls and minors, reflecting a systematic policy of targeting females, both adults and children.

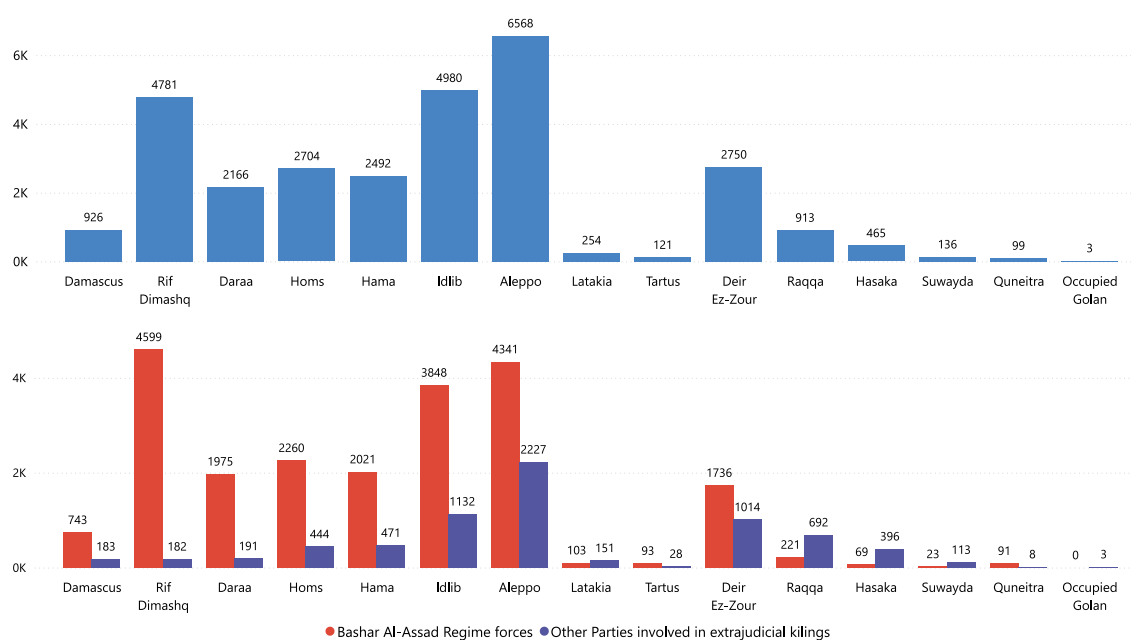
The number of female victims at the hands of the warring parties and controlling forces in Syria was distributed, by year, as follows:



Analysis of the graphs above reveals that 2013 was the worst year for the targeting of women in killings, with the network recording the highest number of victims at 6,430 women, approximately 93% of whom were killed by Bashar al-Assad’s regime forces.

This was followed by 2012, then 2014 and 2015, where Bashar al-Assad’s regime forces were also responsible for more than half of the killings documented by the network during these years, reflecting a systematic and deliberate targeting of women.

The number of female victims at the hands of the conflicting parties and controlling forces was distributed across the Syrian governorates as follows:

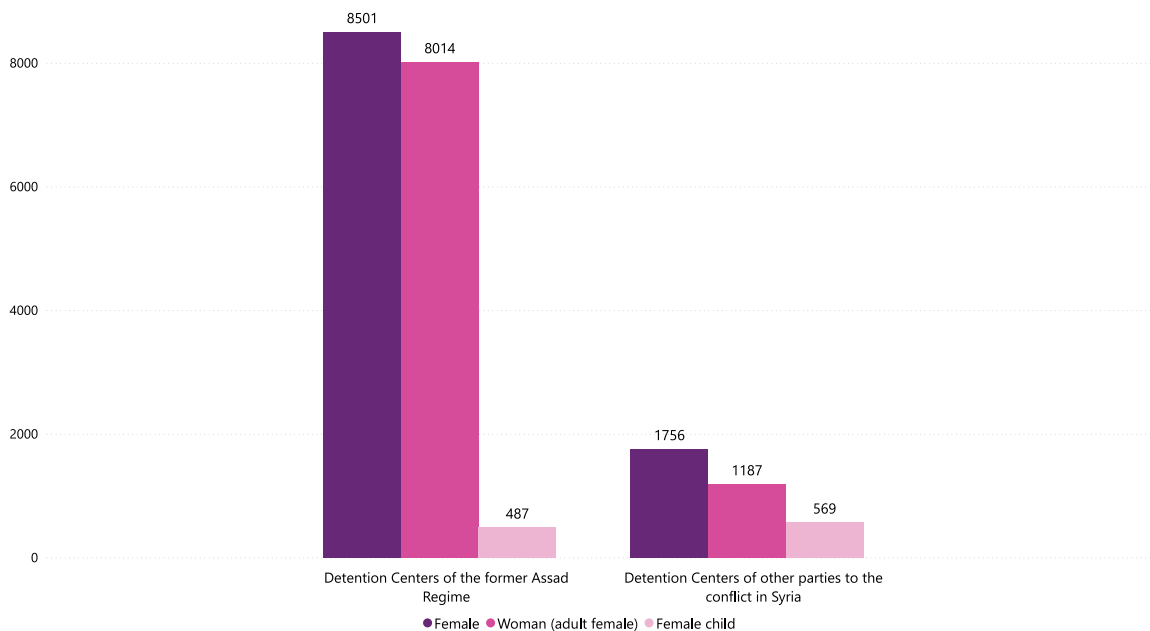


The map above shows that Aleppo Governorate was the most affected in terms of the number of female victims, followed by Idlib and then Rural Damascus. These governorates witnessed the most violent military attacks by Bashar al-Assad's regime forces, reflecting the impact of military attacks on women in the areas most affected by the Syrian conflict.

Arbitrary Detention/Arrest and Enforced Disappearance of Women:

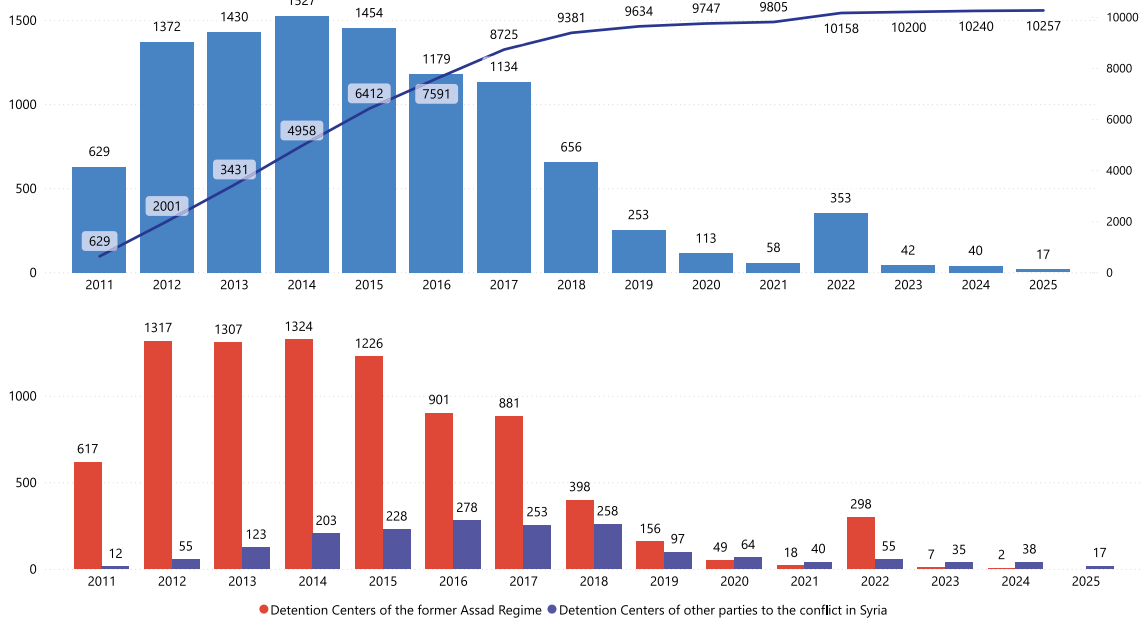
The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented at least 10,257 women who remain detained or forcibly disappeared in Syria from March 2011 to November 25, 2025, distributed as follows:

- Detention centers formerly under the control of the Bashar al-Assad regime: 8,501 women, including 8,014 adults and 487 girls.
- Detention centers formerly under the control of other parties to the conflict in Syria: 1,756 women, including 1,187 adults and 569 girls.



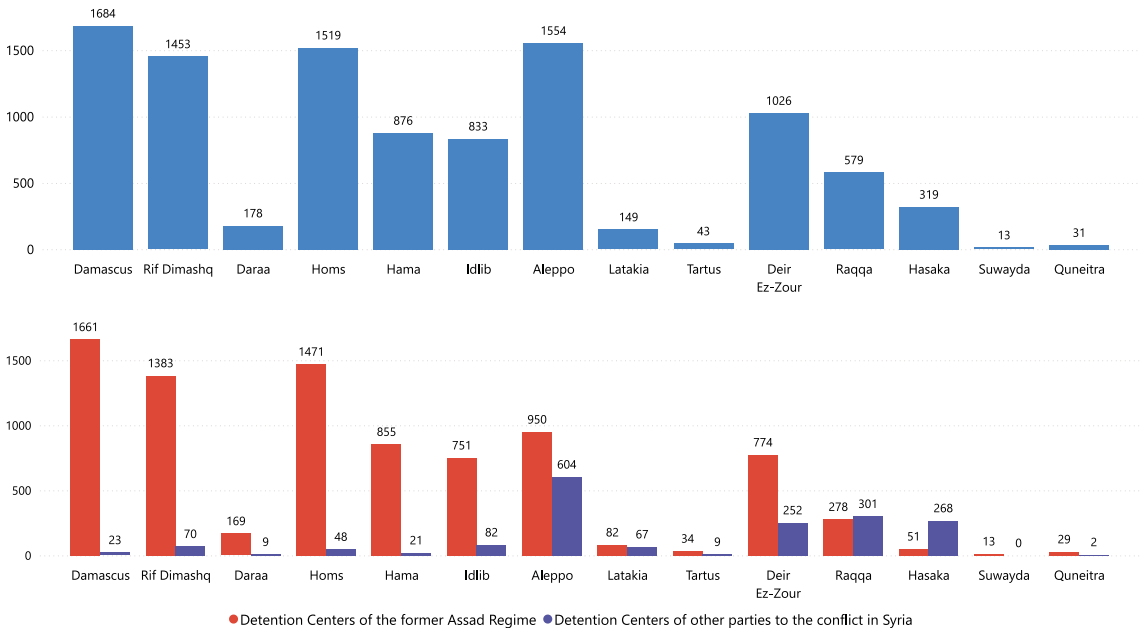
The chart detailing the number of women arrested or forcibly disappeared shows that the Bashar al-Assad regime is responsible for at least 83% of these cases, highlighting its unique targeting of women compared to other parties to the conflict. This indicates that the Assad regime deliberately pursues, arrests, detains, and disappears women for various reasons, demonstrating that these operations are carried out according to well-defined and systematic plans.

The number of female detainees/prisoners or forcibly disappeared persons in Syria, by year, is distributed as follows:



Analyzing the graphs above, it becomes clear that 2014 was the worst year in terms of targeting females with arrests, followed by 2015, then 2013, and then 2012. Bashar al-Assad’s regime was responsible for more than half of the arrests/disappearances we recorded against females throughout these years.

The number of female detainees/prisoners or forcibly disappeared persons was distributed according to the Syrian governorates as follows:

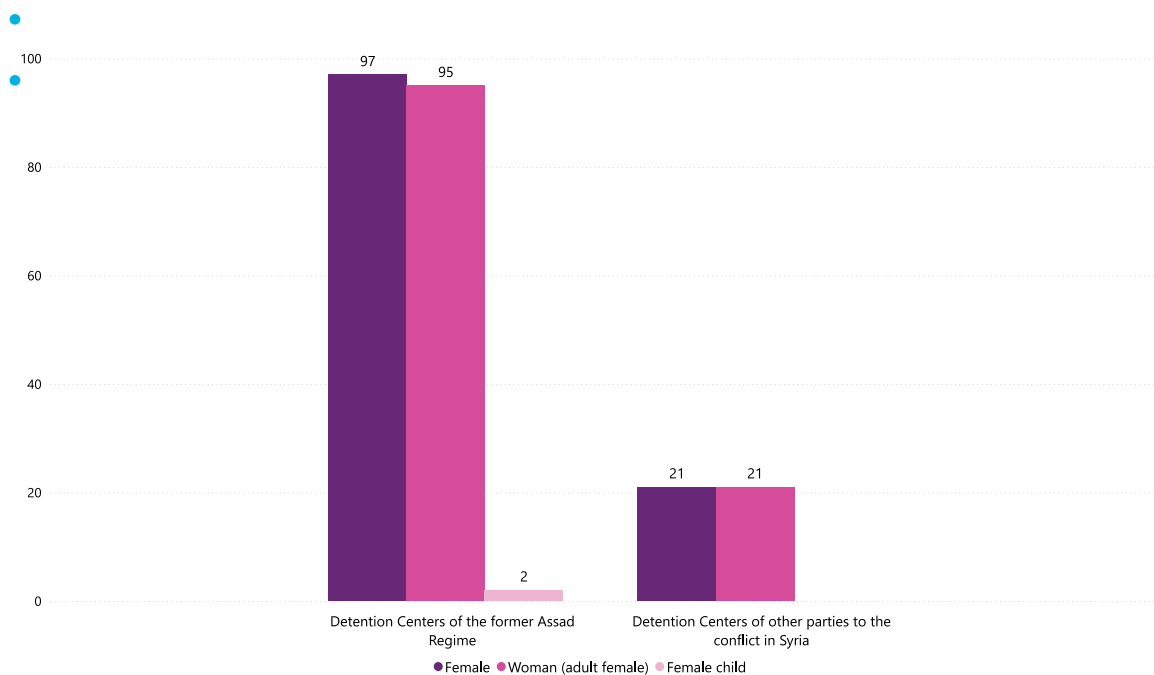


The map above shows that the highest number of arbitrary arrests/detentions of females was in the Damascus Governorate, followed by Aleppo, then Homs, then Rural Damascus.

Female Victims of Torture:

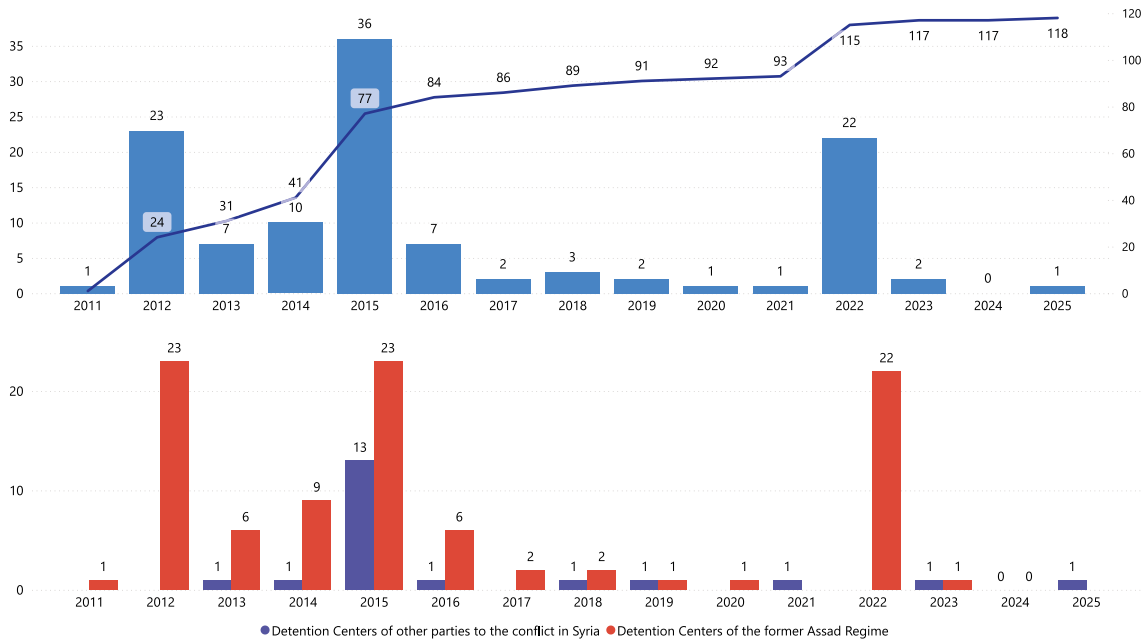
The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented the deaths of 118 women (adult females) due to torture in Syria from March 2011 to November 25, 2015. The cases were distributed as follows:

- Detention centers formerly under the control of the Bashar al-Assad regime: 97 women, including 95 adults and 2 children.
- Detention centers formerly under the control of other parties to the conflict in Syria: 21 adult women.



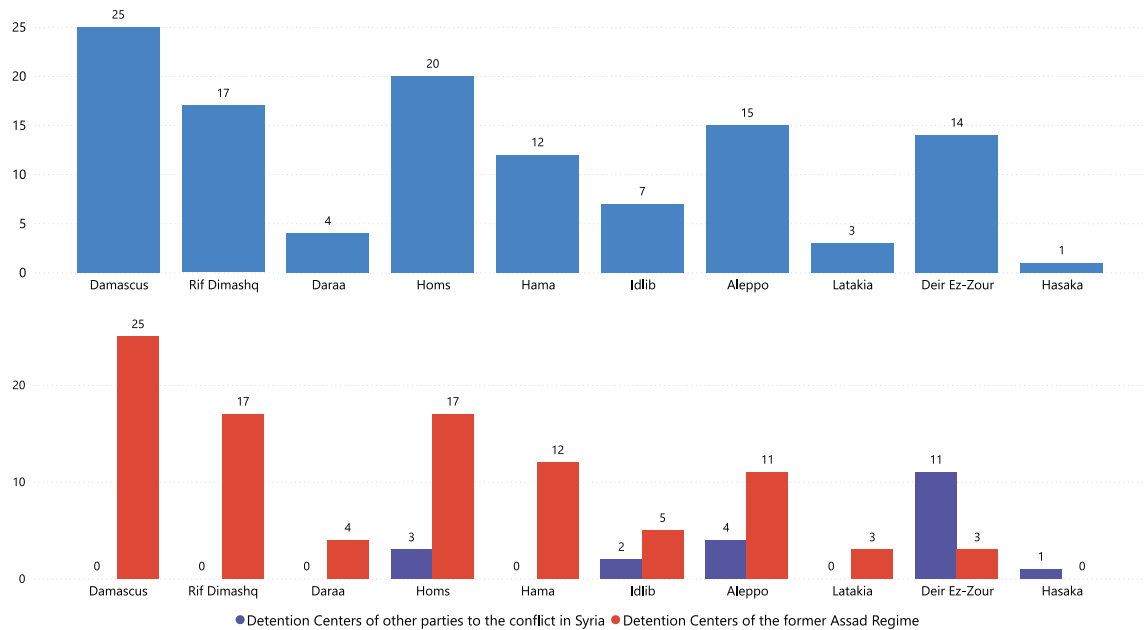
The graph of female victims of torture shows that the forces of the former Bashar al-Assad regime were responsible for the largest number of torture cases, representing 83% of all victims, which reflects his deliberate use of torture as a systematic method against females.

The number of women killed due to torture in Syria, broken down by year, is as follows:



Analysis of the graph above reveals that 2015 was the worst year for female victims of torture, followed by 2012 and then 2022. The former regime of Bashar al-Assad was solely responsible for all female deaths due to torture during these two years.

The number of female victims killed by torture was distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

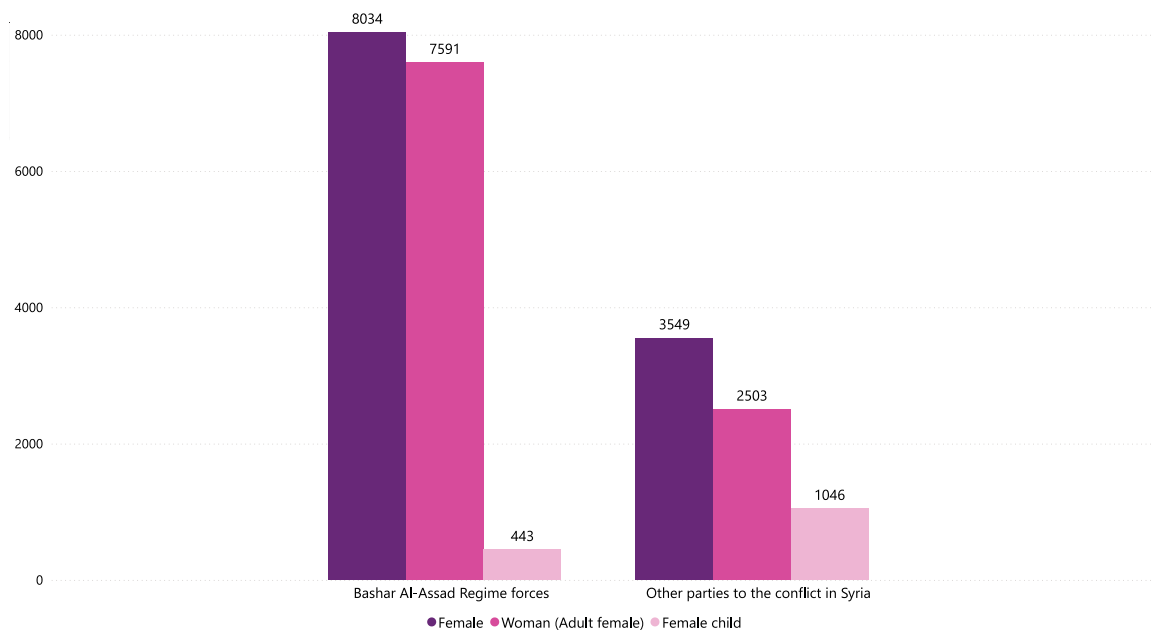


The map above shows that the highest number of female victims of torture was in Damascus, followed by Homs, then Rural Damascus, then Aleppo, and finally Deir Ez-Zour.

Sexual violence against women:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented at least 11,583 incidents of sexual violence against women, including girls under 18, perpetrated by parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria between March 2011 and November 25, 2025. These incidents were distributed among the perpetrators as follows:

- **Bashar al-Assad regime forces:** 8,034 incidents, including 7,591 against adult women and 443 against girls under 18.
- **Other parties to the conflict in Syria:** 3,549 incidents, including 2,503 against adult women and 1,046 against girls under 18.

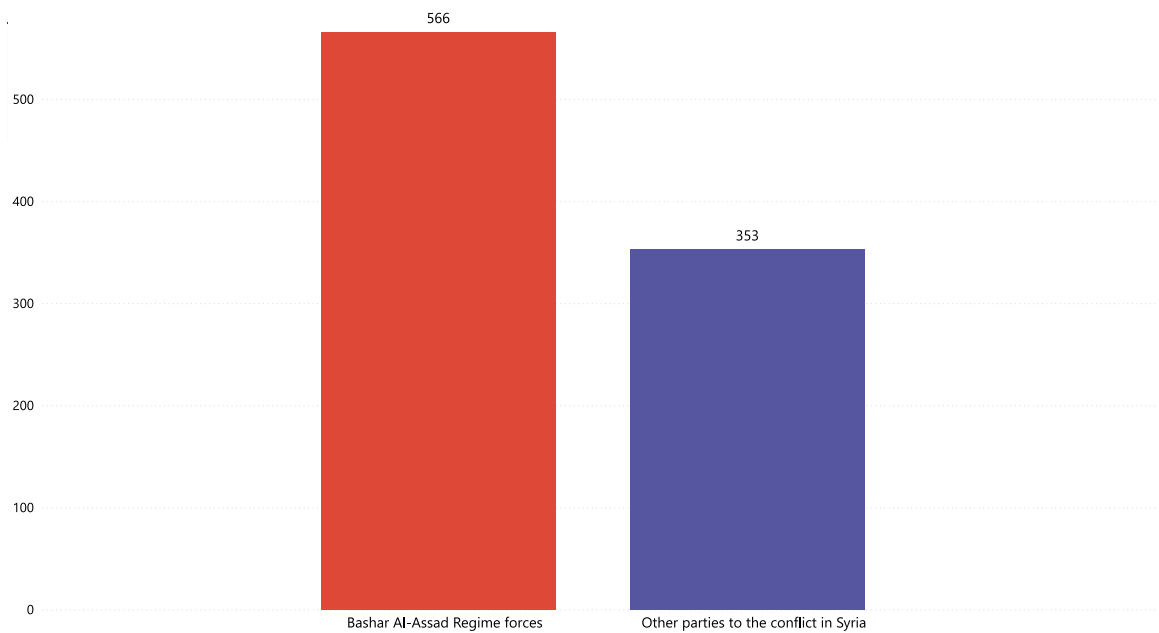


Previous data indicates that forces loyal to the former regime of Bashar al-Assad were the most implicated in perpetrating incidents of sexual violence against women, accounting for approximately 69% of all recorded incidents. This highlights their use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and revenge to terrorize the population. Other parties to the conflict also used sexual violence as a discriminatory tool to blackmail victims and their families. This data demonstrates that sexual violence against women in Syria was a prominent feature of the conflict.

Attacks on Medical Facilities:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented attacks on at least 919 medical facilities in Syria between March 2011 and November 25, 2015. These attacks were attributed to:

- Bashar al-Assad regime forces: 566
- Other parties to the conflict in Syria: 353



The data shows that Bashar al-Assad’s regime forces are responsible for about 62% of all attacks on medical facilities, reflecting an escalating approach against health facilities. This high number of attacks on medical facilities, which already suffer from a lack of availability and a limited number of facilities, has led to a decline in the levels of health care and basic services needed by women.

SECOND: THE SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS' VISION FOR PROTECTING WOMEN AND ENHANCING THEIR ROLE IN THE TRANSITIONAL PHASE

In light of the scale of violations and losses suffered by women and girls in Syria since March 2011, the Syrian Network for Human Rights believes that the transitional phase represents a crucial opportunity to strengthen the protection of women and girls and ensure their active participation in society and the state.

This vision is based on three main pillars:

1. Enhancing Women's Community and Institutional Participation:

- a.** Empowering women to participate in institutional reform and decision-making processes, including national committees, local bodies, and civil initiatives, to ensure that public policies and plans reflect the needs of women and girls and protect their rights.
- b.** Systematically involving women in the restructuring of judicial, security, and other law enforcement institutions to ensure that a women's rights and protection perspective is integrated into the structure, legislation, and practices of these institutions.

2. Strengthening Legal and Social Protection:

- a.** Developing clear and effective legal frameworks that comply with international human rights standards, including enacting and amending laws to prevent violence against women and girls, criminalizing all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, and ensuring the prosecution of perpetrators of serious crimes.
- b.** Establishing integrated support programs that include healthcare, psychosocial support, and economic empowerment for women, with a focus on protecting them from arbitrary arrest, forced displacement, or any other violations they may face during the transitional phase.

3. Continued human rights documentation of violations

- a.** The need to continue collecting information on violations against women and girls in a systematic and reliable manner, while following up on field verification of cases as much as possible, to ensure the availability of accurate and reliable data in various transitional justice pathways, thereby enhancing the protection of rights, supporting accountability efforts, and contributing to the development of evidence-based public policies.

THIRD: RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on this vision, the Syrian Network for Human Rights recommends taking a set of practical measures to enhance the protection and empowerment of women and girls during the transitional phase:

1. Legal and Institutional Protection

- a. Amend and develop national laws to ensure the protection of women and girls from all forms of violence and discrimination, including laws governing arrest, detention, and investigation, anti-torture laws, and rules related to family and community discrimination.
- b. Establish or support specialized national bodies and local units to monitor violations against women and girls, ensure follow-up on complaints, and provide legal and psychological support to victims.
- c. Ensuring the strict application of penalties against perpetrators of violations, with regular follow-up on cases of violence against women and girls by the competent judicial authorities.
- d. Establishing local mechanisms to protect women in public spaces and conflict-affected areas, including the creation of temporary protection centers for women and girls at risk.

2. Empowering Community and Political Participation:

- a. Enhancing women's participation in national committees, local bodies, and civic initiatives, ensuring their direct role in shaping community and development policies and plans.
- b. Supporting training, capacity-building, and professional empowerment programs for women to guarantee their active participation in the civic, political, and economic sectors, including training local leaders on integrating women into decision-making processes.
- c. Encouraging women to assume leadership roles in community initiatives and public service institutions to ensure their needs and priorities are reflected in local and national decisions.

3. Social, Psychological, and Economic Support:

- a. Providing psychosocial support programs for women and girls affected by violence, displacement, or loss of a breadwinner, including individual and group counseling services and referrals to specialized services when needed.

- b.** Supporting economic and social projects that promote women's independence and self-reliance, such as small businesses, vocational training programs, and reintegration into the labor market.
- c.** Ensure women and girls have access to essential services, including education, healthcare, shelter, and social protection, with particular priority given to areas affected by displacement or military operations.
- d.** Develop and implement special support programs for widows and female heads of households to ensure family stability and protect them from poverty, exploitation, and economic abuse.

4. Documentation and Preservation of Human Rights Data:

- a.** Continue to collect information and document violations systematically and regularly against women and girls, while conducting ongoing field verification to enhance the reliability and accuracy of the data.
- b.** Establish a reliable national database of violations committed against women and girls to support local justice processes and transitional mechanisms, and to inform institutional planning for protection and support programs.
- c.** Activate mechanisms for reporting violations at the community level, including helplines and complaint centers, while ensuring confidentiality and protecting victims and witnesses from any retaliation or pressure.

5. Community Awareness and Education:

- a.** Implementing comprehensive educational programs on the rights of women and girls in Syrian society, taking into account the cultural and social specificities of each region and targeting different age groups.
- b.** Training local staff in schools, associations, health centers, and law enforcement institutions on how to deal with women and girls affected by violations in a way that respects their dignity and rights and provides them with the necessary psychological and legal support.
- c.** Organizing media and community campaigns to promote the role of women in leadership and civil society, highlighting their contributions to the political transition and reconstruction process, and raising community awareness of the importance of protecting women from violence and discrimination as a fundamental condition for building a just and safe society for all its members.



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No justice without accountability

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