

IS executing Syrian regime soldiers who were arrested as prisoners in Ar-Raqqa is a war crime

375 Syrian regime soldiers at least were executed

Introduction

SNHR methodology doesn't include counting the casualties of the Syrian regime and IS since both of the two faction prohibit SNHR from working in their territories in addition to pursuing SNHR activists. For more details, please see the other five categories of victims that SNHR documents in our methodology.

The main purpose of this report is to highlight the war crimes that IS perpetrated when it executed tens of Syrian regime soldiers after they were arrested as prisoners in the battles of At-Tabaqa military airbase by the Islamic State. These atrocious violations bring to mind tens of massacres that the Syrian regime used to perpetrate when it raided these areas where rebels and whole families were field-executed. Please see a study published by SNHR about the most prominent massacres perpetrated by the Syrian regime.

It is worth noting that there are no official or unofficial organization that document the casualties of the Syrian regime. The Syrian government haven't sent any casualties lists since March 2012. The total number of victims reported by the Syrian regime at that time was only 2469 while SNHR reported lists of more than 45,000 victims including civilians who support the Syrian regime as we managed, to a certain extent, to document them unlike the Syrian regime's military personnel, Shabihas, Syrian militias such as the National Defense Army.

Details

On 23 August, 2014, the Syrian regime official TV channel broadcasted a report from At-Tabaqa airbase to confirm that it completely regained control over the airbase and its surroundings. The report showed a number of warplanes and also highlighted the aerial arsenal of the airbase. On the next day, 24 August, 2014, the Syrian regime recognized suddenly that IS has taken over At-Tabaqa military airbase and referred to the incident as "evacuation".

Clashes went on for a long time near the airbase after it was taken between IS and the Syrian regime. Soldiers hid in houses until they ran out of ammunition. The pursuing and arresting lasted for 48 hours after the end of the clashes where some of the solders tried to escape to Aleppo countryside via Athrya military checkpoint. However, they were captured after IS took over the checkpoint.

The Syrian regime tried to end the siege using missiles and aerial shelling in addition to sending 200 special forces soldiers as reinforcements in order to open the road for about 250 soldiers who escaped from At-Tabaqa airbase to a desert farm “Al-Ajrawi” waiting to be saved. Nonetheless, the reinforcements were ambushed and IS managed to capture hundreds of soldiers including tens of the soldiers who escaped.

Afterwards, the Islamic State executed those soldiers near a brick factory in Ar-Raqqa. SNHR wasn't able to count the exact number of soldiers who were executed as its only source was the pictures and video footages published by IS.

Additionally, The Islamic State executed, on other occasions, more soldiers. For instance, it executed 40 prisoners at least in Al-Hamrat area near Ar-Raqqa on 28 August, 2014.

SNHR estimates, through cross-checking and verifying tens of video footages and pictures published by IS and its fighters on their verified twitter accounts and also on some websites that support the Syrian regime and publish some pictures of the Syrian regime casualties, the number of prisoners who were executed by IS to be 375 at minimum.

Also, IS published video footages showing about 150 semi-naked prisoners being taken by IS fighters who were saying sectarian and sarcastic remarks.

Furthermore, IS published pictures of more prisoners being taken in a minivan which apparently was in the same area. Also, the faction published video footage showing tens of prisoners including soldiers and officers in being insulted by IS fighters in a closed place.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Islamic State has perpetrated a war crime when it executed those Syrian regime soldiers and violated the laws of war. IS doesn't recognize any legal legitimacy whether it was local or international.

The International Community's failure to protect civilians since the beginning of the Syrian revolution and only taking part in watching, commenting and, sometimes, supporting the Syrian regime's crimes especially in perpetrating 48 ethnic-cleansing massacres have given IS's sectarian discourse a significant legitimacy. The International Community is still adopting a double-standard policy especially in regard to the Shiite militias that are fighting with the Syrian regime.

Attachments and evidences

A [video report](#) by the official Syrian media apparatus from At-Tabaqa military airbase one day before it fell on 23 August, 2014. The Syrian regime, in the report, claims that the airbase is under its control and it killed many IS fighters. Also, the report shows the Syrian regime's military and aerial forces.

[Video footage](#) shows prisoner soldiers being taken to be executed while they are naked by IS fighters

[Video footage](#) of the soldiers after they were executed

Video footages showing IS fighters taking a large number of Syrian regime soldiers and officers in a desert area in their underwear

One of the Syrian regime soldiers who was arrested by IS being interrogated and insulted.

Tens of soldiers and officers are standing behind him naked

Syrian regime soldiers and officers who were arrested by IS

IS has executed and beheaded the pilot Assef Shawkat

Hundernds of Syrian regime soldiers, who were arrested, being taken to be executed

IS executing tens of Syrian regime soldiers

A line of Syrian regime soldiers in the dessert being taken to be executed by IS

Syrian regime soldiers and officers after they were arrested by IS

IS fighters killing soldiers and officers in At-Tabaqa airbase

A number of prisoners in a minivan

A group of IS fighters before they headed to attack At-Tabaqa military airbase

