



241 Violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement Through the Use of Barrel Bombs Only 241 explosive barrel bombs in March 2016 and the use is ongoing

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I. Introduction:

Even though the cessation of hostilities is taking place, but the Syrian regime did not stop bombing of large areas during the past month using explosive barrels. Certainly, the frequency of use of barrel bombs and the death toll has dropped its descendants. But explosive barrels, which are a random weapon, have the effect of massive destruction. This impact does not just stop at the killing of civilian casualties, but also causes residents' displacements and terror in targeted areas. The throwing of the explosive barrels from the helicopter is considered as a savage way that leads to war. Thus, it is possible to consider each explosive barrel is a crime of war.

Unlike the Russian ambassador's announcement in the United Nations, that the Syrian regime stopped using barrel bombs, however SNHR's daily documentation proved the contrary. In this monthly report we present documented cases by time, place, and images of the Syrian regime's use of barrel bombs.

By daily observing and recording violations, after the beginning of the popular protests in March 2011, we found out that first significant use of barrel bombs by government forces (Military forces, security forces, local militias, and foreign Shiite militias) was on Monday 1 October, 2012 in Idlib – Silqean town where a helicopter dropped a barrel bomb on a two-floor residential building which collapsed completely.





It is worth noting that this might not be the first time barrel bombs were used but it was the first time it was used in such a notable manner. The international community was not familiar with that kind of weapon yet. Barrel bombs sometimes weigh quarter of ton and rely on the free fall principle. These barrels are random weapons and locally made, since it is less expensive, causes massive destruction, and causes a great loss of lives. 99% of the casualties are civilians, where the percentage of targeted women and children ranges between 12 and 35%.

The Security Council waited a year and a half before adopting resolution 2139 on 22 February, 2014 which condemned the use of barrel bombs and mentioned it by name: “Demands that all parties immediately cease all attacks against civilians, as well as the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas, including shelling and aerial bombardment, such as the use of barrel bombs”. However, government forces have continued to shell regions under the control of armed opposition with dozens of barrel bombs up to this moment.

Also, we documented some cases where government forces used barrel bombs that were loaded with toxic gases, which constitute a breach in UNSC resolutions 2118. Dated 27 September 2013, and 2209, dated 6 March 2015.

This report depicts the toll of barrel bombs used, the shelling outcomes and aftermath, in addition to the most significant facilities that were shelled with barrel bombs that fell on the Syrian governorates keeping in mind all the challenges and obstacles we face.

The only conflict party who possesses this kind of weapons is the ruling regime; however its officials deny the use of these barrel bombs as weapons just like they deny all their other crimes. Additionally, the current government prohibits all different kinds of media outlets or independent international organizations. This report depicts the use of barrel bombs by the Syrian government only, regardless of the other conflict parties like armed opposition, extremist Islamic groups and Kurdish Self Management Forces) since they do not possess airpower.

SNHR studies and reports prove that most of the attacks were deliberate and targeted crowded civilian areas. The government’s aerial bombardment, displacement and destruction it causes are apparently aimed at thwarting the establishment of any governance model that may serve as a substitute for the Assad government.

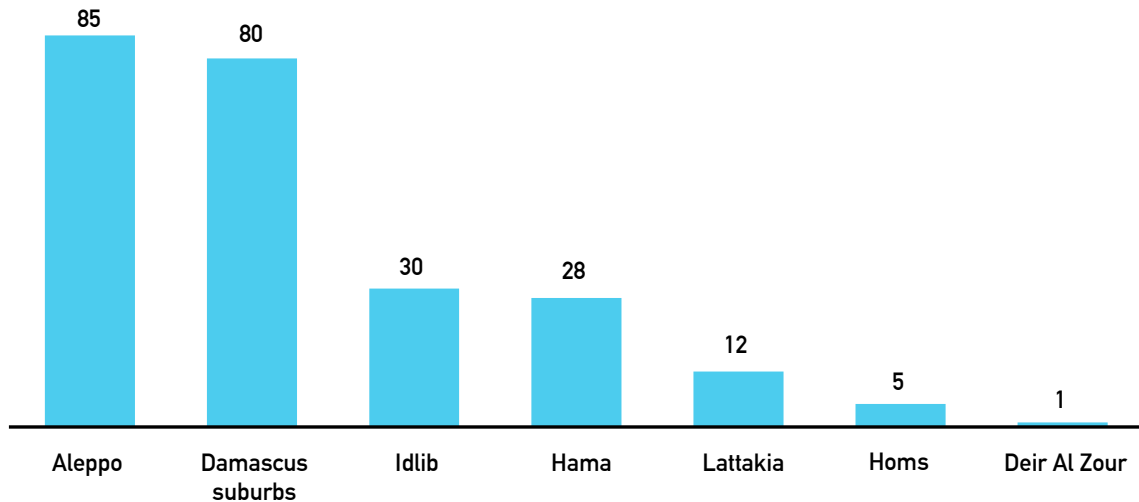




II. Executive Summary:

A. Government Barrel Bomb that were dropped in March 2016:

SNHR was able to document not less than 241 barrel bombs that were dropped by government forces in March 2016, detailed as follows:



These barrel bombs killed three civilians according to SNHR's documentation team detailed as follows: a woman and her daughter were killed in Aleppo and a woman in Deir Al Zour.

III. Report Details:

A. Death toll due to the use of explosive barrel bombs in March 2016:

• Aleppo Province:

On 17 March 2016, the regime's helicopters threw several explosive barrels on the «Al- Najarah Village», « southern suburb of Aleppo» that is under the control of armed opposition groups, which led to the deaths of a woman and her child.

• Deir Al Zour

On 4 March 2016, the regime's helicopters threw explosive barrels on the neighborhood of «Hamidiyah» in Deir Al Zour province that is under the control of ISIL, which led to the death of a woman.





III. Attachments:

A [video](#) that depicts the regime's helicopters throwing explosive barrels on Kfar Nabouda in the suburb of Hama province on 12 March 2016

A [Photo](#) that depicts the 4 explosive barrels bomb shelling on the town of Khan Sheeh governorate of Damascus suburbs on 8 March 2016

An image that depicts regime's helicopter shooting the barrel bomb on Khan Sheeh town, governorate of Damascus on 19 March 2016



Conclusions and Recommendations:

Legal Conclusions

1. The Syrian government has, beyond any doubt, violated Security Council resolution 2139, 2254 and the cessation of hostilities agreement, government forces used barrel bombs in a widespread and systematic manner. Furthermore, the Syrian government perpetrated the crime of murder in a widespread and systematic manner according to Article VII of The International Criminal Court Rome Statute.





Additionally, it violated many principles of the international humanitarian law and perpetrated tens of crimes that can be classified openly as war crimes through its indiscriminate and proportionate bombing.

2. SNHR notes that the bombing using explosive barrels is an act of indiscriminate bombing that targeted armless civilians, thus the government forces and its militias have violated the articles of the international law for human rights which guarantee the right to live. Furthermore these violations were perpetrated during a non-international armed conflict and hence can be absolutely classified as war crimes.

3. The random attacks committed by the government forces are considered violations of the customary international law considering the fact that government forces have attacked residential areas rather than a specific military target.

4. These attacks, especially aerial bombing, have caused immeasurable humanitarian and material losses. There are strong indicators that prove that the damage was deeply severe compared to the expected military advantage.

5. The magnitude of this wide systematic frequent bombing, the level of its excessive strength, its military nature, and the coordinated approach of these attacks must be based on high orders, and a state policy.

6. Government forces, and all of its leaderships and forms, are responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes as well as any parties that support the Syrian government politically, materially, and militarily – such as the Russian government, the Iranian government, and Hezbollah in addition to the weapon manufacturing companies. All of these parties must be prosecuted for the crimes they perpetrated, or contributed to, against the Syrian people.

Recommendations

The Security Council

1. The Security Council should take serious steps in order to implement its resolutions which have become ineffective and thus lost all of its credibility and purpose.

2. Also, it should impose an arms embargo on the Syrian government and prosecute anyone who supplies the Syrian government with money and weapon considering that those resources are being used to perpetrate crimes and serious human rights violations.

3. The Security Council is the party who has the authority to refer the Syrian case to the International Criminal Court. Instead of preserving peace and security, the Security Council is hindering this step. Everyone responsible for war crimes and crimes against must be prosecuted.

Acknowledgments

Our most profound condolences go out to the victims' families and friends and our thanks to the local activists and families who contributed majorly to this report.

