27,226 Females Have been Killed in Syria since March 2011

A Suffering Syrian Woman is a Recipe for a Torn Country and Displaced Society
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 analyses in Syria.

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I. Introduction and Methodology
In a similar fashion to their male counterparts, Syrian females have experienced all the same patterns of violations committed against the rest of the Syrian people, though with additional psychological, social, and physical hardships. It is safe to say that Syrian women and girls have been subjected to the worst of the suffering inflicted on all parts of Syrian society over the past eight years in Syria, particularly since the beginning of the popular uprising for freedom in March 2011. This has been exacerbated by the continuing existence of certain regressive societal structures and social norms conventionally associated with tradition, customs, or religious interpretations some of which normalized a discriminatory worldview and behaviors amongst some sections of society against Syrian females. These have been used by some to legitimize and justify violence and discrimination against women and girls, besides of course the major patterns of violations, such as including such violations as murder, torture, sexual violence, and enforced disappearance, among others. As such, it might be difficult to cover all the various practices and violations that should be condemned. Instead we must hope that the major violations and egregious crimes come to an end, with the subsequent respite offering a chance to condemn other patterns of violations in our next annual report.

The internal armed conflict that ensued after the regime responded to peaceful protests with months of murderous brutality forced vast changes on Syrian females. The massive toll of male deaths and disappearances, killing fathers, brothers, and sons and robbing families of their primary providers, also imposed an additional burden upon the woman, with the number of families in which a woman assumed the main provider's role, increasing steeply.
As such, women have had to assume new roles in addition to their traditional ones, which imposed a complex new set of circumstances. This new situation has placed unimaginably heavy additional material and psychological pressures on millions of Syrian women already dealing with the grief of bereavement and the trauma of a lack of any of the normal structures of security or social care, often while caring for young children whose education has been suspended or ended. Coping with all these pressures simultaneously, often without the usual relief provided by a network of supportive family and friends due to widespread displacement, has had a catastrophic effect on women's emotional and psychological well-being. Further exacerbating this suffering is the absence of groups or organizations working to provide adequate care and support for Syrian women in Syria or even in asylum countries. While there are, undoubtedly, many examples of women who have miraculously overcome all of these barriers, the larger reality remains far darker and bleaker than this report can describe.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, says:

“Despite the unimaginable burdens borne and violations endured by Syrian women, a large proportion of them remain faithful to the cause of resistance against tyranny and the struggle to take back the long-withheld basic rights and freedoms of the Syrian people in their entirety, in the hopes that someday the conditions for a genuinely democratic state will exist in Syria. There must be guarantees for Syrian women’s involvement at all levels.”

SNHR has released an annual report to mark the annual International Day for the Elimination Violence against Women, which takes place on November 25 of each year, which underlines once again, that the violence being inflicted on Syrian women is unmatched in any other part of the world in light of this ferocity being ongoing, continuously escalating, and systematic and inflicted by the parties to the conflict in Syria, and first and foremost the Syrian regime and its allies.

Methodology
This report includes the toll of all the violations that the SNHR’s team has been able to document which were perpetrated against females in Syria between March 2011 and November 25, 2018. This report also summarizes the most notable of these violations, focusing particularly on those which took place between November 25, 2017, and November 25, 2018 in particular, since the crimes predating this period were covered in previous annual reports.
This report draws upon SNHR’s database that was established in March 2011 and has been regularly updated ever since. SNHR’s database compiles evidences, information, and data for incidents that we have verified and received reports about from various sources, including victims, eyewitnesses, activists, or other sources amongst our extensive network of relations which we have established with the local community since beginning of our work. All of the attacks included in this report, which were carried out by parties to the conflict in Syria, targeted wholly civilian areas in which no military presence or weapons arsenals were documented prior to or during the attacks. Also, the aggressing parties failed to warn the civilians in the vicinity prior to the attacks as required by international humanitarian law.

While the overwhelming majority of females who have experienced violations are civilians, a small minority of those affected have been active in the conflict as fighters involved directly in hostilities or as members of reserve units, or in performing assisting or supporting functions to military forces, either voluntarily or forcibly. This report will only focus on female victims who were forcibly conscripted.

This report contains nine accounts by female survivors of various types of violations, including arbitrary arrest, torture, sexual violence, or persecution, as well as accounts from eyewitnesses and victims’ families. All accounts have been collected by speaking directly with the eyewitnesses, rather than citing reports or accounts collected at second hand from any open sources. We explained the purpose of these interviews beforehand to the eyewitnesses, who have given us permission to use the information they provided without being offered or given any incentives. SNHR has attempted to spare the eyewitnesses the agony of remembering the violations perpetrated against them. Guarantees were also given to conceal the identity of any eyewitnesses who preferred to use an alias.

II. Toll of the Most Notable Violations against Females according to SNHR’s Database

Extrajudicial killing

Between March 2011 and November 25, 2018, SNHR documented the killing of 27,226 females at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria, distributed as follows:
27,226 females were killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria from March 2011 until November 25, 2018 as follow:

- Syrian Regime forces: 21,573 females
  - 9,883 females
  - 11,690 males

- Russian forces: 1,301 females
  - 429 males
  - 872 females

- Other Parties: 1,231 females
  - 543 males
  - 688 females

- Parties from the Armed Opposition: 1,053 females
  - 367 males
  - 686 females

- Extremist Islamic groups: 926 females
  - 297 males
  - 629 females

- International Coalition forces: 922 females
  - 294 males
  - 628 females

- Kurdish Self-Management forces (mainly PYD): 220 females
  - 76 males
  - 144 females

As documented by SNHR

Arbitrary arrest and enforced-disappearance
Between March 2011 and November 25, 2018, SNHR recorded that no fewer than 9,906 females are still documented as being detained or forcibly disappeared at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria, distributed as follows:
Female deaths due to torture
A total of 89 women (adult female) died due to torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria between March 2011 and November 25, 2018, distributed as follows:
III. Patterns of Violations against Females by the Parties to the Conflict in the Syrian Conflict
A. Violations by the Syrian regime (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)
1. Extrajudicial killing

Syrian regime forces have carried out raids and attacks using a vast variety of weapons, against populated areas indiscriminately and in some cases deliberately. These attacks don’t distinguish between men, women or children, or between civilians and fighters. Almost every incident involving bombardment resulted in injuries or deaths among women and girls. The women of Syria have also died of starvation and deprivation of medical care in the areas that have suffocated under comprehensive years-long sieges by Syrian regime forces who refused to allow critical medical cases to be evacuated for treatment. Meanwhile, many women were traumatized both by the medical effects of miscarriages suffered as a result of the siege conditions and by the psychological trauma of losing their unborn children.

The killings that targeted Syrian girls and women have also had a heavy toll on the community with obvious implications for the future in light of the irreplaceable stabilizing role played by women in families and communities. This scenario is most tragic in the many cases of children orphaned by the deaths of their mothers.

Between March 2011 and November 25, 2018, we recorded the death of 21,573 females, divided into 11,690 adult females and 9,883 female children, at the hands of Syrian regime forces.

Females killed at the hands of Syrian regime forces make up approximately nine percent of the overall death toll resulting from extrajudicial killings. This high percentage is an indication that the Syrian regime has deliberately targeted women and girls to inflict as much harm as possible upon the fabric of the Syrian society and to underline a very clear and chilling message to the people: no-one, including females, is excluded from punishment for the ‘crime’ of demanding freedom and human rights.

On Tuesday, February 6, 2018, at around 12:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes bombed the residential neighborhoods of Douma city in Eastern Ghouta in the eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, in tandem with rocket and artillery shelling by the same forces. The attack resulted in the death of 31 civilians, including five children and 10 women (adult female). The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.
We contacted Bara Abu Ziad¹, a resident of Douma, who told us that he heard artillery shelling on the city at approximately 10:00 a.m., while he was visiting a relative. Bara added that the artillery shelling was followed by a number of airstrikes by warplanes on the city, “At around 13:00, we heard that there were people trapped in the rubble of their building, so we headed there. We saw Civil Defense – White Helmets, members trying to pull out the people trapped from underneath a destroyed building, which I think was a four-storey building. I met one of my acquaintances there who told me that his sister-in-law was visiting her family, the Kabrita family, in that building and she was trapped in the rubble.” Bara added that the rescue operations still weren’t completed when he returned home at around 17:00 after regime forces resumed artillery bombardment.

On the morning of Thursday February 8, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired a number of missiles at Irbeen city in Eastern Ghouta in the eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the death of 30 civilians, including 10 children and four women (adult female), while no fewer than 114 civilians were wounded – mostly women and children. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Anas al Ta’an, a volunteer with the Civil Defense force in the city at the time, told us that observatories had alerted the civilians about a Sukhoi-24 warplane that had taken off and was headed towards the Ghouta area. The Civil Defense was on stand-by in anticipation for any airstrike, “At around 15:00, the warplane bombed the center of the city. We rushed there and it was a horrible sight. Scattered body parts were everywhere and the vendors’ goods were tossed around [from the impact of the explosion]. We started working and we had to transfer five victims or wounded together in each ambulance because of the huge numbers. I couldn’t count the number of victims that day. The bombing never stopped.” Anas added that most of the wounded were women and children, “The warplane fired four missiles, with each missile landing about 30 meters from the last. I can’t measure the destruction that resulted from the bombing. The bombing didn’t stop for days.”

¹ We contacted him via Facebook on February 13, 2018
On Saturday, March 10, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired a number of missiles at residential buildings next to the Ajyal al Mustqabal Kindergarten for Children in eastern Kafr Sajna village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the death of eight civilians from the same family, including two children and four women (adult female). The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

On Tuesday, March 13, 2018, one woman, identified as Halima Mohammad Farzat, was shot dead by a Syrian regime sniper stationed in Katibat al Handasa (The Engineering Battalion) in northern Rasan city in the northern suburbs of Homs governorate.

On Wednesday, May 2, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes (Su-22) fired two missiles at a house in western Mashmashan village, administratively a part of Jisr al Shoughr city, in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the deaths of six civilians – three children and three women, most of them were from the same family. The village was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.
On Wednesday, May 16, 2018, Syrian regime forces stationed in Jourin Camp used shoulder-mounted rocket launchers to fire two rockets at two civilian cars as they were travelling along the public al Zeyara-Qal’at al Madiq Road near al Mansoura village in the Sahl al Ghab area in the western suburbs of Hama governorate. Six civilians, all internally displaced people, were killed in the attack, including one child and three women (adult female). The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, May 18, 2018, three women (adult females) from Mohasan village in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate were killed in artillery shelling by Syrian regime forces of al Hajar al Aswad neighborhood in southern Damascus city with a number of shells. The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

On Thursday, June 21, 2018, a woman and her daughter were killed in shelling by Syrian regime forces using a rocket launcher that targeted al Hrak city in the northeastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.
2. Arbitrary arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

Females have been involved in the popular uprising by participating in demonstrations, working to provide humanitarian aid, and caring for the wounded, the sick, and the IDPs. Women have also played a leading role in the field of media, as well as in civil activities. As a result of this, the Syrian regime has arbitrarily arrested women in a violent and abusive manner in many cases with no consideration for the stature of the female in the Syrian society and the psychological and emotional harm inflicted on families and wider society as a result of targeting women, with the Syrian regime deliberately targeting women and girls in raids on homes, at checkpoints, and even in ambushes. The regime has not restricted its persecution to those women involved in the Syrian uprising, also targeting female family members of armed opposition fighters, women from areas known for holding demonstrations, and even women with no involvement in any anti-regime activities simply in order to terrorize and intimidate the Syrian people in its efforts to silence all dissent. These actions served as a message warning of the dangers of continuing with any dissident activities, particularly since the detention and imprisonment of women in particular is seen as significantly demeaning to the status and dignity of the family in the eyes of the Syrian society.

The Syrian regime has practiced arbitrary arrests in dealing with all categories in Syrian society. Females have been subjected to the same horrendous imprisonment conditions experienced by males. Syria’s detention centers, particularly the security branches, have generally been designed primarily to hold male detainees. As such, hardly any of these centers are equipped to detain women, with no separate restrooms and women wardens to supervise female detainees.

This doesn’t necessarily mean that women’s situation in civilian prisons is dramatically different, with many female political prisoners kept in prison wings intended to house women accused of serious crimes such as murder or theft, which has undoubtedly caused severe suffering. Pregnant women and mothers arrested along with their children endure particularly extreme hardships, being deprived of all of their basic needs as mothers. Between March 2011 and November 25, 2018, we recorded no fewer than 123 incidents where children were detained along with their mothers, and no fewer than 84 incidents of childbirth inside detention centers, with all these mothers and newborn babies suffering from a lack of postnatal care and the most basic lack of securing their needs, which caused seven of those children to die.
Over the course of their imprisonment at the security branches’ detention centers, female detainees are prohibited from seeing or contacting their families, or from appointing an attorney. In many cases, the duration of imprisonment is extended for many months or even years without any cause. When asked for details of detainees’ cases, Syrian authorities routinely deny having arrested them, and cases of arbitrary arrest routinely turn into enforced disappearances.

As of November 25, 2018, we have documented the no fewer than 8,057 females, divided into 7,636 adult females and 421 female children, who are still held under arbitrary arrest or enforced disappearance at the regime’s official and unofficial detention centers.

Maha al Aboud, from al Qosour neighborhood in Eastern Hama city, was born on 1982. On March 5, 2018, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint in the al Sbahi Circle area in northern Hama city. She was taken to the Air Force Intelligence branch in the city. She was released on Saturday, March 10, 2018, after being subjected to beating and torture.

SNHR spoke to Maha2 who told us that the checkpoint officials detained her for refusing to hand over her mobile phone to them: “I was on my way to work. An officer asked me to give him my mobile phone and I declined, so he took me violently to his commanding officer who was in the car. The commanding officer took my I.D. and my mobile phone and slapped me twice on the face. He then took me in the car to Hama Military Airbase where the Air Force Intelligence branch is located. I was kept in a large room by myself for six days, during which I was tortured and beaten by the branch’s officers. No one ever asked about my charges, and I never had any in the first place. I just refused to let them steal my mobile phone. I was released after my husband paid a sum of money.”

Is’af Mohammad Qazza, a 33-year-old woman from Homs city, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on April 11, 2018 at al Masna border point with Lebanon. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate remains unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Fatima al Halwani, a housewife from al Khaldiya neighborhood in Eastern Homs city, was born in 1984. On Tuesday, April 10, 2018, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint near Homs Central Prison in northern Homs city. She was released on Friday, May 25, 2018, after being subjected to torture.

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2 Via Skype
SNHR spoke to Fatima and she told us, “The officer in charge of the checkpoint stopped three passenger buses that were passing through it and ordered the arrest of approximately 11 individuals, and I was the only woman among them. The cause of the arrest was that I was from a previously besieged city of Homs, and I found out later that the [Syrian] regime was arranging for a prisoner exchange with the rebels in Hama suburbs. They took us in one of their buses to the Air Force Intelligence branch which was nearby. I suffered from severe deprivation of food, and I would be tortured once every two or three days. The torture would often take place in the corridor. I would be kicked and slapped until I passed out, in addition to the verbal insults and indignities which were every day. I was released thanks to mediators from Homs city.”

Sabah Mohammad al Sheikh al Kilani, a 60-year-old woman from al Dmair city in eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Monday, October 8, 2018, in al Dmair city. Her fate remains unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Sara al Abdullah, a woman from Deir Ez-Zour city, was born in 1989. Sara, an engineering student at the Damascus University's Faculty of Engineering, was arbitrarily arrested by Syrian regime forces in a raid on her house in Damascus city on Saturday, April 19, 2017. She was released in October 2018.

SNHR spoke to Sara³. She told us that a squad from the State Security’s branch 40 raided her home in al Mazza neighborhood of Damascus city. They took her to the branch where she spent one night in solitary confinement, “They took me in front of my daughter, and started beating and insulting me. I spent the night in a room by myself, before I was transferred to al Khatib branch in the morning where I stayed for 68 days, during which I was subjected to all kinds of torture. All of this was because of my husband’s activism before he passed away. I was then transferred to the State Security branch in Kafrsousa where I stayed for 15 days, and then another 10 days in Adra Prison. After a total of 10 months of imprisonment, an order for my release came through in October 2018.” Sara added that her sister paid a number of large sums of money in attempts to have her set free, which only resulted in Sara being transferred from one branch to another; she was released after her sister had paid a total of approximately 11 million Syrian pounds ($21,350).

Female detainees are subjected to the same methods of torture used against males. Usually, torture starts from the very first moments of arrest, with verbal insults. The majority of the torture is carried out during interrogation, not just for the purpose of extracting confession

³ Via phone
but also to spread fear and terror among the rest of the female detainees as a form of punishment and to encourage a belief in the society that women shouldn’t expect any sort of special protection during their detention, and should be aware that they will be subjected to every form of indignity that demeans their dignity and privacy in order to crush Syrian society and have it bear the consequences of revolting against the Syrian regime.

Between March 2011 and November 25, 2018, we recorded that 71 women (adult female) died due to torture in regime custody.

The torture to which female detainees are subjected is not limited to physical torture, but also extends to the psychological level. Many women are threatened with rape and murder, and with having their family members arrested and tortured. Regime operatives will also force female detainees to watch other detainees being tortured or to hear the screams of other detainees under torture. Female detainees also suffer constant anxiety and trauma from the well-founded fear of acts of sexual violence, with incidents of rape and other abuses of detained women and girls by regime personnel being common knowledge in Syrian society. For Syrian women, the fear of rape itself is exacerbated by the knowledge of how they might be treated and shunned by their families and society as a result. We have recorded a number of divorce cases that happened after detention, as well as a number of cases of violence by families against previously detained female family members, with rape victims often punished twice over, by the perpetrators and by family members’ abusive reactions. Feeling completely powerless to escape or to overcome their feeling of shame, women can find themselves placed in an impossible situation through no fault of their own, with these pressures driving which drove many to commit suicide.

Lama Nawwaf al Basha, a university student at the Damascus University’s Faculty of Project Management, was born in 1992. Lama, from Al Tal city in the northern Damascus suburbs governorate, was a volunteer with the civil group Methaq Surya (The Covenant of Syria). She was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Sunday, November 16, 2014, in an ambush in al Tal city. She was transferred to Adra Central Prison where she was tried by al Midan Military Court, a military court that issues verdicts and carries out summary executions. In 2015, she was transferred by a police patrol from Adra Central Prison to an undisclosed location. Her family was last able to visit her on March 29, 2015. On July 31, 2018, Lama was registered as dead at the civil registration office. We suspect that she was killed as a result of an execution order issued against her.
3. Sexual violence

Sexual violence has been practiced against females by Syrian regime forces in a widespread and deliberate manner, mainly during raids on homes in Syrian regime’s areas of control, and during raids on areas that broke free of Syrian regime forces’ control as an act of retaliation and to spread fear among the Syrian society, which is considered a generally conservative one, in order to force people to flee and leave their hometowns. Sexual violence has been also practiced inside detention centers during interrogation and inspection as a method of torture and pressure in order to extract information from female detainee or to inflict a sort of social stigma upon them.

Acts of sexual violence to which women have been subjected ranged from molestation, forced undressing, verbal sexual violence, and forced marriage to the most heinous form of sexual violence, namely rape. Many incidents of sexual violence were also perpetrated from sectarian motives, as well as following abductions by pro-regime militias when women were taken to unofficial detention centers, where, in most cases, the rape of a woman ends with her murder.

Syrian regime forces have forced no fewer than 11 females aged under eighteen appear on official Syrian TV channels and confess to having had sexual intercourse with members of armed opposition factions. All of these individuals have become enforced disappearance cases following their TV appearance. SNHR’s estimations indicate that Syrian regime forces have been responsible for no fewer than 8,013 acts of sexual violence, including 871 incidents inside detention centers, and no fewer than acts of 443 sexual violence against girls younger than eighteen years.

Syrian regime forces have used sexual violence as a strategic method of warfare in order to destroy the social fabric. The sexual violence practices have resulted in the victims suffering critical and severe physical and psychological traumas that are magnified by the social stigmatization and isolation in Syria’s conservative social environment, which is why many women prefer to abstain from stating the forms of sexual violence they have been subjected to.

B. Violations by Russian forces

Since the first day of Russia’s mobilization of its military forces in support of the Syrian regime on September 30, 2015, Russian forces have resorted to indiscriminate bombardment against the areas that broke free of the Syrian regime’s control, carrying out attacks against densely populated residential areas in which they used deadly and highly destructive weapons. Russian forces also adopted the double-strike strategy to kill as many civilian
victims as possible, especially children and women. We have released numerous reports shedding light on the massacres and violations that resulted from Russian bombardment, the most recent of which was issued to mark the third anniversary of the Russian intervention in Syria.

We at SNHR have documented that 1,231 females, divided into 688 adult female and 543 female children, have been killed in attacks which we believe were carried out by Russian forces, with this significantly high death toll indicating that civilians were deliberately targeted in these cases.

On Wednesday, January 3, 2018, fixed-wing warplanes which we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at residential neighborhoods in Misraba town in the Eastern Ghouta in eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, resulting in the deaths of 20 civilians, including 11 women (adult female), and the wounding of approximately 80 others. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

On Sunday, January 21, 2018, at approximately 17:00, fixed-wing warplanes which we believe were Russian fired a missile at Zmar village in the southern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the deaths of six civilians, including two children and three women. The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

A female child who was killed in an attack by fixed-wing warplanes which we believe were Russian on Zmar village in Idlib – January 21, 2018
On Thursday, June 7, 2018, at around 21:00, fixed-wing warplanes which we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at a residential neighborhood near Saed ben Muath Mosque in southwestern Zardana village in the northeastern suburbs of Idlib governorate. As residents and Civil Defense force members were gathering to recover the dead bodies and rescue the wounded, the same warplanes returned and bombed the same site at around 21:50. The two airstrikes resulted in the death of 53 civilians, including 10 children and nine women (adult female) while approximately 80 others were wounded. The village was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

We have released a special report on this incident.

SNHR spoke to activist Mohammad Hamroush4 of Zardana town. Mohammad, who works as a news editor for the Civil Defense in Idlib governorate, was on the outskirts of the town on his way home when he saw a missile fired by Russian warplane on al Janoubi neighborhood which released a large flare of light when it hit the ground, “I immediately rushed there, and saw the dead bodies scattered everywhere. The bombardment destroyed multi-storey buildings and left a large hole of 10 meters in diameter.” Mohammad added that residents and Civil Defense and medical teams gathered at the site to rescue the people who were trapped in the rubble, “A civil defense member screamed when he saw warplanes flying in the sky, and everyone quickly evacuated the area in anticipation of a second airstrike, and the worst came to pass. The site was bombed with more missiles that left more victims and three more holes. There were over 40 martyrs and about 80 were wounded.”

C. Violations by Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party)

Kurdish forces entered the Syrian conflict in July 2012 after Syrian regime forces withdrew from the Kurdish-majority areas in northeast Syria, while limiting their presence to the vital city centers, to leave the Democratic Union Party forces, which is a branch of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, in control of these areas. The Kurdish-majority Self-Management forces were established in January 2014.

4 Via Facebook on June 8, 2018
1. Extrajudicial killing
Self-Management forces have carried out extrajudicial killings through indiscriminate shelling operations and clashes in populated areas, as well as sniping, execution by shooting during raids, and planting landmines before retreating from areas that were previously under their control. In addition, Self-Management forces committed massacres, some of which targeted specific ethnic groups and involved the killing of a number of females. Between July 2012 and November 25, 2018, SNHR documented the death of 220 females, divided into 144 adult females and 76 female children, at the hands of Self-Management forces.

On Monday, March 26, 2018, a landmine, planted by Self-Management forces in al Ashrafiya neighborhood of Afrin city northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate before they retreated from the city, detonated, killing seven civilians from the same family, including five women (adult females). The city was under the control of the Turkish-backed Olive Branch forces at the time of the incident.

Khayriya Mohammad Hanan Jamki, a woman, was killed on Monday, April 2, 2018, as a result of the explosion of a landmine planted by Self-Management forces in Erbo village, administratively a part of Afrin city, in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate before their retreat.

On Wednesday, April 11, 2018, a landmine, planted by Self-Management forces in Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate before their retreat from the city, detonated, killing 11 civilians, including one female child and seven women (adult female). The city was under the control of the Turkish-backed Olive Branch forces at the time of the incident.

2. Arbitrary arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture
Self-Management forces have used arbitrary arrests against women, mainly for the purpose of conscription. In addition, these forces have resorted to abducting adult women, or even female children who refuse to join their forces, who are detained in the streets, at school, or even upon leaving their homes, to take them to military training camps outside these children’s areas. Self-Management forces ban these children from contacting or seeing their families. Additionally, these forces have targeted a number of female activists involved in civil work under the pretext of their lacking work permits. We have recorded a number of instances of political female activists being arrested, primarily those known for refusing or criticizing the governing methods of the Self-Management Forces. Lastly, we’ve recorded a number of cases of the arrest of women related to figures opposing the Self-Management
as a way to force these individuals to surrender themselves. We have also documented some cases of the arrest of Arab women due to their ethnicity in the governorates of Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zour.

Between July 2012 and November 25, 2018, we recorded that no fewer than 449 females, divided into 148 adult females and 301 female children, are still documented as being under arbitrary arrest or forcibly disappeared inside Self-Management forces’ detention centers.

Sabah Mahmoud al Mohammad is a woman from Jahfat Edwan village, administratively a part of Ras al Ein city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. She was arrested by Self-Management forces on Saturday, May 19, 2018, in Jahfat Edwan village and taken to an undisclosed location.

Nawal al Shammakh, a housewife born in 1988, from Um Kheif town in eastern Hasaka city, was arrested by Self-Management forces on Wednesday, August 29, 2018, during a raid on her place of residence in the village. She was taken to a detention center in Tal Hamis town in eastern Hasaka city. She was released on Tuesday, September 18, 2018.

We spoke to Nawal⁵, “Around 15 Kurdish forces cars raided the village. One of the members arrested my brother who lives nearby. My family and I gathered around the patrol in an attempt to prevent them from taking him, so they arrested me with three cousins of mine. They took us all to Tal Hamis Center, where I spent my detention that lasted for approximately 20 days. They transferred my relatives to another detention center in Hasaka.” Nawal said that the female warden treated her and her fellow female detainees in a racist manner, adding that she was subjected to insulting and beating. Nawal concluded that all of these abuses were inflicted by the Self-Management forces in retaliation for other offences.

Self-Management forces used several methods of torture against female detainees at their detention centers, most notable severe beating, pulling out nails, and solitary confinement in narrow cells for prolonged periods of time that might extend to months. Self-Management forces also resorted to deprivation of food and medical care, as well as poor imprisonment conditions in confined cramped conditions humidity, lack of hygiene and extreme heat.

Between July 2012 and November 25, 2018, we recorded that two adult females died due to torture and negligent health care at Self-Management forces’ detention centers.

⁵ Via phone
3. Conscription

Kurdish Self-Management forces have enforced a conscription policy against adult and child females, many younger than eighteen years of age, in their areas of control for the sake of increasing the number of their fighters. The Self-Management forces have also established secret training camps in areas remote from residential centers which are effectively detention camps, with female conscripts prohibited from contacting or visiting their families. Usually, those female conscripts are sent to the frontlines directly after finishing their training. Self-Management forces have never shown any consideration for the wishes or approval of the female children’s families over their conscription, or considered the conditions of female detainees, many of whom are the primary providers for their families. Female conscripts’ tasks were not limited to providing transportation, cleaning weapons, and guarding, but they were also tasked with direct combat-related activities on the frontlines and during clashes, and with being marksmen.

Avin Saroukhan, a 12-year-old female child from al Derbasiya city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, was abducted and conscripted by Self-Management forces in November 2017. Her parents subsequently learned that she was on the battlefronts in Deir Ez-Zour after a photo of her was posted by a Self-Management forces Facebook page.
Salima Abdul Rahman Ali, her parents’ only child, was born in 2004. She suffers from short-sightedness and a disfigurement in her right hand. In September 2018, Self-Management forces conscripted her. Her family has submitted a complaint to the relevant division within the Self-Management forces, but have received no response.

Awyesha Bouthan, a female child from the Khreibsan village of Ein Arab city in the northeastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was born in 2002. She was conscripted by Self-Management forces on Monday, October 8, 2018.

Female child Yasmin Aref, known as Barfin Amed, from Shran town, administratively a part of Afrin city, in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was born in 2001. She was conscripted by Self-Management forces in 2015. She was killed on Friday, October 12, 2018, during a battle with ISIS in Deir Ez-Zour city.
4. Sexual violence
We’ve recorded no fewer than six incidents of sexual violence, the most prominent of which took place at camps under the supervision and guarding of Self-Management forces when a woman was trying to obtain a permit to leave the camps to buy food and medical supplies.

On Monday, January 8, 2018, a woman IDP from eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour was subjected to attempted sexual molestation by a Self-Management Forces leader who was in charge of protection and security at the Mabrouka Camp in western Ras al Ein city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, whilst the woman was on her way to the camp entrance, trying to obtain a permit to leave the camp.

D. Violations by extremist Islamic groups
ISIS (the self-proclaimed Islamic State)
1. Extrajudicial killing
Since its emergence on April 9, 2013, ISIS has used a policy of terror and killing against the residents in the areas under the control of the group’s enemies, particularly through indiscriminate shelling, bombings, and clashes in populated areas, as well as direct execution by shooting. In addition, ISIS planted landmines at homes and on roads after retreating from areas that were previously under the group’s control. These improvised methods have resulted in the killing or injuring of a large number of Syrian women and girls.

On Sunday, October 10, 2018, the Facebook page entitled Ayn Mukhtafou Daesh (Where are ISIS’s Abductees?) published a copy of a document dated June 16, 2017 recording the execution of a woman named as Fatima Mohammad Jasim on charges of ‘insulting the Divine Entity’. The Facebook page claimed that the document was found at one of ISIS’s former prisons in Raqqa city.

A copy of the execution order issued by ISIS against Fatima Mohammad Jasim on charges of insulting the Divine Entity.

Between the emergence of ISIS and November 25, 2018, we recorded that 844 females were killed at the group’s hands, divided into 554 adult females and 290 female children.

Tharwat Fadel Abu Ammar, a 25-year-old woman from Shbeki village in eastern Suwayda governorate, was abducted by ISIS gunmen from the village on Wednesday, July 25, 2018. She was executed by a shot to the head at the hands of the group on Tuesday, October 2, 2018.
On Friday, November 16, 2018, ISIS executed two women by shooting in al Sha’fa city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate on charges of conspiring with the Kurdish-majority Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

2. Arbitrary arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

ISIS has adopted a policy of arrest and adduction of women who violate the rules and regulations enforced by the group in their areas of control, such as failing to abide by their dress code or traveling alone or working at places where there are men present. The group established special detention centers for women detainees and abductees under the supervision of a female police force or what’s known as al Hesba al Nesa’iya (‘Female Hesba’, with Hesba being a type of police apparatus). The group has also resorted to abducting females during attacks on areas outside their control, particularly of female members of ethnic and religious minorities. In addition, the group has targeted women activists working in the field of media or with local or foreign humanitarian groups. Most of these women have been categorized as forcibly disappeared, as we have been unable to positively ascertain the fate of most of them, despite ISIS losing large swathes of territory to the Kurdish Self-Management forces who have yet to give any adequate opportunity for Syrian human rights groups to operate. The Self-Management Forces have also failed to carry out the necessary investigations to reveal the fate of those who have been disappeared.

ISIS also used particular punishment to degrade women such as putting them in cages on display in public squares or putting these cages onto the backs of lorries which would be driven around to publicly display and shame the women. Women detained by ISIS can’t be released until their male guardians, known locally as Wali al Amer, sign a pledge guaranteeing that their female charges will never repeat the violation they are accused of.

Between the emergence of ISIS and November 25, 2018, we recorded that no fewer than 426 females, divided into 402 adult females and 24 female children, are still documented as under arrest or enforced-disappearance.

Saleha al Jad’an, a woman from Hajin city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, born in 1978, was arrested by ISIS gunmen in Hajin city on Friday, September 21, 2018. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate remains unknown to SNHR as well as her family.
ISIS’ detainees and abductees are subjected to various forms of systematic, brutal torture. The severity of torture increases depending on the charges against a woman detainee. Usually, the torture is carried out by the Hesba al Nesa’iya officers who use methods such as whipping, severe beating, biting, electrocution, incineration, deprivation of sleep and medical care. ISIS has also implemented death penalty punishments using torture, such as stoning or dragging to death.

Between the emergence of ISIS and November 25, 2018, we recorded that no fewer than 14 women died due to torture at ISIS’s detention centers; most of them were stoned to death on rulings issued by the group against them.

Zahiya Fawwaz Jba’ie, a 60-year-old woman from Shebki village in eastern Suwayda governorate, was abducted by an ISIS armed group from the village on Wednesday, July 25, 2018. On Thursday, August 9, 2018, we received information confirming that she had died inside a detention center due to negligence in healthcare.

3. Restricting women
ISIS has enforced special regulations and requirements on women, beginning with permission to leave the house or so she can work, seek education, or travel. These include the imposition of strict dress code (Al Lebas al Shar’ie which are a set of requirements a woman must consider for her public attire according to interpretation of the rules of Islam), and insist that a woman outside the home must be accompanied by a male guardian. Women are only allowed to work in service fields and solely with other women, with the group forbid-
ding men and women from working in the same space. ISIS also enforced a rule prohibiting woman from sitting in public places and forced women to marry their fighters, particularly foreign fighters. Additionally, women are forbidden from consulting male doctors for treatment, with the group also mobilizing female police patrols (al Hesba al Nesab’iyya) to monitor and arrest women who violate the group’s regulations. The group used al Hesba al Nesa’iyya as a catalyst to enforce their control, terrorize women, and warn society of the dire consequences of failing to follow their rules.

In light of such restrictive norms, women found themselves forced to live in complete isolation from society, as most preferred to stay at home rather than going out and risking being pursued by al Hesba al Nesa’iyya. This deprived women of education and work opportunities, as well as the opportunity to receive full healthcare, effectively putting them under a suffocating state of siege.

On Sunday, January 14, 2018, Jaish Khaled ben al Walid, a faction who pledged allegiance to ISIS, prohibited women under the age of 40 from leaving their areas in western Daraa governorate unless by the authority of a medical report that states that she is need of medical care not available at the makeshift hospitals in Hawd al Yarmouk.

4. Female enslavement and sexual violence
ISIS has practiced sexual violence as a weapon of warfare for the purpose of terrorizing and forcing civilians to flee and leave their hometowns. ISIS also used this as a way to attract fighters, as well as a source of income by way of sex trafficking, with females, adults and children being abducted and sold at special ‘slave markets’ commonly known as Awaq al Sabaya which are, for the most part, virtual marketplaces on social media exclusive to the group’s members in which members can post and publish photos of abducted females with their characteristics and prices. Additionally, the group has dedicated some houses in their areas of control to the sale and enslavement of female captives by the leaders and members of the terrorist group.

The group has primarily enslaved women from religious and ethnic minority groups, and secondly females from areas under the control of other parties to the conflict. The largest-scale enslavement of females perpetrated by ISIS was after their attacks on Yazidi areas in Iraq in 2014, when the group abducted hundreds of females between the ages of eight and forty. Most of those abducted were transferred to Syria for sexual trafficking and enslavement.
ISIS forces female members of religious minorities to convert to Islam and separates them from their children. Sexual enslavement starts immediately after they are sold to members or leaders of the group, in which a woman can be sold multiple times and suffer systematic rape or even be killed in case she tried to refuse, resist, or escape. Most of the abducted females were not forcibly disappeared after ISIS retreated from many of the areas that were previously under their control in Syria. The task of determining their fate remains a difficult one due to the highly complex and unstable situation in these areas.

Hay’at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of armed opposition factions)

1. Extrajudicial killing

Between the emergence of al Nussra Front (currently known as Hay’at Tahrir al Sham) in January 2012 and November 25, 2018, we recorded the death of 78 females -74 adult females and four female children - at the hands of Hay’at Tahrir al Sham, who were killed in indiscriminate shelling operations that targeted the areas outside the group’s control or during clashes in densely populated areas as a result of random crossfire during the group’s raid on homes, particularly in areas under the control of armed opposition factions, as well as in bombings for which the group was responsible.

2. Arbitrary arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

Hay’at Tahrir al Sham has persecuted female activists who criticized the group’s practices in areas under their control or those who participated in demonstrations protesting against the group. The women were summoned to special courts, where in most cases they are taken to undisclosed locations during these trials. In addition, the group has abducted women with their children during attacks on areas under the control of Syrian regime forces as hostages to use them in prisoner exchange deals with the Syrian regime. We recorded that 63 adult females are still documented as being either under arrest or forcibly disappeared at Hay’at Tahrir al Sham’s detention centers.

On Saturday, October 13, 2018, Hay’at Tahrir al Sham fighters abducted a woman identified as Suzan Ghali and her one-and-a-half-year-old son in Idlib governorate as they were travelling from Salamiya city in the eastern suburbs of Hama governorate to Turkey. We received information confirming that they are currently being held at a Hay’at Tahrir al Sham detention center in Harem city in the northwestern suburbs of Idlib governorate.
3. Restricting women

Hay’at Tahrir al Sham has established a number of Hesba centers in their areas of control. These centers are either affiliated directly with Hay’at Tahrir al Sham or one of the apparatuses founded by the group, such as Sawaed al Khair (the Hands of Prosperity) which is the Hesba apparatus devoted to monitoring civilians in Idlib governorate and which receives instruction from Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

“Al Da’ieyat” (The Female Callers for Islam) is the female Hesba which is charged with inspecting schools and universities and monitoring women who violate the regulations and rules enforced by al Hesba, such as abiding by a certain dress code and abstaining from any familiarity with or proximity to young men in the course of their education, or from listening to music and songs in public places. Usually, the Female Hesba beat and verbally abuse the women violating their regulations in public places and arrest them when they refuse to obey their regulations.

SNHR spoke to a woman identified as Batoul. H. in her place of residence in Idlib governorate. Batoul is the director of a private association for women empowerment in Idlib city. Batoul was summoned to the Female Hesba center in Idlib city in May 2018, “Two of the Sawayed al Khair’s ‘Female Callers’ came to my office and told me that I have to visit their center and specified a visitation date. When I went there, a woman interrogated me and asked me about the sessions and meetings we hold for psychological support for women and the music and parties that these activities involve at the end of some sessions. She asked me to stop doing that. When I tried to discuss this matter, she insulted me and threatened to shut down the association in case we did these things again. She also threatened to arrest me and impose a fine up to $5,000.”

On Sunday, June 24, 2018, a member of the Sawayed al Khair Female Callers group affiliated with Hay’at Tahrir al Sham assaulted the director of the exam directorate at Atiq Kindergarten in Idlib University’s Faculty of Literature, shoving the woman and knocking her down, which required her victim to be taken to hospital for treatment. The attack was perpetrated under the pretext that Rawda, the exam directorate director, had prevented the group member from entering the exam room while the Caller was pursuing one of the female students over her style of dressing.
E. Violations by factions from the armed opposition

1. Extrajudicial killing

The indiscriminate shelling operations by some armed opposition factions on Syrian regime forces’ areas of control have resulted in a number of female deaths. In addition, the clashes that ensued during these factions’ attacks on areas outside their control or during crossfire that resulted from incidents of infighting between these factions have also resulted in civilian deaths. SNHR has documented the death of 1,301 females, divided into 872 adult females and 429 female children, at the hands of different factions from the armed opposition.

Fatima Hamid al Mardini, a woman from Sahm al Joulan village in the northwestern suburbs of Daraa governorate, was killed on February 8, 2018 in an artillery shelling on the village by an artillery stationed in areas under the control of armed opposition factions. The village was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the attack.

Tasnim Shab’an, a woman from Homs city, was killed on Sunday, April 29, 2018, by a rocket launched by opposition artillery forces stationed in areas under the control of factions from the armed opposition in the northern suburbs of Homs on al Adawya neighborhood of Homs city. The neighborhood was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the attack.

2. Arbitrary arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

We’ve recorded that a number of armed opposition factions have made arrests of adult females or female children across Syria. This was mainly done during attacks by those factions on areas under the control of Syrian regime forces in order to use the detainees in prisoner exchange deals. In addition, a number of armed opposition factions have targeted female activists who criticized their practices in their areas of control or failed to obtain a work permit, especially for media work such as photography. A number of those women detainees are now forcibly disappeared. We have recorded that 911 females, divided into 846 adult females and 65 female children, are still documented as being under arrest or forcibly disappeared at armed opposition factions’ detention centers.

Hanan Shikhou Hammo, a 37-year-old woman from Jouqa village, administratively a part of Afrin city, in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested by gunmen from Ferqat al Hamza, an armed opposition faction, on Thursday, September 6, 2018. She was taken to an undisclosed location.
Some factions from the armed opposition have used methods of torture such as severe beating, electrocution, solitary confinement, deprivation of food and medical care. These factions also practiced psychological torture methods such as depriving a female detainee from seeing her children and barring her from contacting her family, as well as insulting her or misleading her into believing that she will face execution.

We’ve recorded that one woman died due to torture and negligent health care at armed opposition factions’ detention centers.

E. Violations by international coalition forces

SNHR has documented the death of 926 females, divided into 629 adult females and 297 female children, at the hands of international coalition forces between the beginning of their offensive in Syria on Tuesday, September 23, 2014, and November 25, 2018. These girls and women were killed in attacks by international coalition forces on ISIS’s areas of control in the governorates of Aleppo, Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zour, and Idlib. These attacks have resulted in many massacres and civilian deaths, including females.

On Wednesday, December 13, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Jarthi al Sharqi village in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, which resulted in the deaths of 29 civilians, including 21 children and five women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

On Sunday, February 4, 2018, at around 01:30, fixed-wing international coalition warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Bahra village in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the deaths of 40 civilians, including 21 children and 13 women (adult female). The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

On Tuesday, September 1, 2018, fixed-wing international coalition warplanes fired a number of missiles at Tal al Jaber town in the southern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, which resulted in the deaths of 25 civilians, including 16 children and seven women (adult female). It should be noted that the same air force also committed another massacre in the town that day by bombing the town with missiles in which eight civilians from the same family were killed (three children and five women). The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incidents.
G. Violations by other parties

1. Extrajudicial killing

SNHR’s categorization includes many classifications such as victims who drowned as they were fleeing by sea, and victims of bombings whose perpetrators we couldn’t positively identify, as well as others who were killed by armed groups unknown to SNHR.

Under this category, SNHR documented the death of no fewer than 1,053 females, divided into 686 adult females and 367 female children, at the hands of other parties between March 2011 and November 25, 2018.

On Thursday, March 8, 2018, a woman identified as Malak Ibrahim Na’san was killed along with her husband, Mohammad Abdul Karim, as a result of the explosion of a landmine near Medanki Lake in Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. At the time of this writing, we have yet to identify the party who planted the landmine.

On Friday, September 7, 2018, a number of shells landed in al Midan neighborhood in western Mharda city. The shelling resulted in the deaths of 11 civilians, including six children (four females and two males) and four women. At the time of this writing, we have yet to identify the group behind the shelling. Mharda city was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

2. Abduction and enforced-disappearance

In the course of our daily monitoring of violations of human rights in Syria, we come across a number of incidents for which groups that operate as gangs with no allegiance to a specific party are responsible. These groups surface in some of the areas of control of the parties to the conflict and exploit the lack of security to carry out crimes of killing and abduction driven by either material or sectarian motives. These groups are seen throughout Syria, particularly in areas under the control of Syrian regime forces and ISIS, and carry out abductions on public roads, as well as in highly unstable areas or areas where clashes between Syrian regime forces and other parties are taking place.

Between March 2011 and November 25, 2018, SNHR recorded that no fewer than 3,056 females are still documented as abducted or forcibly disappeared at the hands of other parties.

Hamida Redwan al Gharib, a 22-year-old woman from Idlib city, was abducted by unidentified gunmen on Friday, April 27, 2018, in al Shamali neighborhood of Idlib city. Her fate remains unknown to SNHR as well as her family.
Hanan Sarhan, a female teacher from Mar’yan village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, lives in Atma Camp in northern Idlib governorate. She was abducted by masked men on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, as she was traveling from Atma area to Sarmada city in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. She was released after a ransom of five million Syrian pounds ($9,700) was paid.

SNHR visited Hanan in her place of residence in Idlib city where she told us, “When I left my house in Atma heading for the public transportation point, a van passed by me, and two armed men got out very quickly. They beat me and put me in the car and covered my head until we arrived at an unknown place where they took my phone and started negotiations with my family where they demanded money for my life.” Hanan added that the abductors denied her food and constantly threatened to kill her, opening fire randomly around her with their guns. “About 10 days later, my family paid the money and they let me go on an agricultural road near Atma,” she said.

Nazela Sheikh Ya’qoub, a 48-year-old woman from Babeilet village, administratively a part of Afrin city, in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was abducted on Thursday, November 1, 2018 by gunmen in Babeilet village. Her fate remains unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

**IV. Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Legal conclusions**

**Syrian regime forces**

- As civilian individuals not taking part in hostilities, women enjoy both general and special protection established in Geneva Convention IV, as well as Protocol I and Protocol II. Women also enjoy all the rights stated including the right to life and the right to physical and psychological safety. The acts of systematic killing practiced by Syrian regime forces in a widespread manner across Syrian governorates constitute crimes against humanity. In addition, the indiscriminate bombardment constitutes daily war crimes that are still going on.
- The Syrian regime practices sexual violence as an effective deterrent weapon against society. This has become a phenomenon with dire consequences for the victims, particularly women and girls, as well as their families and communities. Many such incidents have yet to be documented with the victims understandably not feeling confident enough to reveal the details of their ordeals, in most cases out of fear of retaliation, shame, or social stigmatization.
Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of Democratic Union Party forces – a branch of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party)

- Self-Management forces have carried out acts that constitute war crimes through indiscriminate shelling and willful killing. All of these crimes are regarded as blatant violations of international humanitarian law. As a de facto authority, the party should adhere to the standards of international humanitarian law.

Extremist Islamic groups

- ISIS and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham have both carried out the crime of killing, as indiscriminate shelling operations, which constitute war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law. ISIS has also tortured and enslaved women in a widespread manner which constitutes a crime against humanity.
- The practices carried out by ISIS and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham in their respective areas of control constitute violations of Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and constitute war crimes.

Armed opposition factions

- Factions from the armed opposition have committed the crime of killing. The indiscriminate shelling operations constitute war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law.

Recommendations

Syrian regime and other parties to the conflict

- The Syrian regime must lift its reservation on the CEDAW treaty and immediately cease the acts of willful killing, torture, and arrest against Syrian women.
- The Syrian-Russian alliance and Iranian militias must cease deliberately bombing residential civilian neighborhoods and populated areas since these attacks result in civilian casualties, most of whom are women and children.
- International coalition forces must investigate the incidents that resulted in the death of female victims in particular. Also, the international coalition must apply pressure on its allies, particularly the SDF, to cease the conscription of female children, as well as abductions and arrests.
- All parties to the conflict must immediately release female detainees, specifically those who were arrested in the context of the armed conflict, and adhere to international laws that outlaw the detention of female children.
European States and European Union

- Economic sanctions on the two main supporters of the Syrian regime, namely Iran and Russia, must be escalated, which is something that can effectively achieved by the European Union. While civilian protection and safe zones are still the primary demands, economic sanctions also remain an effective course of action.
- Provide every possible assistance to the active civil society groups working to rehabilitate and reintegrate female victims into their communities.

Security Council

- Since 2011, protection of Syrian woman has been a responsibility beyond the capabilities of the Syrian regime since it is the party perpetrating the most serious and major violations of every kind against Syrian women. The Security Council must, therefore, uphold this responsibility. Every possible step must be taken to protect Syrian woman and Syrian society.
- At a minimum, pressure must be applied on the Syrian regime to ensure that international observers, including the Commission of Inquiry, are given unconditional and unrestricted access to women detention centers.

OHCHR

- Release a special report on the violations that Syrian women, in particular, have experienced.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

Our most sincere and heartfelt thanks and gratitude go out to the victims’ families, relatives, and friends, and the local and media activists who greatly contributed to this report.