

5381 Civilians Killed in the First Half of 2017

Including 848 Civilians in June

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Saturday, July 1, 2017

The Syrian Network for Human Rights, founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, non-profit independent organization that is a primary source for the United Nations on all death toll-related statistics in Syria



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I. Introduction and Methodology

The report includes only the death toll of civilians that were killed by the main seven influential parties in Syria:

- Syrian regime forces (army, Security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)
- Russian forces
- Self-management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party forces, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)
- Extremist Islamic groups
- Armed opposition factions
- International coalition forces
- Other parties

The fourth round of negotiations was held in Astana city, Kazakhstan's capital, on 3 and 4 of May 2017. Russian, Turkish, and Iranian representatives attended as the sponsoring states of Ankara Ceasefire Agreement. The three states agreed on establishing four de-escalation zones, wherein the agreement is to commence on May 6, 2017. The agreement outlined four major areas for the de-escalation – Idlib governorate and the surrounding areas (parts of Aleppo, Hama, and Latakia governorates), northern Homs governorate, Eastern Ghouta, and parts of Daraa and al Quneitra governorates in the southern parts of Syria. It was provided that an expert committee would accurately assign the borders of said zones at a later date. The agreement provided for a cessation of combat operations, passage of humanitarian aids, and for IDPs to go back to their areas. Since the agreement went into effect, these areas saw a relatively noticeable and good decrease in killing rates compared with the previous months since March 2011.



We noticed that this agreement reflected on the living aspects of the civilians who live in the areas that were included in the agreement, as patients were able to go to hospitals and medical points, and many children went back to school after their families prevented them out of fear for their lives in light of the repeated bombing that targeted schools, as well as hospitals. Markets became more active, and many infrastructure services were restored thanks to a number of maintenance campaigns. Nonetheless, breaches didn't stop, mainly by the Syrian regime, who is seemingly the party that would be most affected should the ceasefire go on, and in particular extrajudicial killing crimes and, more horrendously, deaths due to torture. This strongly asserts that there is a ceasefire of some sort on the table, but the crimes that the international community -especially the Russian, Turkish, and Iranian sponsors- won't see are still going on as nothing had happened.

Also, we recorded this month that international coalition forces continue to be a prominent party in killing civilians in Syria, as they were responsible for the killing of 32% of the total number of civilian victims - only surpassed by Syrian regime forces. 25% of the victims killed by international coalition forces were children. The killings were concentrated in the eastern region of Syria in general, and in Raqqa governorate particularly under the pretext of taking down ISIS.

We, at SNHR, hope that the de-escalation agreement sees a good commitment, so it becomes a stronger foundation on which a political process would be built that would fulfil justice for the victims, and hold all the perpetrators accountable for their violations; most pressing the party that was primarily responsible for the dire situation that Syria have come into: the current ruling regime who has perpetrated roughly 90% of all violations against the Syrian people.

Methodology

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) is an independent human rights organization that is not affiliate of any political or partisan side. SNHR works on documenting human rights violations by the seven main parties in Syria.

We have been able to document the civilian victims who are being killed by the parties to the conflict to a great extent, whereas armed victims are divided into two categories: Victims from the armed opposition: We face additional difficulties as many of those victims are killed on battlefronts and not inside cities. Also, we aren't able to obtain details such as names, pictures and other important details on account of the armed opposition forces'



unwillingness to reveal such information for security concerns among other reasons. Therefore, the actual number of victims is much greater than what is being recorded.

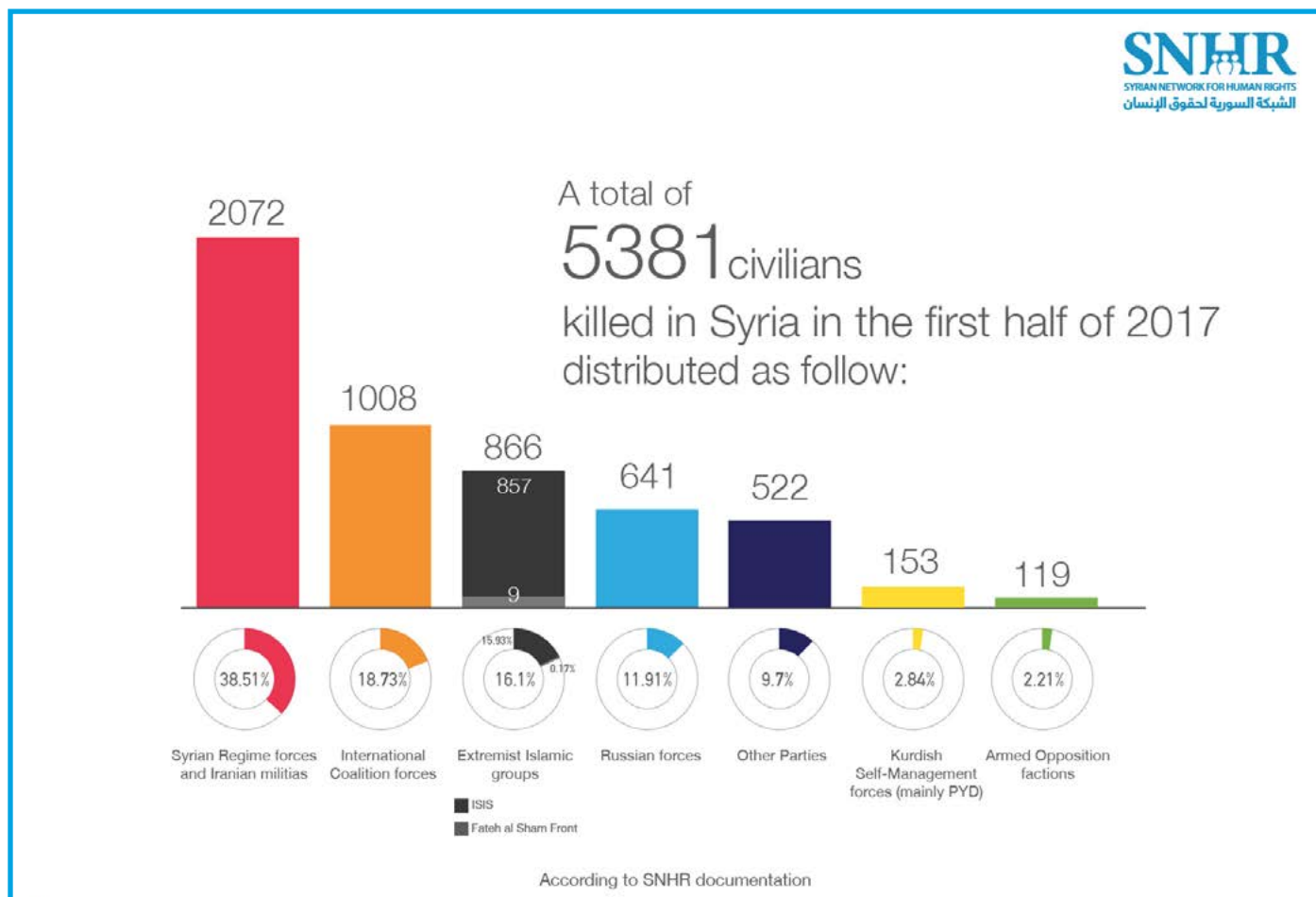
Victims from Syrian regime forces and ISIS: It is almost impossible to access information about this kind of victims and the margin of error is considerably higher due to the lack of any applicable methodology in this type of documentation. The Syrian government and ISIS don't publish, reveal, or record their victims. From our perspective, the statistics published by some groups on this category of victims are fictitious and are not based on any actual data.

Therefore, we are only going to include civilian victims who were killed by all parties and compare them

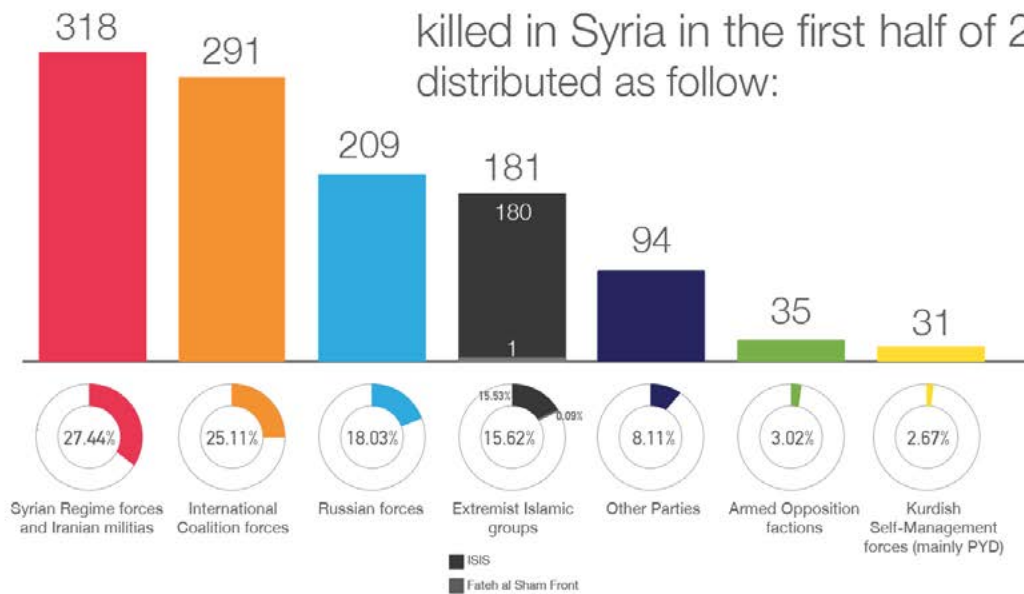
Please see SNHR [methodology](#) in documenting victims:

II. Details

A. Civilian death toll in the first half of 2017

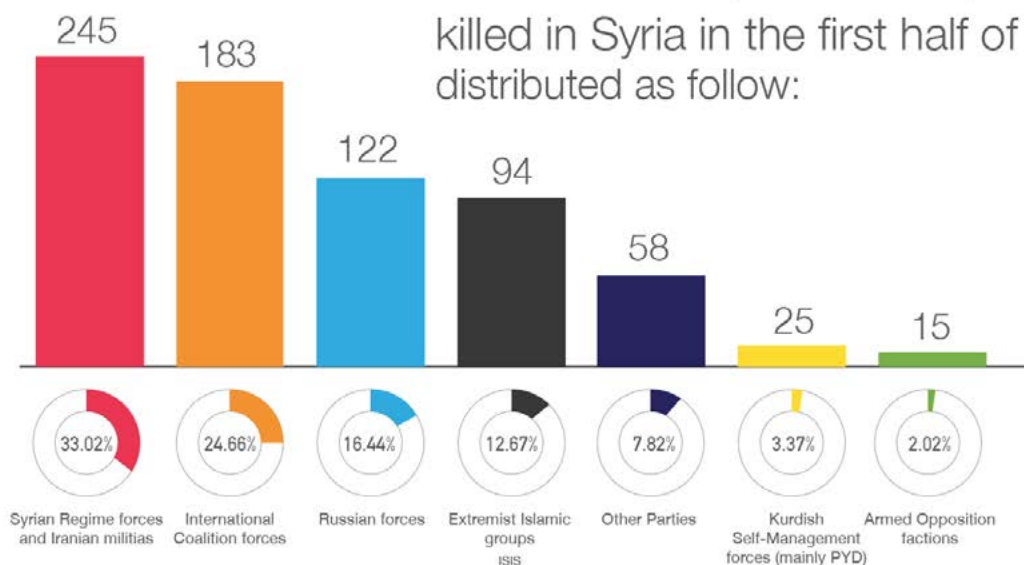


A total of
1159 children
killed in Syria in the first half of 2017
distributed as follow:



According to SNHR documentation

A total of
742 women (adult female)
killed in Syria in the first half of 2017
distributed as follow:



According to SNHR documentation



SNHR has documented the killing of 5381 civilians in the first half of 2017. Death toll is distributed by the parties to the conflict as follows:

A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

SNHR documented the killing of 2072 civilians at the hands of Syrian regime forces, including 318 children (two children are killed every day on average) and 245 women (adult female). Also, among the victims were 93 civilians who died due to torture.

B. Russian forces

We recorded the killing of 641 civilians, including 209 children and 122 women, in bombardment operations we believe were Russian.

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

Killed 153 civilians, including 31 children and 25 women. Additionally, among the victims were five who died due to torture.

D. Extremist Islamic groups: Killed 866 civilians, including 181 children and 94 women

- ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State): killed 857 civilians, including 180 children and 94 women.
- Fateh al Sham Front (formerly al Nussra Front): killed nine civilians, including one child.

E. Armed opposition factions

SNHR documented the killing of 119 civilians, including 35 children and 15 women. Additionally, among the victims were three who died due to torture.

F. International coalition forces

We recorded the killing of 1008 civilians, including 291 children and 183 women, in bombardments by international coalition forces warplanes.

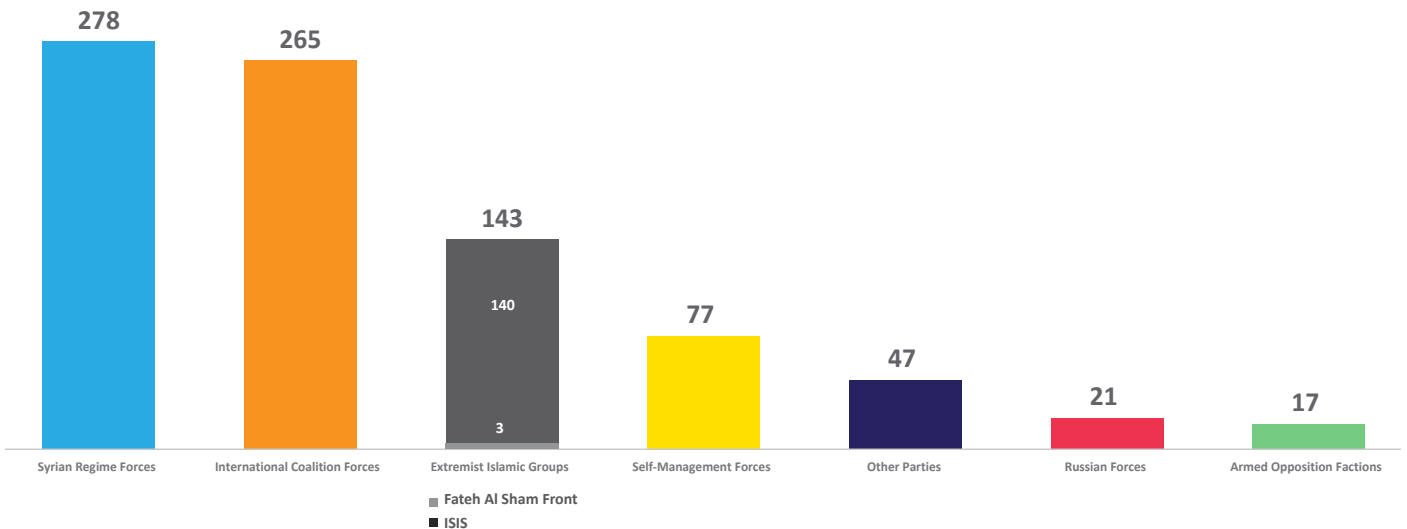
G. Other parties

We documented the killing of 522 civilians, including 94 children, 58 women, and three who died due to torture, at the hands of other parties. This category includes bombings that we couldn't identify the group behind them, bullets of unknown sources, landmines of unknown sources, drowning, victims who died in fires, and the indiscriminate bombardment incidents by the Turkish land and air forces, and victims killed by Jordanian and Lebanese forces.



B. Death toll in June 2017

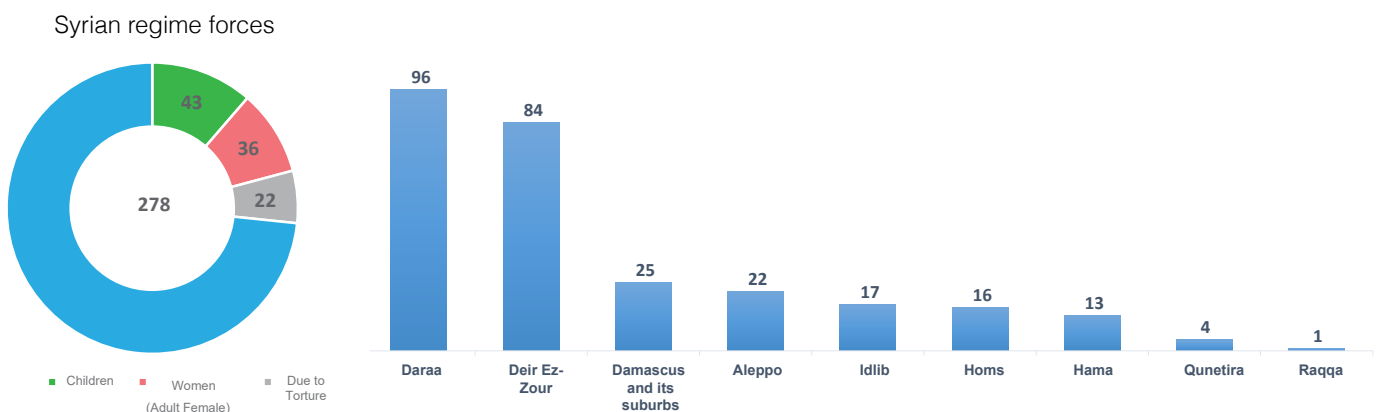
SNHR has documented the killing of 848 civilians in the month of June 2017. Death toll is distributed by the parties to the conflict as follows:



A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

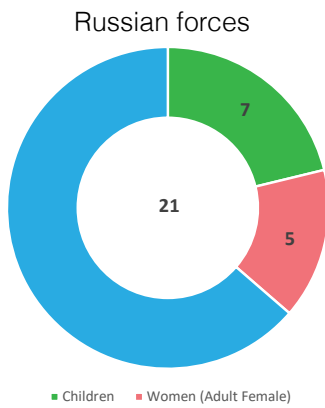
SNHR documented the killing of 278 civilians at the hands of Syrian regime forces, including 43 children (two children are killed every day on average) and 36 women (adult female). Also, among the victims were 22 civilians who died due to torture.

Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:



B. Russian forces

We recorded the killing of 21 civilians, including seven children and five women, in bombardment operations we believe were Russian. All of the victims were killed in Deir Ez-Zour governorate

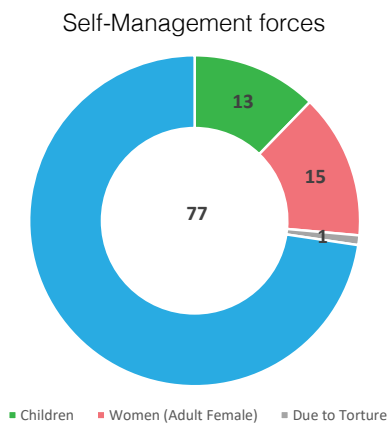


C. Self-Management forces (Consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party)

Killed 77 civilians, including 13 children and 15 women. Additionally, among the victims was one who died due to torture.

Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:

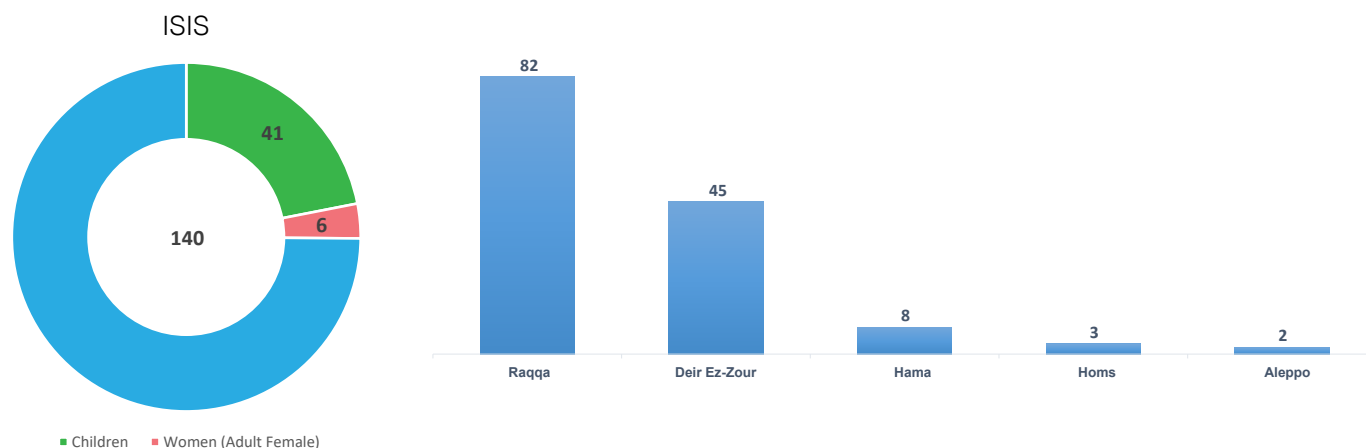
Raqqa: 68, Aleppo: 7, Hasaka: 2



D. Extremist Islamic groups: killed 143 civilians, including 41 children and six women, as follows:

- ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State): killed 140 civilians, including 41 children and six women.

Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:



- Fateh al Sham Front (formerly al Nussra Front): killed three civilians in Idlib

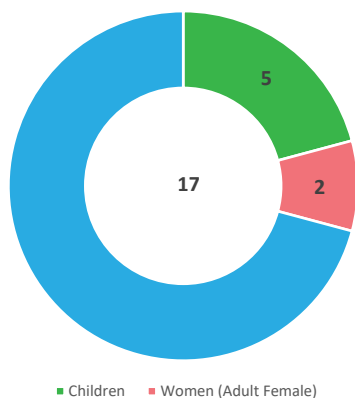
E. Armed opposition factions

SNHR documented the killing of 17 civilians, including five children and two women.

Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:

Daraa: 11, Damascus suburbs: 4, Homs: 2

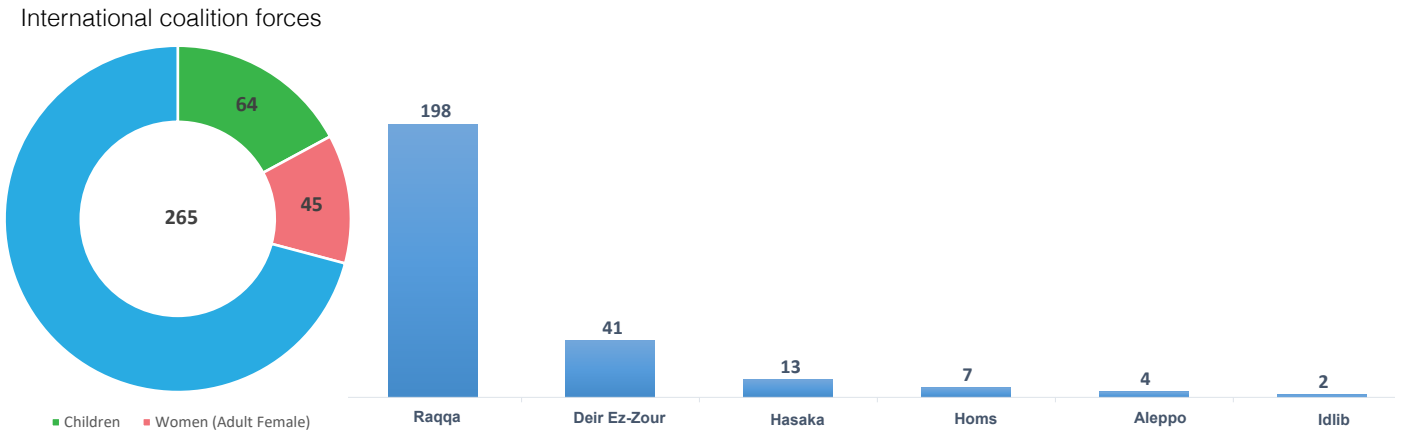
Armed opposition factions



F. International coalition forces

We recorded the killing of 265 civilians, including 64 children and 45 women, in bombardments by international coalition forces warplanes.

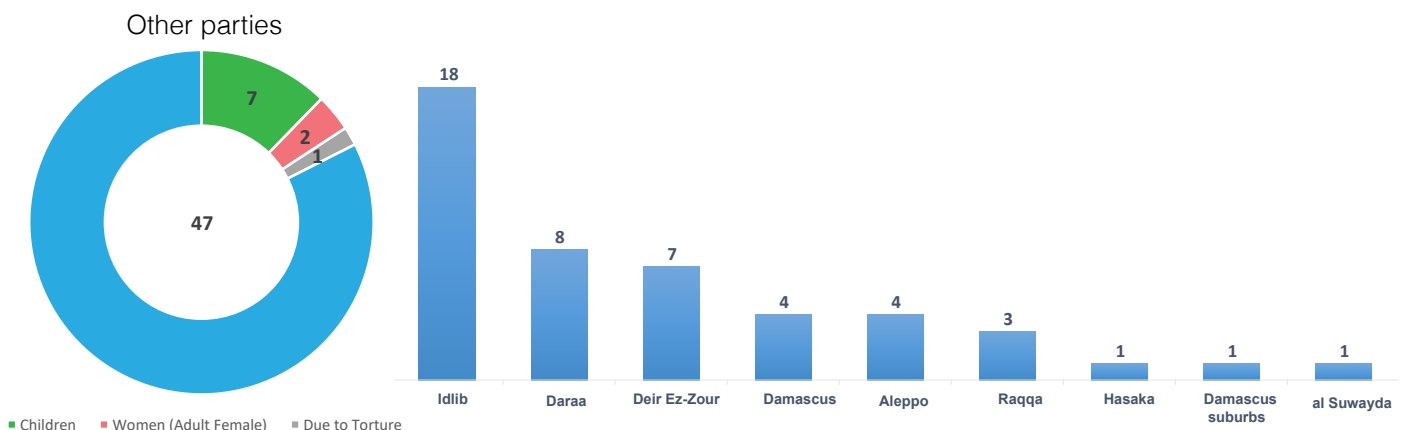
Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:



G. Other parties

We documented the killing of 47 civilians, including seven children, two women, and one who died due to torture, at the hands of other parties. This category includes bombings that we couldn't identify the group behind them, bullets of unknown sources, landmines of unknown sources, drowning, victims who died in fires, and the indiscriminate bombardment incidents by the Turkish land and air forces, and victims killed by Jordanian and Lebanese forces.

Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:



III. Conclusions and Recommendations

1- SNHR affirms that the Syrian-Russian alliance forces have violated the rules of international human rights law which guarantee the right to life.

Evidences and proofs, according to hundreds of eyewitnesses' testimonies, indicate that 90% at least of the widespread and single attacks were directed against civilians and civilian facilities.

All of this discredits the Syrian government's claims that they are fighting "Al-Qaeda and terrorists"

SNHR notes that these incidents of killing constitute crimes against humanity where most of these cases involved the element of widespread or systematic attack against a group of civilian residents.

2- Kurdish Self-management forces have conducted extrajudicial killings that constitute war crimes.

3- Extremist Islamic groups have conducted extrajudicial killings as well that constitute war crimes.

4- Some of the armed opposition factions have conducted extrajudicial killings that constitute war crimes.

5- International coalition forces have conducted extrajudicial killings that constitute war crimes.

Condemnation and liability

Every internationally unlawful act committed by the state will entail a legal responsibility on that state. Equally, the customary international law states that the state is responsible for all the acts committed by the members of its security and military forces. Consequently, the state is responsible for the unlawful acts, including crimes against humanity, that have been perpetrated by the members of its military and security forces.

Additionally, the Russian regime and all Shiite militias as well as ISIS are all foreign parties who were effectively involved in acts of killings and are all responsible legally and judicially in addition to the funders and supporters of the Syrian regime that is perpetrating massacres systemically and ceaselessly on a daily basis.



Recommendations

The Security Council

- The Security Council must take additional steps as it has been a year since Resolution 2139 was adopted and no pledges to stop the indiscriminate bombing, which causes daily destruction and killing, have been made.
- Apply pressure on the states that support Syrian regime forces such as Russia, Iran, and Lebanon in order to stop the weaponry and expertise supply for Syrian regime forces as it has been proven that Syrian regime forces have been involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as states and individuals who are supplying extremist groups, the Democratic Union Party, and some of the armed opposition factions.
- The Syrian case must be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible must be held accountable.
- Instill security and peace in Syria and implement the principle of Responsibility to Protect in order to save the Syrians' lives, history, and culture, from being destroyed, stolen, and ruined.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

We gratefully thank all the families and local activists who majorly enriched this report with their contribution.





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