

# 69 Medical and Civil Defense Personnel Killed and 135 Incidents of Attack on their Operable Vital Facilities in the First Half of 2017

Seven Medical and Civil Defense  
Killed and 12 Incidents of Attack on  
their Operable Vital Facilities in June

# SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Thursday, July 6, 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 consistent bombing and targeting of medical facilities and civil defense centers by Syrian regime forces since 2011, and the killing and arrest of medics and civil defense personnel at the hands of different conflict parties, especially Syrian regime forces, indicates a systematic policy that only aims to shed more blood and deepen the suffering of the injured – civilians and armed.

### **Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, says:**

“The Russian attacks on medical and civil defense centers as well as medical and civil defense personnel are considered a blatant violation of the international humanitarian law and constitute war crimes considering the chaotic, and in many cases, deliberate, targeting of protected objects. All of this have only deepened the suffering of the wounded and injured and is one of the main reasons behind the displacement of the Syrian people as it sends a very clear message: there is no safe area, or a red line, including hospitals, you either flee or perish.”

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 de-escalation areas – 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.

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 changed.

SNHR documented in June a noticeable drop in the rates of violations by Syrian regime forces against medical and civil defense personnel and their vital facilities. Also, in this month, we recorded the first case of a medical personnel killed by international coalition forces since the start of their intervention on September 23, 2014.

SNHR's high-level methodology for documentation relies on survivors and families' direct accounts in addition to the process of verifying and analyzing pictures, videos, and some medical records. However, we can't claim that we have documented all cases in light of the ban and pursuit by Syrian regime forces and some of the other armed groups.

This report only represents the bare minimum, which we were able to document, of the actual magnitude and severity of the violations that occurred. Additionally, the report doesn't cover the social, economic, and psychological ramifications.

The type and number of evidences vary from one case to another. In light of the challenges we mentioned above, many of the incidents' legal description change based on new evidences or clues that surface after we had released the report. We add these evidences and clues to our data archive. On the other hand, many incidents don't constitute a violation to the international humanitarian law, but it involved collateral damages, so we record and archive these incidents to know what happened historically and to preserve it as a national record. However, they don't necessarily qualify as crimes.

Please see the methodology adopted by SNHR in [victim documentation](#) and [classifying civilian vital facilities](#)



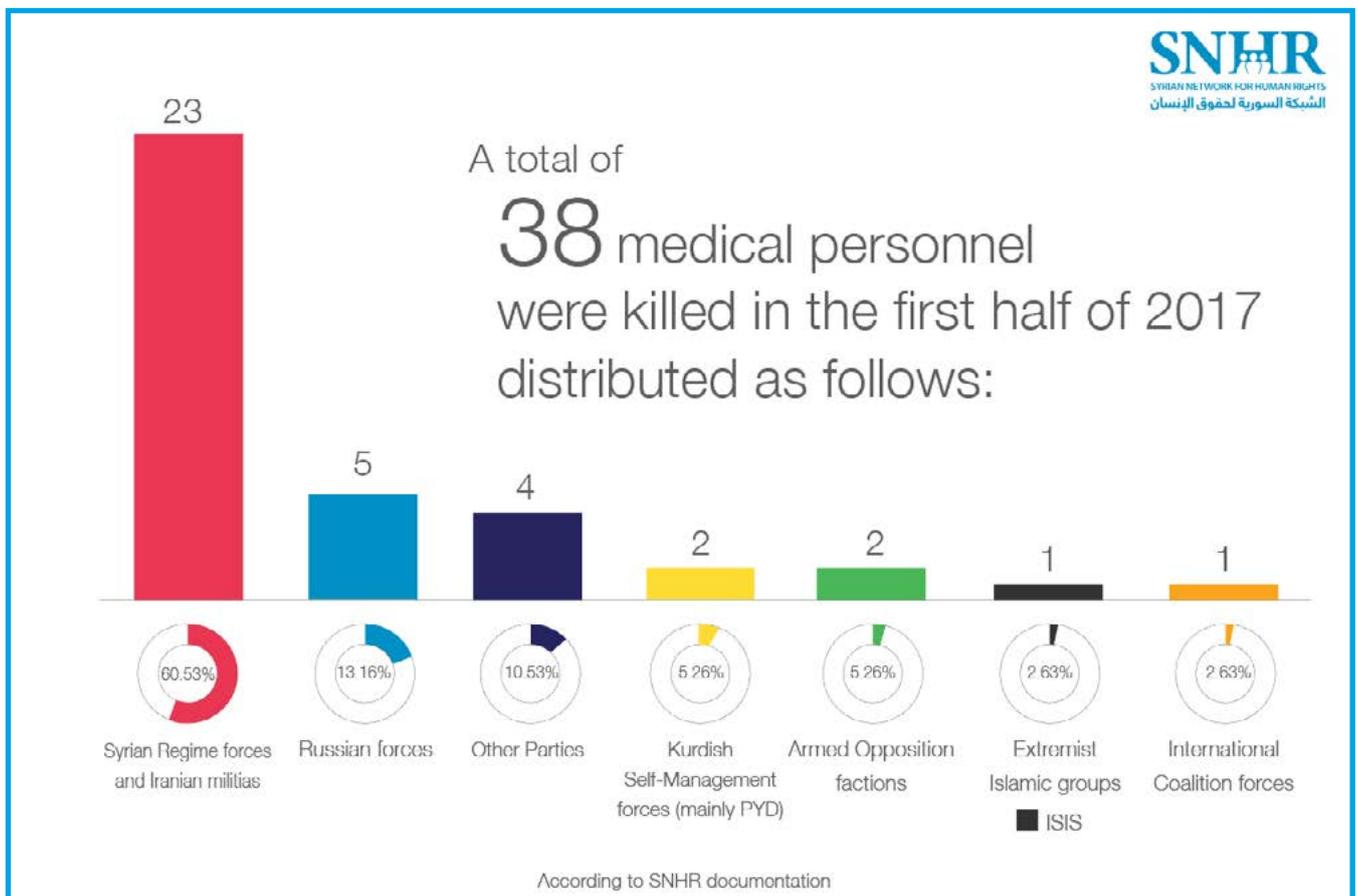
This report only represents the bare minimum of the actual severity and magnitude of the violations that occurred. Also, it doesn't cover the social, economic, and psychological ramifications.

## II. Executive Summary

### A. Toll of violations in the first half of 2017

SNHR has documented the following main violations in the first half of 2017 against medical personnel, civil defense personnel, Red Crescent personnel and their respective facilities

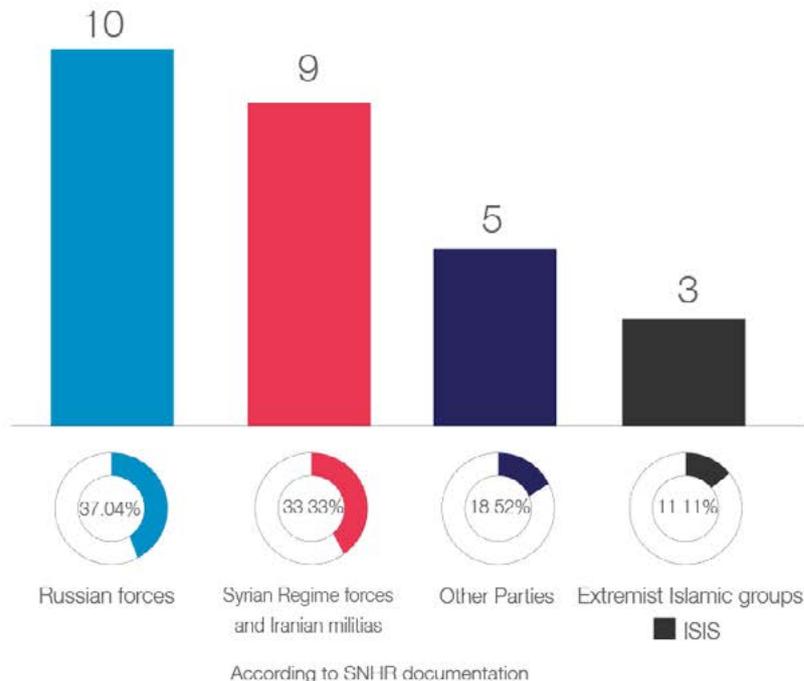
#### A. Acts of killing



A total of

**27** civil defense members

were killed in the first half of 2017, distributed as follows:



We documented the killing of 69 medical personnel, civil defense personnel, and Red Crescent personnel, as follows:

- Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): killed 33 individuals, including two women (adult female), who were medical personnel, civil defense personnel, or Red Crescent personnel. Victims are distributed as follows:

- One doctor
- Eight nurses, including two women
- Nine paramedics
- Two pharmacists
- One Red Crescent personnel
- Nine civil defense personnel
- Three medical personnel



- Russian forces: killed 16 individuals, including one woman (adult female), who were medical personnel, civil defense personnel, or Red Crescent personnel. Victims are distributed as follows:

- Three nurses
- One female pharmacist
- One Red Crescent personnel
- 10 civil defense personnel
- One medical personnel

- Extremist Islamic groups

ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State): killed four medical and civil defense personnel, as follows:

- One doctor
- Three civil defense personnel

- Armed opposition factions: killed two medical personnel, as follows:

- One paramedic
- One medical personnel

- Self-Management forces (primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party): killed two medical personnel, as follows:

- One doctor
- One pharmacist

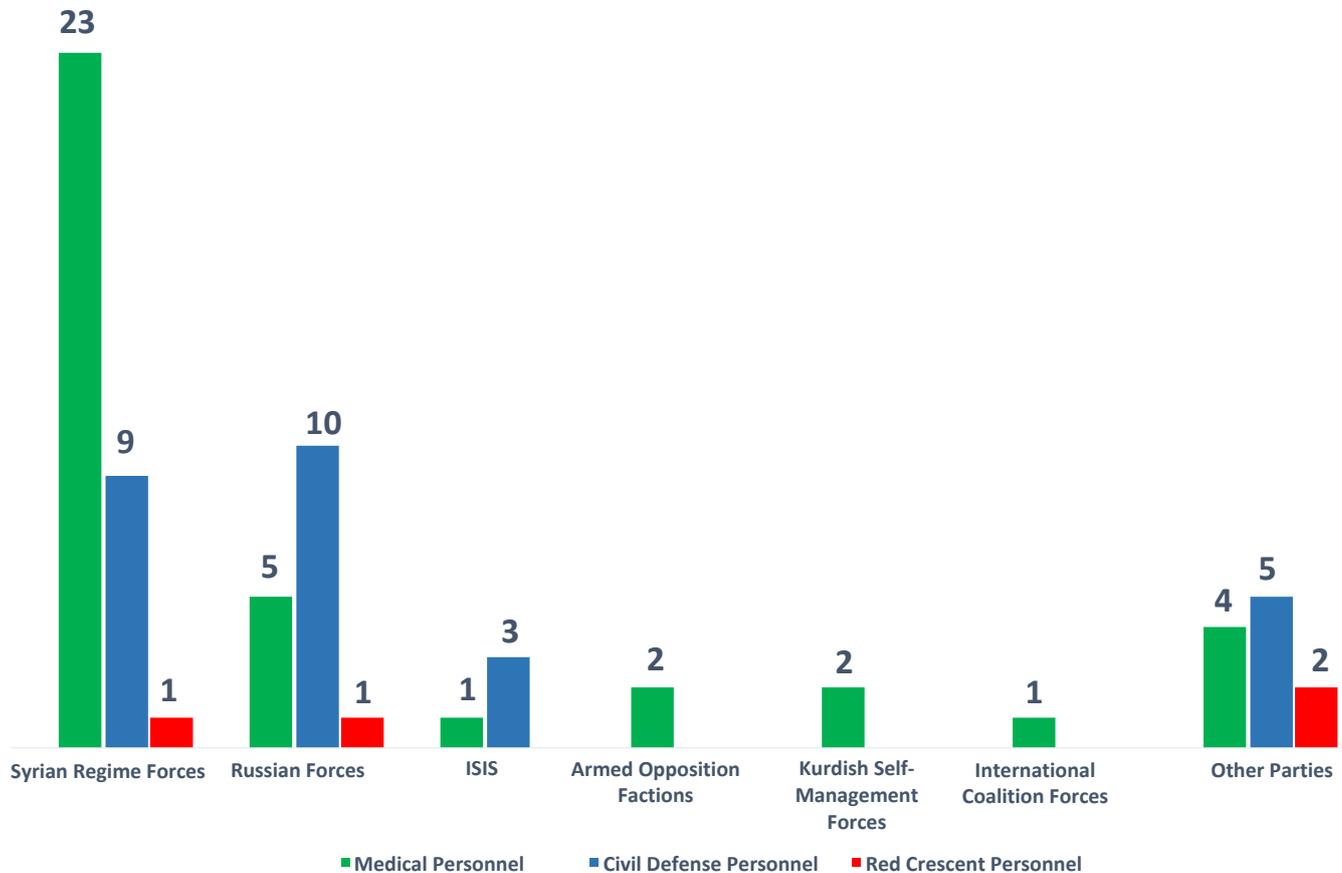
- International coalition forces: killed one female nurse

- Other parties: killed 11 individuals, including one woman (adult female), who were medical personnel, civil defense personnel, or Red Crescent personnel. Victims are distributed as follows:

- One doctor
- One nurse
- One paramedic
- Two Red Crescent Personnel
- Five civil defense personnel
- One medical personnel



The death toll among medical personnel, civil defense personnel, and Red Crescent personnel is distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:



### B. Incidents of attack on vital facilities

SNHR has documented 135 incidents of attack on vital medical facilities, civil defense facilities, and Red Crescent facilities, as follows:

- Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 71 incidents of attack, as follows:

- 23 medical facilities
- 13 ambulances
- Two Red Crescent facilities
- 33 civil defense facilities

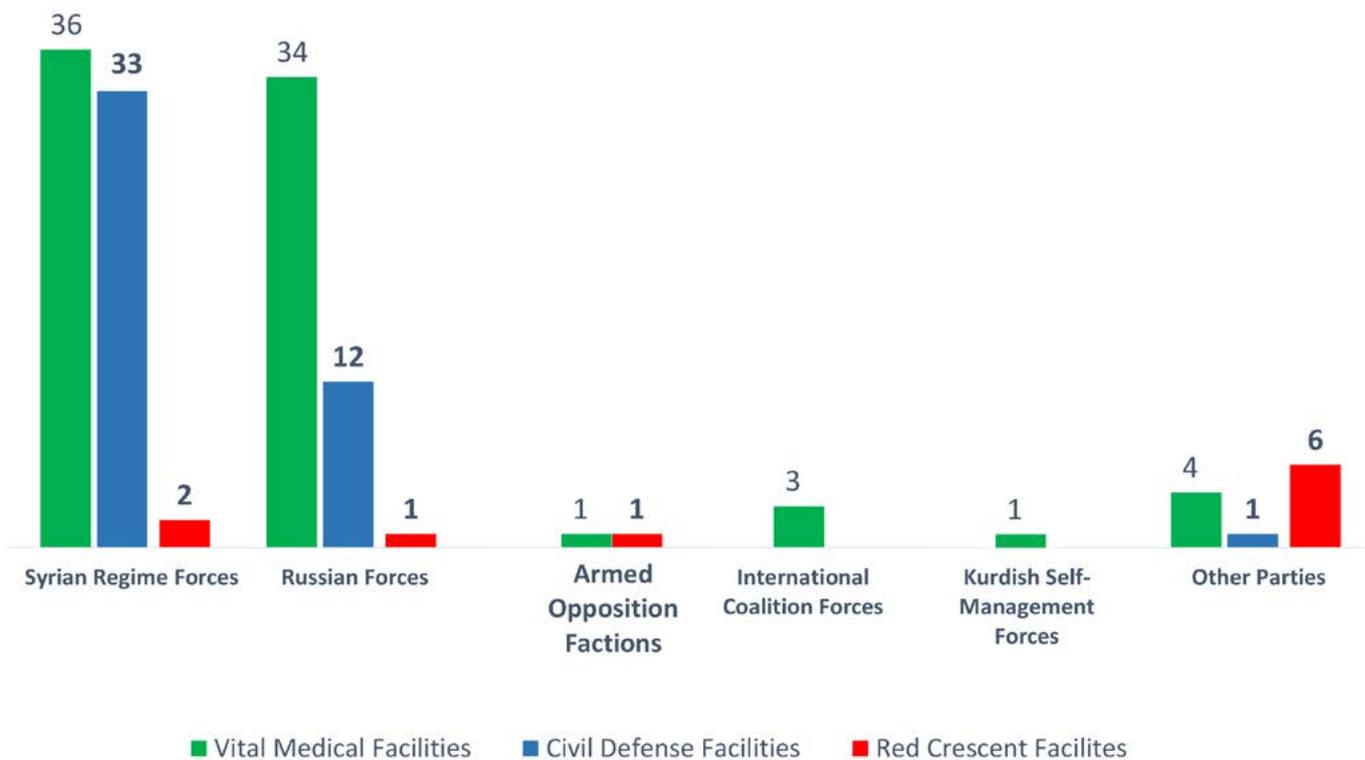
- Russian forces: 47 incidents of attack, as follows:

- 24 medical facilities
- 10 ambulances
- One Red Crescent facility
- 12 civil defense facilities



- Armed opposition factions: two incidents of attack, as follows:
  - One ambulance
  - One Red Crescent facility
- International coalition forces: three incidents of attack on medical facilities
- Self-Management forces (primarily the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party): one incident of attack on a medical facility
- Other parties: 11 incidents of attack, as follows:
  - One medical facility
  - Three ambulances
  - Six Red Crescent facilities
  - One civil defense facility

Incidents of attack on vital medical facilities, civil defense facilities, and Red Crescent facilities are distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:



## **B. Toll of Violations in June 2017**

SNHR has documented in the month of June 2017 the following main violations against medical personnel, civil defense personnel, and Red Crescent personnel and their respective facilities:

### A. Acts of killing

We documented the killing of seven medical, civil defense, and Red Crescent personnel, distributed as follows:

- Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): killed four individuals, including one women (adult female), who were medical personnel and civil defense personnel. Victims are distributed as follows:

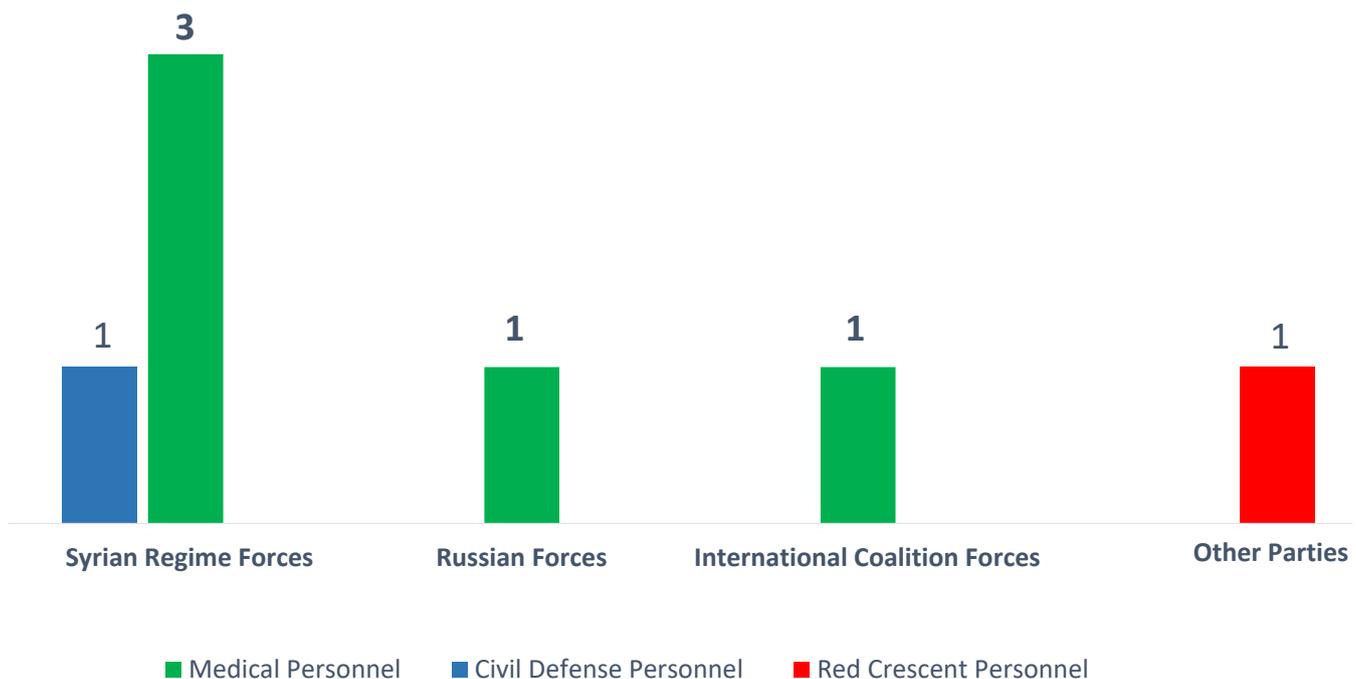
- Three nurses, including one woman
- One civil defense personnel

- Russian forces: killed one nurse

- International coalition forces: killed one female nurse

- Other parties: killed a Red Crescent volunteer

Medical, civil defense, and Red Crescent personnel killed in the month of June are distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:



## B. Incidents of attack on vital facilities

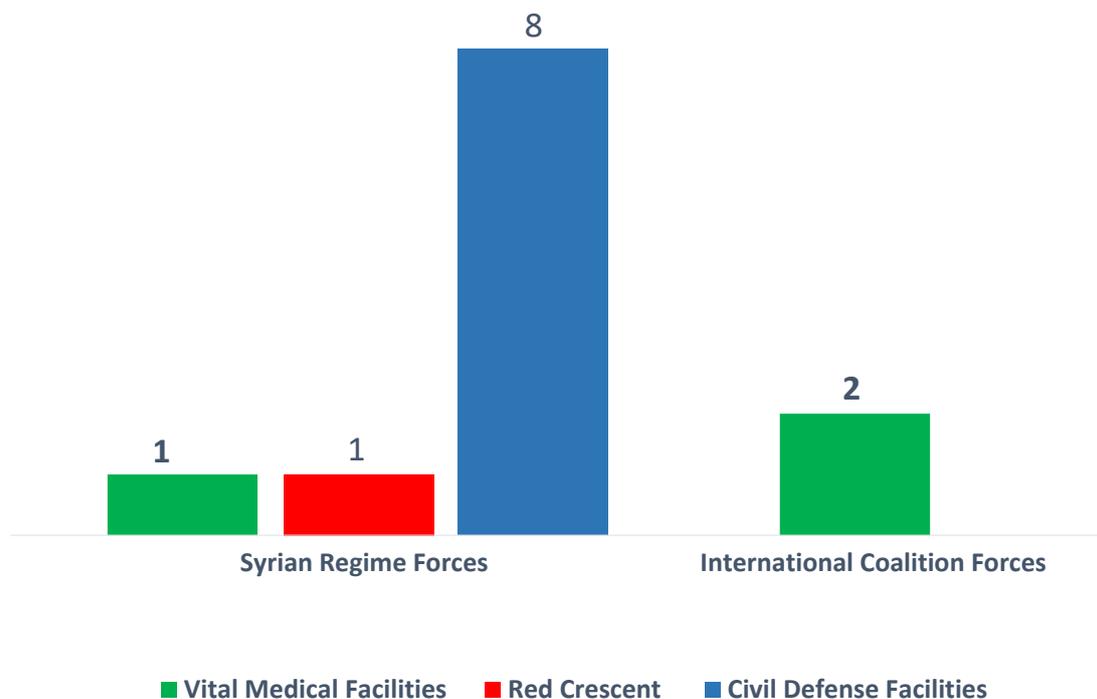
SNHR has documented 12 incidents of attack on vital medical facilities, civil defense facilities, and Red Crescent facilities, as follows

- Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 10 incidents of attack, as follows:

- One medical facility
- One Red Crescent facility
- Eight civil defense facilities

- International coalition forces: two incidents of attack on medical facilities

Attacks on vital medical and civil defense facilities are distributed as follows



### III. Details of June Incidents

#### **First: Acts of killing**

##### **A. Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)**

Mohammad al Sahli, nurse, from al Yarmouk Camp, southern Damascus city. On Sunday, June 4, 2017, we received information confirming his death due to torture at Palestine branch which is affiliated to the Military Security forces in Damascus city.

Ghazi Mahmoud al Shkeiti, a member of Izzdin point which is affiliated with the civil defense center in Homs, from Izzdin town, northeastern suburbs of Homs governorate, born in 1990, married and a father of two children. He was killed on Thursday, June 8, 2017, around 03:00 by shrapnel from a shell fired by Syrian regime forces. The shrapnel got into his chest as he was with the civil defense checking a site that was bombed earlier in al Steihat area, al Tloul village, southern suburbs of Hama governorate.



Mohammad Nour Mahmoud Kiwan, [nurse](#), from Tafas city, western suburbs of Daraa governorate, born in 1974, [works at Tafas makeshift hospital](#), married and a father of five children. He died on Thursday, June 8, 2017, at a Jordanian hospital of wounds sustained in a bombing by the fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian-Russian alliance (investigations are still ongoing to accurately determine the perpetrator party) which fired missiles in Tafas city on Monday, June 8, 2017.

Khadija Khaled Dmiri, female nurse, from Talbisa city, northern suburbs of Homs governorate, born in 1968, works at the children wing at Talbisa makeshift hospital, married and a mother of a girl. She was killed on Thursday, June 29, 2017, around 21:00 in a shelling by Syrian regime rocket launchers that fired a number of rockets at Talbisa city. One of the rockets landed in front of her house where she was standing and the shrapnel got into her head and shoulder, killing her immediately.



## Russian forces

Saleh Mohammad al Edib, nurse, from Dablan village, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, has a degree in nursing from the faculty of nursing at Damascus University, married. He died on Friday, June 30, 2017 of wounds sustain on Wednesday, June 28, 2017, in a bombardment by fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian that fired missiles loaded with cluster submunitions in Dablan village.



Saleh al Edib

## C. International coalition forces

Hanan Mohammad Ali Hasan Hamza, female nurse, born in 1977, she was killed on Saturday, June 10, 2017, in a bombing by fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes that fired missiles at al Nour Street in al Dar'iyah neighborhood, west of Raqqa city.



Hanan Hamza

## D. Other parties

Fadi Mahmoud Fadel al Breije', a Red Crescent volunteer, from al Joura neighborhood, northwest of Deir Ez-Zour city. He was killed on Monday, June 19, 2017, after a parachute, which carried food aids to Deir Ez-Zour's neighborhoods that are besieged by ISIS, landed on top of him. The parachute was dropped by a cargo aircraft near al Asad Hospital, which is located in west of al Joura neighborhood. As of this writing, we are yet to identify the source of the aircraft.



## **Second: Targeting of vital medical facilities and civil defense facilities**

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

#### Vital medical facilities

- Vital medical facilities (hospitals – dispensaries - medical points - makeshift hospitals)

Friday, June 9, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired missiles at the makeshift hospital in Jadid Ekidat village, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, the hospital building was heavily destroyed. As a result, the hospital was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

- Red Crescent

Saturday, June 17, 2017, Syrian regime snipers, stationing in the [Irrigation Ministry building](#), opened fire at [a Syrian Arab Red Crescent](#) (SARC) truck, which was loaded with humanitarian aids, near [Harasta city](#), east of Damascus suburbs governorate, as the ambulance was heading back to SARC headquarters in Damascus city after it was denied access into Harasta city by Syrian regime forces. As a result, the truck driver was wounded. The assault took place within the parts of Harasta city that are under the control of Syrian regime forces. SARC issued [a statement](#) condemning the assault on the truck.

- Civil defense facilities (centers - vehicles)

Monday, June 12, 2017, Syrian regime forces fired two “Pheel” rockets at center 1, which is affiliated to [Tareeq al Sad neighborhood](#), east of Daraa city. The center building was heavily damaged, and one of the ambulances belonging to the center was heavily destroyed and was rendered out of commission. The center is located within the parts of Daraa city that were under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.





Damages resulting from a shelling by Syrian regime forces on center 1, which is affiliated to the civil defense, in Tareeq al Sad neighborhood, Daraa – June 12, 2017

Wednesday, June 14, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a shell [near an ambulance](#) that belongs to the civil defense in [Tafas city](#), western suburbs of Daraa governorate, as the ambulance was heading to aid wounded from a previous shelling. The ambulance glass windows were shattered, and its structure was slightly damaged. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Friday, June 30, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a number of shells at center 107, which is affiliated to the civil defense, in Kafr Zita city, northern suburbs of Hama governorate. The center building, [a service vehicle](#), and a [bulldozer](#) were damaged to varying degrees. Additionally, an [ambulance](#) and a [flash rescue vehicle](#) belonging to the center were partially destroyed and rendered out of commission. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.





Damages to the ambulance that resulted from a shelling by Syrian regime forces on the civil defense center in Kafr Zita city, Hama – June 30, 2017

## **B. International coalition forces**

### Vital medical facilities

- Vital medical facilities (hospitals – dispensaries - medical points - makeshift hospitals)  
Saturday, June 10, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Fatima al Zahraa hospital, known as the Maternity Hospital, in al Mayadin city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The missiles fell in the hospital yard and heavily damaged its building and cladding materials. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Friday, June 23, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the National Hospital in Ma'adan city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour. The hospital building was heavily destroyed. As a result, the hospital was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.





Picture showing the National Hospital in Ma'adan city, Raqqa suburbs, before and after it was bombed by international coalition forces – June 23, 2017

## IV. Conclusions and Recommendation

### **Legal conclusions**

1- The incidents mentioned in this report are considered, beyond any doubt, violations of Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2254 which both state that indiscriminate attacks must be halted. Also, these incidents are violations of Article 8 of Rome Statute through the act of willful killing which constitutes war crimes.

2- We can confirm that most of the incidents included in this report have targeted armless civilians. Therefore, Syrian regime forces have violated the rules of the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. Additionally, these violations were perpetrated in a non-international armed conflict which amount to a war crime where all elements were fulfilled. Also, Russian forces, ISIS, Self-Management forces, international coalition forces, armed opposition factions, and other parties (which includes parties that we weren't able to identify as well as Turkish, Lebanese, and Jordanian forces) have committed acts that amount to war crimes through the crime of extrajudicial killing or targeting vital civilian facilities.

3- The attacks mentioned in this report are considered a violation of the customary international law as the shells were fired at populated areas rather than a specific military object.

4- Aerial bombardment has caused collateral damages that involved loss of lives, injuries, and significant damages to civil facilities. There are strong indicators suggesting that the damage was too excessive compared to the anticipated military benefit.



## **Recommendations**

### **The Security Council**

- The Security Council has to take additional steps as it has been more than two years since Resolution 2139 was adopted and no pledges to cease the indiscriminate bombardment operations have been made. All the conflict parties must respect these steps and adhere to the rules of the international humanitarian law.
- The Syrian case must be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible must be held accountable including the Russian regime whose involvement in committing war crimes have been proven.
- Instill security and peace in Syria and implement the norm of the Responsibility to Protect in order to protect the lives, culture, and history of the Syrian people from being destroyed, stolen, and ruined.
- Expand the sanctions to include the Syrian and Iranian regimes and all of their pillars who are directly involved in committing crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people.

### **The International Community**

- In light of the split of the Security Council and its utter inability, Steps must be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people that would protect them from the daily killings and siege and enhance the support for the relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction must be activated in local courts regarding these crimes in order to conduct fair trials for all those who were involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect in tens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) after all political channels through the Arab League's plan and then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan were drought out. Therefore, steps under Article 7 of the Rome Statute must be taken and the norm of the Responsibility to Protect, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, must be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.
- Renew the pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- Work on fulfilling justice and achieving accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights council and work on utilizing the principle of the universal jurisdiction.



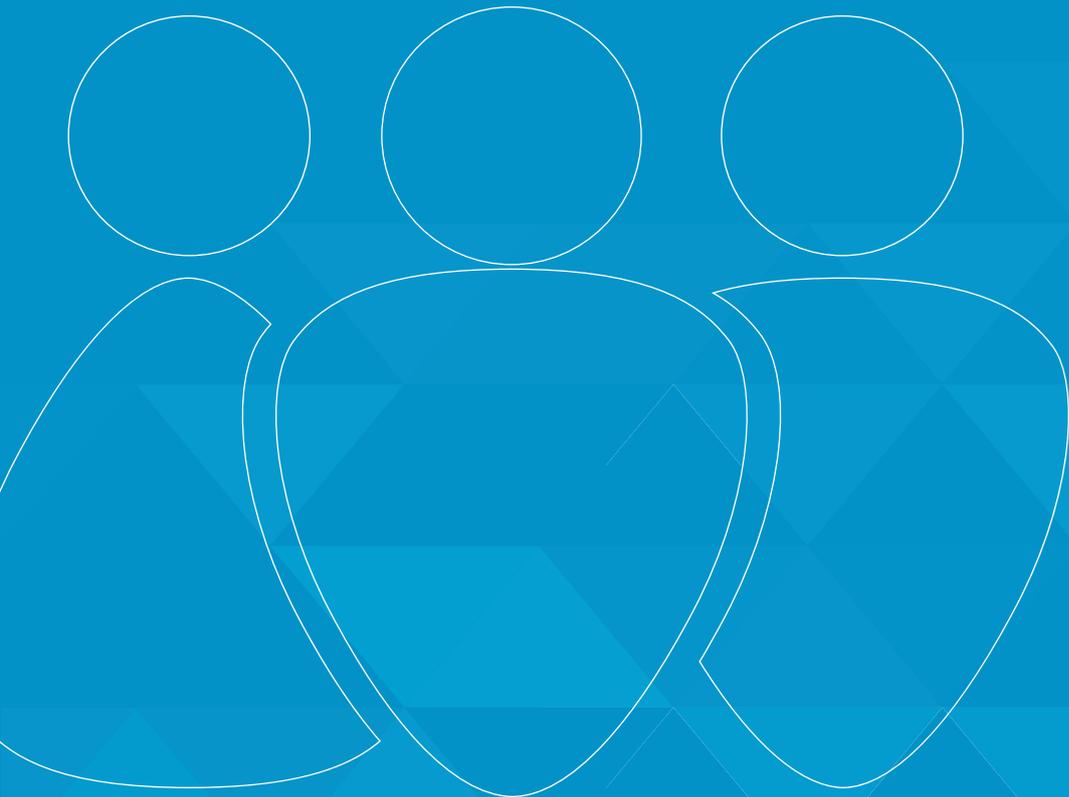
## **Medical organizations around the world**

There is a severe shortage in medical manpower in Syria because of the ceaseless killing of medical personnel. Firstly, Syrian doctors must come back to Syria to compensate for the severe shortage in medical personnel. Also, international organizations can send volunteers to safe areas where wounded are sent for treatment. We have recorded many cases where wounded died due to lack of medical resources.

## **Acknowledgment and Condolences**

Our most sincere thanks go to the victims' families and friends and to the local activists who contributed majorly to this report.





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