

No less than 938 Barrel Bombs in April 2017

Security Council Has to Take Additional Steps to Ban these Dumb Bombs

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Wednesday, May 10, 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

Vitaly Churkin, the former Russian representative to the United Nations, said that the Syrian regime has stopped using barrel bombs. However, the daily monitoring and documentation conducted by SNHR prove, beyond any doubt, otherwise as the Syrian regime continues to kill and destroy Syria by dropping hundreds of barrel bombs. In this report, we are going to highlight the incidents in which we documented the use of barrel bombs particularly with place, date, and pictures. This report is a monthly report by SNHR.

A distinctively indiscriminate weapon with huge destructive impact, a barrel bomb doesn't only kill civilians but also terrorizes and displaces residents in light of the destruction it creates. Dropping barrel bombs from warplanes in this savage and primitive manner amounts to a war crime. Every barrel bomb dropped is considered a war crime.

According to SNHR's violation archive, the first notable use of barrel bombs by Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias) was on Monday, April 1, 2012 against the residents of Salqin city in Idlib governorate. Barrel bombs is a locally-made weapon which is used by Syrian regime forces due to the fact that it costs notably less than missiles and it has a huge destructive impact. The use of barrel bombs is based on the principle of free fall and it weighs sometimes more than one-fourth ton and it is a distinctively indiscriminate weapon. even if barrel bombs killed an armed man, this would be an accident as 99% of the victims killed by barrel bombs are civilians and the percentage of women and children victims varies between 12% to 35% in some cases.



Security Council adopted Resolution 2139 on February 22, 2016 which specifically condemns the use of barrel bombs: “cease all attacks against civilians, as well as the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas, including shelling and aerial bombardment, such as the use of barrel bombs.” Nonetheless, Syrian regime forces are still dropping tens of barrel bombs on armed opposition-held areas.

In some cases, we documented the use of barrel bombs that is loaded with poison gases by Syrian regime forces which is a violation of Security Council Resolution 2118, adopted on September 27, 2013, and Resolution 2209, adopted on April 6, 2015.

This report monitors the number of barrel bombs that were dropped across Syria, the death toll it causes, and the destruction of most notable vital facilities caused by barrel bombs. In light of the difficulties our teams encounter, it should be noted that this is the bare minimum of the actual magnitude of crimes.

The only party that possesses warplanes and helicopters is the ruling regime. However, the regime denies that it is using barrel bombs the same way it denies perpetrating other violations such as murder, arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture among others. In contrast, the regime denies the International Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic access to Syria, and bans local and international human rights organizations and independent media. Therefore, this report doesn't include the remaining three parties (Self-management forces, extremist Islamic groups, and armed opposition factions) as none of them has an air force.

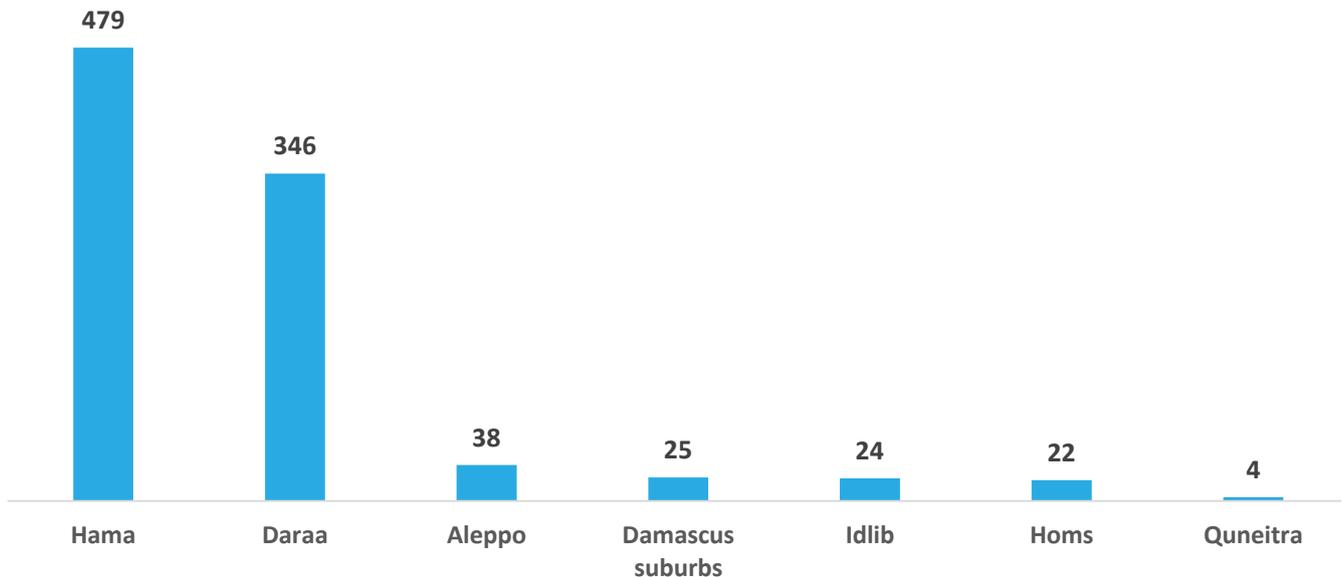
All the reports and studies done by SNHR show that most of the attacks were deliberately against residential areas and vital centers in order to demolish any chances to establish an alternative state and an alternative authority in the areas that are not controlled by Syrian regime forces. Otherwise, what is the point of targeting areas that are tens of kilometers away from the frontlines?



II. Executive Summary

A. Use of barrel bombs

Through daily monitoring and documenting, SNHR team was able to record that 938 barrel bombs at least were dropped in April 2017 by the Syrian regime forces helicopters. Those barrel bombs are distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



According to SNHR's victim documentation team, 16 civilians, including seven children and four women (adult female), were killed in barrel bombs attacks in Daraa governorate.

B. Incidents of attacks against vital facilities that involved the use of barrel bombs

Due to the widespread use of barrel bombs, it is impossible to record all forms of destruction caused by barrel bombs. Therefore, we are going to focus on protected objects and vital facilities such as markets, hospitals, schools and places of worship....

The use of barrel bombs by the Syrian regime helicopters in the month of April 2017 caused damages to no less than four civil defense facilities, which were:

Places of worship

- Mosques: 1

Vital medical facilities

- Medical facilities: 1



III. Details

A. Most notable deaths caused by barrel bombs

Daraa governorate

Wednesday, April 26, 2017, Syrian regime helicopters dropped four barrel bombs on residential houses in Nasib village in the eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the killing of four civilians – two children and their parents. The village is under the control of armed opposition factions.

Sunday, April 30, 2017, around 11:00, two [Syrian regime](#) helicopters dropped eight [barrel bombs](#) on under-construction houses -in which IDPs live- in [al Shayyah area](#) in southern [Daraa city](#), which resulted in the killing of [12 civilians](#) including five children and three women. Al Shayyah area is under the control of armed opposition factions.



Picture of a dead girl killed in the massacre perpetrated by Syrian regime forces in al Shayyah area, Daraa city, using barrel bombs – April 30, 2017

B. Incidents of attacks against vital facilities that involved the use of barrel bombs

Places of worship

- Mosques

Friday, April 21, 2017, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb near Abu Obayda ben al Jarrah Mosque in Kafr Zita city in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate. The barrel bomb fell on an agricultural land that is only a few meters from the mosque, as the mosque building was moderately damaged. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front.



Vital medical facilities

- Medical facilities

Wednesday, April 26, 2017, Syrian regime helicopters dropped two barrel bombs near the makeshift hospital in Nasib village in the eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, the hospital building was slightly damaged. The village is under the control of armed opposition factions.

IV. Appendixes and Attachments



Picture showing Syrian regime helicopters dropping two barrel bombs on Daraa al Balad area in the middle of Daraa city – Thursday, April 20, 2017





Picture showing the destruction in a house in Kafr Zita city, northern suburbs of Hama, after Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on it – Tuesday, April 25, 2017



Picture showing the destruction in the residential houses in Nasib village, eastern suburbs of Daraa, after Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on them – Sunday, April 30, 2017



[Video showing](#) Syrian regime helicopters dropped four barrel bombs on Daraa al Balad area in the middle of Daraa city – Monday, April 10, 2017

Video showing Syrian regime helicopters dropping two [barrel bombs](#) on Daraa al Balad area in the middle of Daraa city – Tuesday, April 11, 2017

Video showing Syrian regime helicopters dropping a barrel bomb on [Kafr Zita](#) city, northern suburbs of Hama governorate – Wednesday, April 12, 2017

Video showing Syrian regime helicopters dropping a number of barrel bombs on Daraa al Balad area in the middle of [Daraa city](#) – Wednesday, April 12, 2017

[Video](#) showing a barrel bomb falling and its explosion in M'arkebbba village after it was dropped by Syrian regime helicopters, northern suburbs of Hama governorate – Thursday, April 20, 2017

Video showing Syrian regime helicopters dropping a [barrel bomb](#) on Kafr Zita city, northern suburbs of Hama governorate – Friday, April 21, 2017

Video showing Syrian regime helicopters dropping four barrel bombs on [Daraa al Balad](#) area in the middle of Daraa city – Friday, April 21, 2017

Video showing a barrel bomb falling and its explosion after it was dropped by Syrian regime helicopters in the agricultural lands of [M'arkebbba village](#), northern suburbs of Hama – Monday, April 24, 2017

Video showing the [smoke](#) from a barrel bombs explosion after they were dropped by Syrian regime helicopters on the agricultural lands of al Latamena town, northern suburbs of Hama governorate – Thursday, April 27, 2017

Video showing a [barrel bomb](#) falling and its explosion after it was dropped by Syrian regime helicopters in al Latamena town, northern suburbs of Hama governorate – Sunday, April 30, 2017

Video showing a barrel bomb falling and its explosion in [Kafr Zita city](#), northern suburbs of Hama – Sunday, April 30, 2017



V. Legal Conclusions and Recommendations

Legal conclusions

1- The Syrian government has, beyond any doubt, violated Security Council Resolutions 2139 and Security Council Resolution 2254. Syrian regime forces used barrel bombs in a widespread and systematic manner and violated, through the crime of willful killing, Article 7 of the Rome Statute in a widespread and systematic manner as well which constitutes crimes against humanity. Additionally, the Syrian government violated many rules of the international humanitarian law by perpetrating tens of crimes that amount to war crimes which manifested in the indiscriminate and random bombardment that was also disproportionate due to the use of excessive force.

2- SNHR can confirm that the bombardment using barrel bombs is an indiscriminate bombardment that targeted unarmed civilians. Thus, Syrian regime forces have violated the rules of the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. Additionally, considering that these crimes were perpetrated during non-international armed conflict, these crimes amount to a war crime where all the elements of a war crimes were fulfilled.

3-the Indiscriminate attacks carried out by Syrian regime forces are considered a violation of the customary humanitarian international law, where Syrian regime forces fired shells on residential areas and it wasn't directed against a specific military target.

4- These attacks, especially bombardment, have caused collateral damages that involved casualties, injuries, and great damages to civil facilities. There are strong indicators that suggest that the damage was considerably excessive in relation to the estimated military benefit.

5- The magnitude of the widespread frequent bombardment, the excessive force, the indiscriminate manner, and the coordinated approach of these attacks must be based on high orders and a state policy.

6- Syrian regime forces, including all forms and leaders, are involved in perpetrating crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people in addition to those who provide Syrian regime forces with financial, political, and military support -such as the Russian government, the Iranian government, and the Lebanese group Hezbollah among others. Also, the companies that supply weapons are considered partners in these crimes and are subject to criminal prosecution.



Recommendations

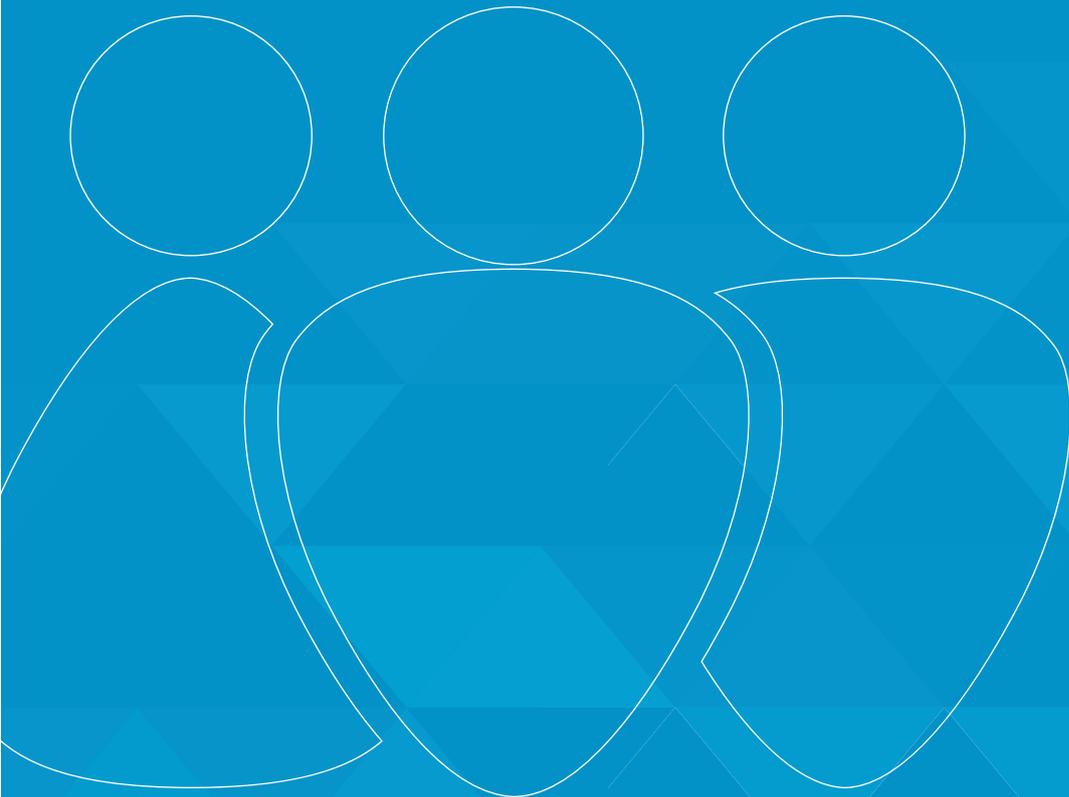
The Security Council

- The Security Council must insure the serious implementation of its Resolutions. These Resolutions have become merely words and, thus, the Security Council has lost all of its credibility and purpose.
- An arms embargo must be imposed on the Syrian government. Also, all those who supply it with weapons and funding must be prosecuted considering the risk that these weapons might be used to commit crimes and serious violations of human rights.
- In the Syrian case, The Security Council is the one who is authorized to refer the case to the International Criminal Court. However, the Security Council has been obstructing this procedure for five years instead of facilitating it and working on instilling peace and security in Syria. The prosecution of everyone involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes must commence immediately.

Acknowledgment and Consolation

Our most heartfelt condolences for the families and friends of the victims, and our thanks go out to all local activists and families who contributed majorly to this study and the investigations.





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