

996 Civilians Killed in November 2017

Including 79% at the Hands of
the Syrian-Russian Alliance

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Friday, December 1, 2017

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

This 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

On December 30, 2016, a comprehensive ceasefire was announced from the Turkish capital Ankara under a Russian-Turkish sponsorship. The signing parties, the Syrian regime on one side and armed opposition factions on the other side, agreed to cease all armed attacks, including airstrikes, and stop raids and on-the-ground advancements. The military areas controlled by ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State) were excluded from the agreement. Ankara Ceasefire Agreement was followed by seven rounds of talks that were held in Astana, Kazakhstan's capital, between Russian, Turkish, and Iranian representatives as the states who sponsored Ankara Ceasefire Agreement. These rounds -the most recent of which was on October 30-31, 2017- discussed mostly, in parallel with a number of local agreements, ways to further establish de-escalation zones in Idlib governorate and the surrounding areas (parts of Aleppo, Hama, and Latakia governorates), northern Homs governorate, Eastern Ghouta, and parts of Daraa and Quneitra governorates in south Syria. Additionally, the talks addressed ways to deliver humanitarian aids and enable IDPs to return to those areas.



Since these agreements went into effect, the included areas saw a relatively good and noticeable drop in killing rates in relation to the past months since March 2011.

We noticed that these agreements reflected on the civilians' lives in most of the areas that were included in the agreements, 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 guarantors- won't see are still going on as nothing had changed.

A de-escalation agreement was reached in Eastern Ghouta between Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction, and Russian forces under an Egyptian sponsorship on Saturday, July 22, 2017, and was followed by a similar [agreement](#) with Failaq al Rahman faction that established the faction's inclusion in the de-escalation zone in Eastern Ghouta on Wednesday, August 16, 2017. Nonetheless, Syrian-Russian alliance have initiated a vicious offensive against Eastern Ghouta on the 14th of last November. We released a report, "[The Barbarian Bombardment and Siege on Eastern Ghouta Practically Invalidates the Upcoming Geneva Round](#)", documenting the most notable violations by the Syrian-Russian alliance between November 14-27, 2017.

We recorded a 20% increase in the toll of civilian deaths at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance forces in November compared to October, as the Syrian-Russian alliance topped all parties to the conflict for the third month in a row, followed by ISIS. We also documented an unprecedented drop in civilian deaths at the hands of international coalition forces since September 2016. Deir Ez-Zour governorate saw the most civilian deaths, with a similar toll to that of October's, while Damascus and its suburbs saw the second-most civilian deaths with a toll that was nearly twice and a half as the toll the governorate recorded in October.

The Russian guarantor should respect the agreements they struck and apply serious pressure on their Syrian and Iranian allies in order to cease all forms of killing, shelling, and torture-to-death inside detention centers, and start releasing detainees – an issue that has not seen any notable progress so far.



We, at SNHR, hope that the de-escalation zones agreements see 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

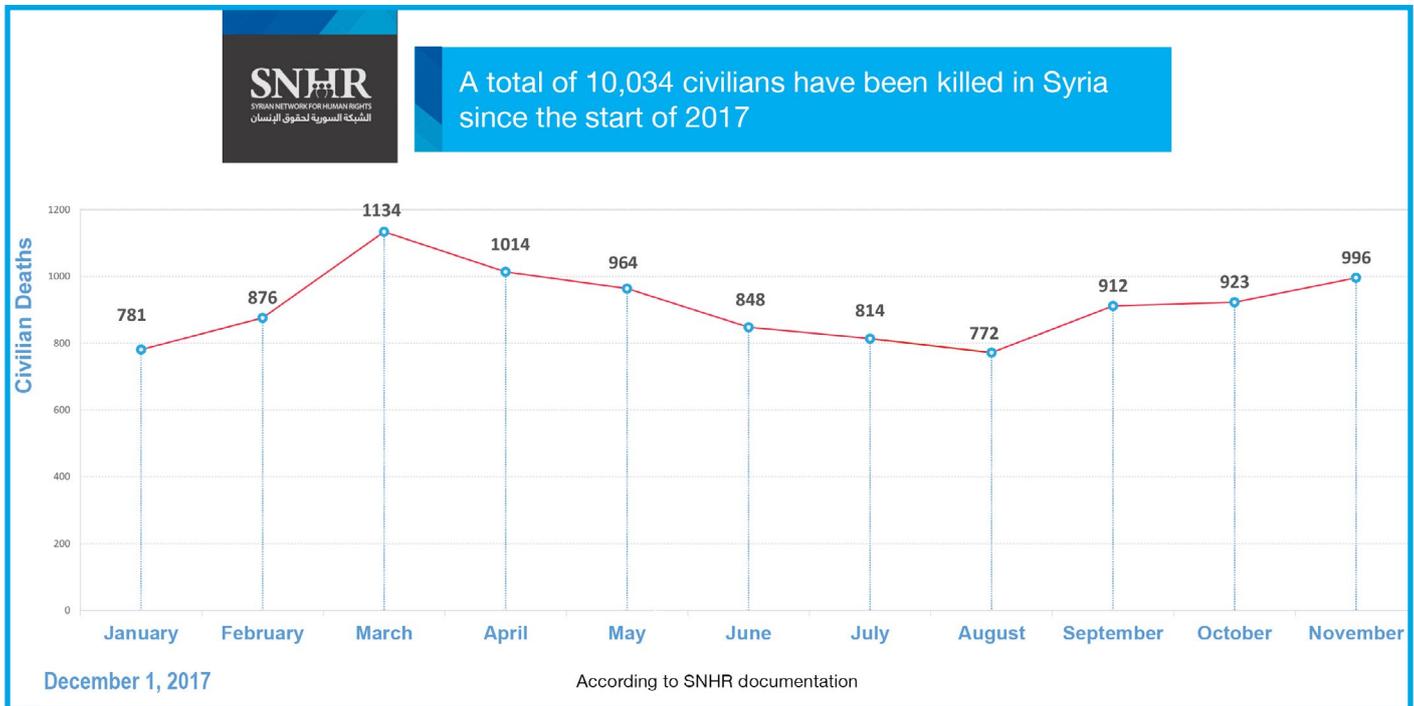
Please see SNHR [methodology](#) in documenting victims:



II. Details

A. Civilian death toll in 2017

SNHR has documented the killing of 10,034 civilians at the hands of parties to the conflict in Syria between the start of 2017 and December of the same year

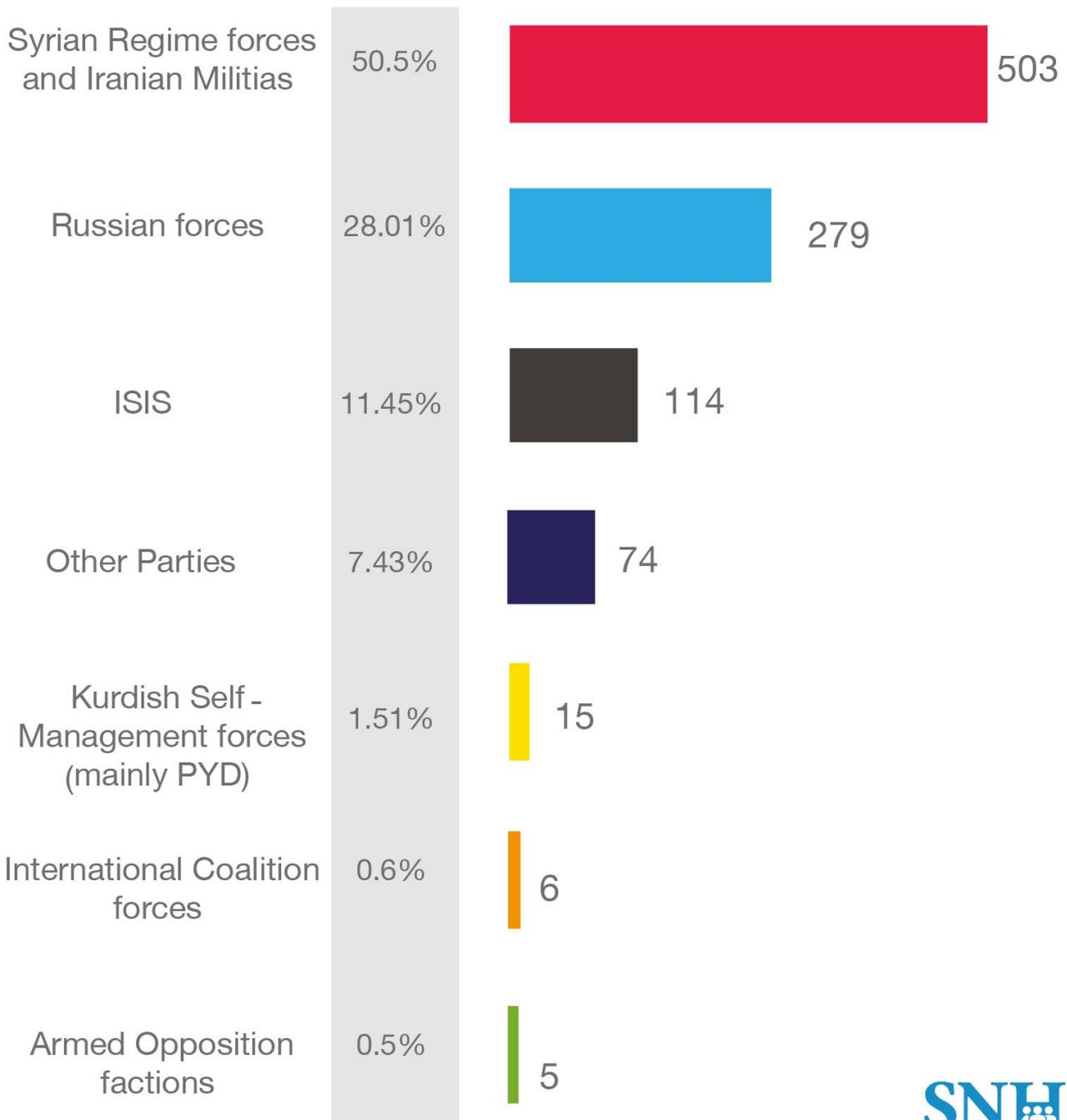


B. Civilian death toll of November 2017

SNHR has documented the killing of 966 civilians in the month of November 2017 at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria



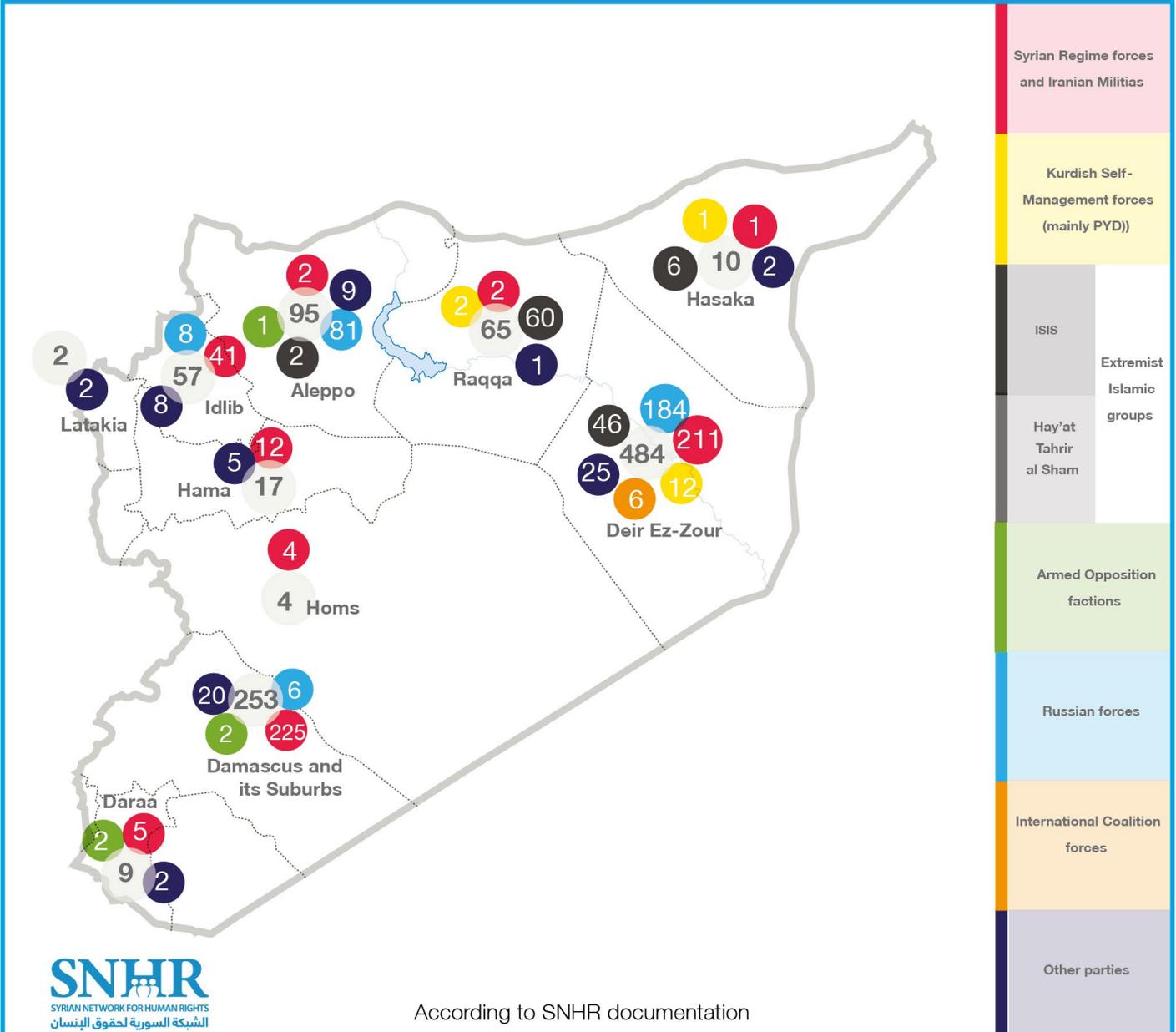
A total of 996 civilians killed in Syria in November 2017



According to SNHR documentation



A total of 996 civilians killed in Syria in November 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 has documented the killing of 503 civilians at the hands of Syrian regime forces, including 74 children (three children are killed every day on average) and 51 women (adult female). Additionally, among the victims were nine who died due to torture.

B. Russian forces

We recorded the killing of 279 civilians, including 95 children and 44 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 15 civilians, including one child and two women.

D. Extremist Islamic groups:

- ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State): killed 114 civilians, including 16 children and 10 women.

E. Armed opposition factions

SNHR has documented the killing of five civilians, including one child and one woman.

F. International coalition forces

We recorded the killing of six civilians in bombardments by international coalition forces warplanes.

G. Other parties

We documented the killing of 74 civilians, including 24 children and five women 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.

We would like to note that this is what we were able to document and verify with full names, place, and time through our members who are spread across Syria. It also should be noted that there are many cases that we couldn’t access and document especially in the event of massacres where towns and villages are enclosed and communication is cut off. This suggests that the actual number of civilian deaths is greater. All of this is because the Syrian government bans any human rights organization from working on its grounds.



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 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.

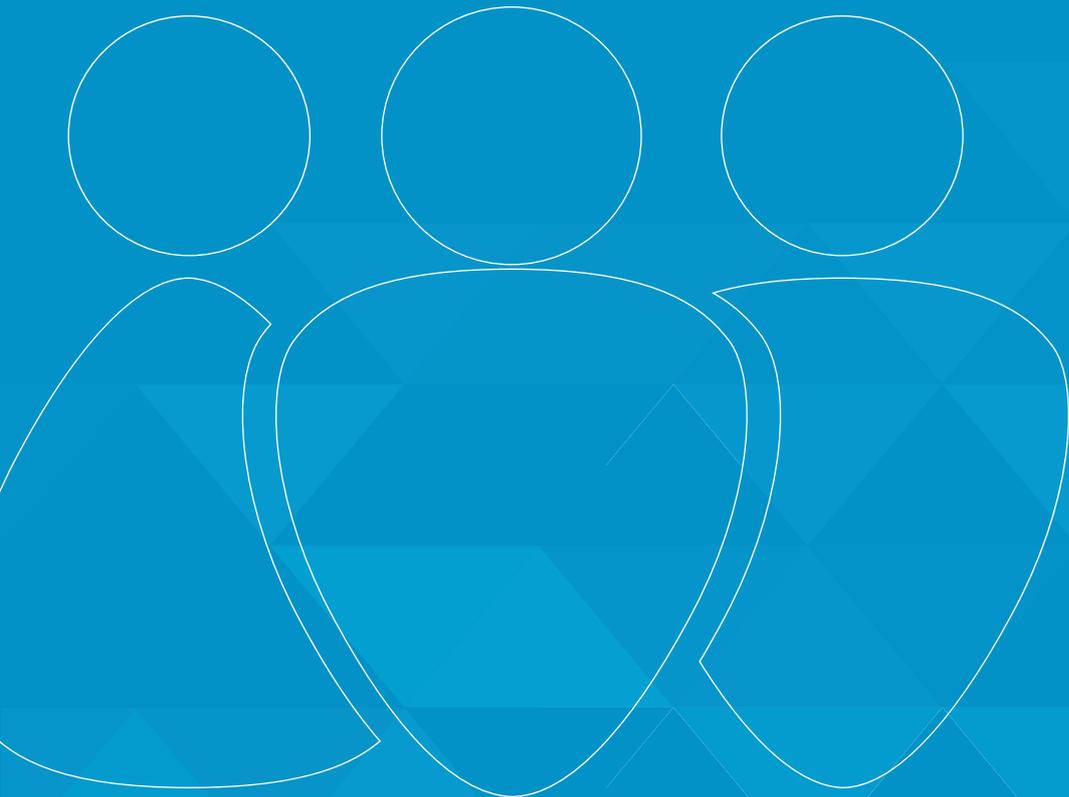
The Russian guarantor

- The Syrian regime has to be stopped from dooming the de-escalation agreements. Otherwise, it will only be seen as an exchange of roles between the Russian regime, on one side, and the Syrian/Russian alliance on the other side.
- Start making progress in the detainees issue by revealing the fates of 76,000 forcibly-disappeared persons at the hands of the Syrian regime.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

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





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