

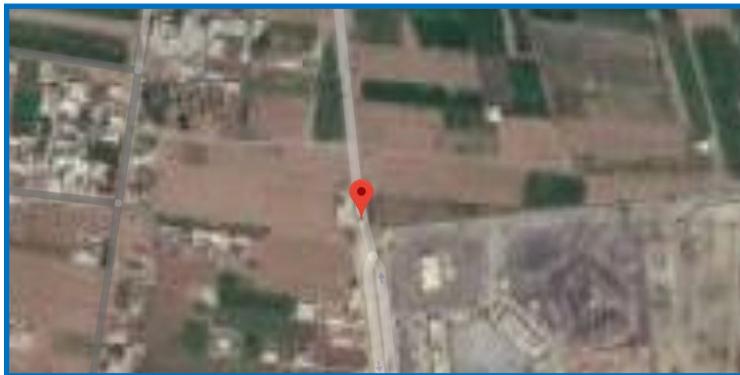


The Indiscriminate Military Offensive and the Massacres that were Perpetrated in al Sfeira area

A report by: The Syrian Network for Human Rights

Al Sfeira city is located in the southern suburbs of Aleppo. The road from Kharboush to Khanaser Athrayya is a strategic road, as it leads to Ma'amel Al Defaa, one of the Syrian regime forces' largest weapon arsenal. Long clashes took place on the road which was taken over by the Free Army on August 22, 2013, before the regime took it back on Monday, October 7, 2013.

The location on the map



On Monday, October 7, 2013, the regime started a raid in Abu Jrein, the first village on Kharboush-Khanaser road, in which various kinds of weapons were used, including barrel bombs, thermal missiles (Kornet), artillery shelling, shelling by Shilka tanks, and grad missiles. Government forces dropped no less than 230 barrel bombs on al Sfeira city and the surrounding villages.

Government forces also fired no less than 50 thermal missiles (Kornet) in the area that concentrated mostly on (Tal'n'am road, Tal Riman, Tal Arn, the agricultural lands between Tal'rn and al Sfeira, and al Sfeira). As a daily average, 30 grad missiles, 520 artillery shells, and 5700 Shilka and DShK shells were fired every day.





The military campaign forced 92% of the city residents to flee and destroyed roughly 85% of the city. Also, the campaign resulted in the killing of 118 civilians, including 34 children and 11 women, who were documented by name, and 1590 injuries, which varied from moderate to severe, as among the cases were amputation and disability. In addition, approximately 525 people went missing.

A testimony by Abu Shadi, an eyewitness from al Sfeira area, who is still alive:

“99% of al Sfeira residents fled north, and to Manbej, al Bab, al Raqqa, Maskna, and other areas. The regime shelled an IDPs camp, al Fostouq camp, and all of the medical points with barrel bombs, which rendered them out of commission. We have three ambulances in al Sfeira, the regime shelled two of them along with a makeshift hospital. What we have left is one medical point in the middle of the city and one ambulance.”

“We have been subjected to a daily shelling. Averagely, 700 shells are falling on us every day including missiles and artillery shells, and more than 7000 Shilka shells and 7000 DshK. Also, 15 barrel bombs are dropped every day and about 40 grad missiles.”

The shelling on the city resulted in four massacre

The first massacre: Thursday, October 10, 2013

Government forces shelled a bakery in the city with missiles, which resulted in the killing of 17 citizens including four children and one woman. Also, we documented 40 injured.

The second massacre: Thursday, October 17, 2013

Government forces shelled a civilian car that was transporting an IDP family from Tal’rn city using a thermal missile, which killed six people from the same family, five children and one woman, and injured one other.

The third massacre: Tuesday, 22 October, 2013

Government forces dropped barrel bombs on “al Fostouq” camp near Tredim village to the north of al Sfeira area. The camp houses IDPs from Al Sfeira residents. The bombing resulted in the killing of nine citizens including one child. Also, activists talked about seven burned dead bodies that weren’t identified. Additionally, we documented 30 injured.





The fourth massacre: Wednesday 23 October, 2013

On Wednesday, October 23, 2013, government forces dropped barrel bombs on Al Jboul village, which resulted in a massacre in which 10 citizens were killed, including six children and two women. Among the victims were eight members of the same family. Also, about 50 others were injured.

[All the names and victims' pictures](#) are included in the following URL

Proofs and Attachments

1- Barrel bombs

[Videos showing](#) barrel bombs [being dropped](#)

[Videos showing](#) [the destruction](#) in the aftermath of the [barrel bomb attacks](#)

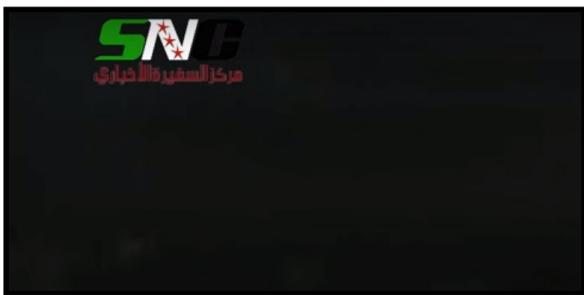
[Video of](#) [the wounded](#) in the aftermath of the barrel bomb attacks

2- Heavy artillery shelling

[Videos showing](#) [the heavy](#) artillery [shelling](#) on [the city](#)

[Videos showing](#) the wounded in the artillery shelling

3- Shilka tanks shelling



4- Missile shelling

[Video showing](#) the missile attack on the city

[Video showing](#) the destruction [in the aftermath](#) of the missile shelling

5- Shelling using thermal missiles (Kornet)

Video showing [the shelling](#) using thermal missiles





Conclusions

1. SNHR affirms that the bombardment on Sfeira was indiscriminate. Thus, government forces and Al Shabiha have violated the international human rights law which protects the right to life in addition to being committed in a non-International armed conflict so it mounts to war crime as all elements were fulfilled.
2. The indiscriminate attacks by government forces are violation of customary international humanitarian law where government forces launched several shells on populated areas rather than targeting specific military objects.
3. Those attacks, particularly the bombardment, caused casualties, injures or damaged civilian objects. Moreover, there are strong indicators that the damaged was great compared with the military benefits.
4. The volume of the massacre in addition to its nature, the amount of power that was used, and the indiscriminate and coordinated nature of bombardment cannot be without high instructions and it's a state policy.

Recommendations

The Syrian government

- 1- Stop all Human Rights violations immediately.
- 2- Respect its international commitments that includes the protection of civilians in the time of war, and respect the rules of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Human Rights Council

- 1- Demand the Security Council and the concerned international institutions to shoulder their responsibilities in regard to what is happening to Syrian people like murder, arrest, rape, and displacement.
- 2- Apply pressure on the Syrian government to cease murder, torture and release all kidnapped persons.
- 3- Hold Syrian government's allies and supporters- Russia, Iran, and China- morally and materially responsible for what is happening to the children of Syria.
- 4- Give the disastrous situation of victims' families in Syria greater interest and seriousness.





The Security Council

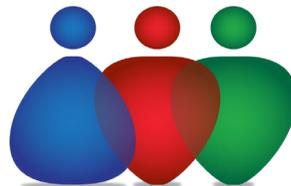
- 1- Adopt a resolution to refer all perpetrators and criminals to the International Criminal Court.
- 2- Warn the Syrian government about the ramifications of severe acts and systematic murder and send a clear message regarding this case.

The Arab League

- 1- Ask the Human Rights Council and the United Nations to give the case of daily murder its right of interest and follow-up.
- 2- Give the case the serious and great interest and follow-up, and try to give the victims' families psychological, material and educational care.
- 3- Press politically and diplomatically on the main Syrian regime allies- Russia, Iran and China- to ban them from providing the international and political cover and protection of all committed crimes against the Syrian people and to hold them morally and materially responsible for all Syrian government violations.

International Commission of Inquiry

- 1- Stop depicting the conflict as it is between two equal parties in crimes, power and central decision-making, and to describe the crime as it is without mitigation for political purposes. It also has to increase its cadres that is concerned with the Syrian case due to the volume of the daily crimes which would insure a more comprehensive and complete documentation.



Syrian Network For Human Rights
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

