

# **No less than 28 Massacres in February 2017**

Including 19 Massacres at the  
Hands of the Syrian-Russian  
Regime

# **SNHR**

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Monday, March 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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Acknowledgment

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### I. Introduction

On December 30, 2016, a comprehensive ceasefire was announced in Syria under a Russian-Turkish sponsorship. The parties signing to the statement - the Syrian regime, on one hand, and armed opposition factions, on the other hand, pledged to cease all combat operations including aerial airstrikes, and cease all raids and advancements on the ground. However, military ISIS-held areas (Self-proclaimed the Islamic State) were excluded from the agreement. Since the Ankara Ceasefire Agreement went into effect, there has been a decent and notable drop in the rates of killing throughout Syria in comparison with the previous months from March 2011 until now. The main focus here is the areas under the control of armed opposition factions, as the Syrian regime-held areas aren't subjected to heavy, daily aerial bombardment, which has resulted in the killing of no less than 60% of the victims, and destroyed buildings, displacing the people of Syria.

Nonetheless, breaches haven't stopped, mainly by the Syrian regime, who is seemingly the party that would be affected the most should the ceasefire go on, especially crimes of extrajudicial killing, and, more horrendously, deaths due to torture, which strongly proves that there is some sort of ceasefire on the table. The crimes, however, that the international community wasn't able to notice, and particularly the Turkish and Russian sponsors, are still ongoing as nothing has changed in that regard.



SNHR documented no less than 28 massacres in February 2017 which were distributed as follows:

- A. Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 13
- B. Russian Forces: 6
- C. International coalition forces: 1
- D. Other parties: 8

SNHR describes an incident as a massacre if it involves the killing of five peaceful individuals at the same time. For more information about our methodology in documenting victims, please see the Following [URL](#)

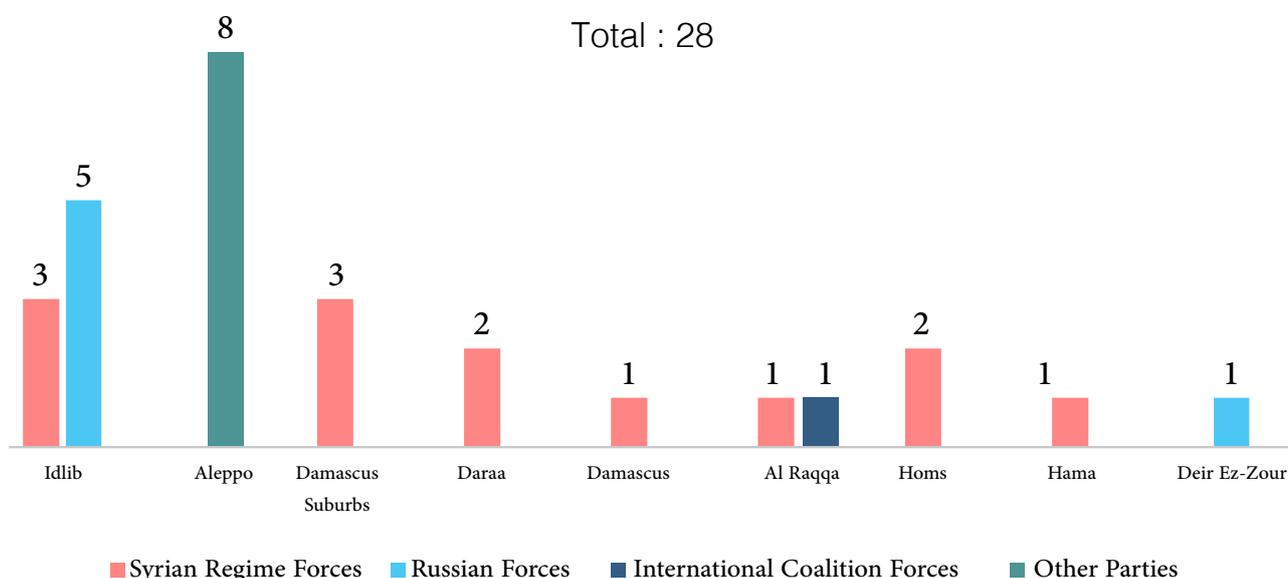
Massacres perpetrated by Syrian regime forces during the month of February 2017 were distributed by areas of control as follows:

- Nine massacres in areas under the control of armed opposition factions.
- Three massacre in areas under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front
- one massacre in areas under the control of ISIS

Massacres were distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

Aleppo: 8, Idlib: 8, Damascus suburbs: 3, Daraa: 2, al Raqqa: 2: Damascus: 1, Homs: 2, Hama: 1, Deir Ez-Zour: 1

The following table shows the distribution of massacres by the perpetrator party



According to SNHR's victim documentation team, 270 individuals were killed in these massacres including 98 children and 55 women (Adult female) which implies that 57% of the victims were women and children. This considerably high percentage is an indication that civilians were targeted in most of these massacres.

The death toll of these massacres is distributed by the perpetrator as follows:

Syrian regime forces: 109 individuals including 37 children and 13 women.

Russian forces: 67 individuals including 24 children and 18 women.

International coalition forces: 10 civilians including six children and two women

Other parties: 84 civilians including 31 children and 22 women.

## II. Details

### A. Syrian regime forces

#### Idlib governorate

Tuesday afternoon, February 21, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a missile at a residential building near the main road in the southern parts of Ma'aret Misreen town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of seven civilians including three women. Additionally, 15 others were wounded. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front.

Saturday, February 25, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired two [missiles](#) at the residential houses in the western parts of Khan Shaikhoun city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of five civilians at once including three children. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front.



Saturday, February 25, 2017, around 16:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired two missiles in "al Dalla circle" area in the western parts of Ariha city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of eight civilians at once. It should be noted that the fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes carried out consecutive missile airstrikes on various areas in Ariha city that resulted in the killing of a total of 16 civilians including three children, and wounded about 20 others. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front.



## Damascus suburbs governorate

Wednesday, January 11, 2017, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on a residential building in Ain al Khadra village in Wadi Barada area in northwestern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of six civilians from the same family (Four children and their parents). On Saturday, February 4, 2017, we were able to contact activists from the area who confirmed the death toll of the massacre. The village was, at the time of the massacre, under the control of armed opposition factions with a minor presence for Fateh al Sham, whereas it is, at the time of this writing, under the control of Syrian regime forces.

Saturday, February 18, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a number of mortar shells at al Jadida neighborhood “cemetery” in Harasta al Gharbiya area, which follows Harasta city in eastern Damascus suburbs governorate. The bombing came at a time when residents from al Qaboun neighborhood in Damascus city were holding a funeral for victims who had fallen in a previous shelling on the neighborhood. The shelling resulted in the killing of 18 individuals, and wounded about 15 others. Harasta city is under the control of armed opposition factions. It should be noted that there is a military base for armed opposition factions near the cemetery. However, the mourners were no less than 10-15 away from it. People being killed even though they were this far reflects a lack of distinction and precision in the targeting of the military base. Furthermore, the high number of victims is an evidence on the disproportionate use of force which was, undoubtedly, greater than the anticipated military benefit from targeting the military base.

Saturday, February 25, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Douma city in Eastern Ghouta in eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in [the killing of 10 individuals](#) at once including five children and one woman. Additionally, about [30 others were wounded](#). [Douma](#) city is under the control of armed opposition factions.



## Homs governorate

Wednesday, February 8, 2017, Syrian regime forces fired a number of “Pheel” rockets in conjunction with a mortar shelling on al Wa’er neighborhood in western Homs city, which resulted in the killing of 11 individuals including four children and two women. The neighborhood is under the control of armed opposition factions.



Friday, February 10, 2017, around 09:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes bombed residential buildings in al Wa'er neighborhood in western Homs city, which resulted in the killing of seven individuals including two children. The neighborhood is under the control of armed opposition factions.

### **Daraa governorate**

Monday, February 13, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes (Investigations are still ongoing to determine the perpetrator party accurately) fired missiles at a residential building in Tareaq al Sad neighborhood in Daraa al Mahata area in eastern Daraa city, which resulted in the killing of [12 individuals who were mostly from the same family](#). Among the victims were five children and two women. Tareaq al Sad neighborhood is under the control of armed opposition factions.

Saturday, February 18, 2017, around 14:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at residential buildings in al Yadouda village in the southern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the killing of five civilians who were mostly from the same family – four children and one woman. The town is under the control of armed opposition factions.

### **Al Raqqa governorate**

Monday, February 20, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Al Qetar street in the middle of al Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of five civilians at once including two children. The city is under the control of ISIS.

### **Damascus governorate**

Monday, February 20, 2017, around 11:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes carried out an airstrike, where four missiles were fired at the residential buildings in Al Hafeth street in Barza neighborhood in northeastern Damascus city, which resulted in the killing of seven individuals at once including two children and two women. The neighborhood is under the control of armed opposition factions.

### **Hama governorate**

Friday, February 24, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Hmeirat village in the western suburbs of Hama governorate, which resulted in the killing of eight civilians (Six children and their parents). The village is under the control of armed opposition factions.



## **B. Russian forces**

### **Idlib governorate**

Thursday, January 12, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian carried out two missile airstrikes on a residential building for the “al Hezb al Islami” (The Islamic Party) fighters’ families in Jabal al Arba’in area in southern Ariha city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of seven civilians at once (Four children and three women). On Friday, February 10, 2017, we contacted activists from the area who confirmed the incident. Ariha city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front.

Tuesday, February 7, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired two missiles at a residential building in Masaken al Dubbat area -Uzbek fighters’ families live in these areas- in western Idlib city, which resulted in the killing of six civilians (Two female children and four women). It should be noted that the same warplanes carried out eight airstrikes on Idlib city on that day that resulted in three massacres in which 29 civilians, including 15 children and 11 women, were killed, and about 30 others were wounded. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front.

Tuesday, February 7, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired four missiles at two residential buildings located to the west of al Jaraa circle in al Qosour neighborhood in southern Idlib city, which resulted in the killing of 14 civilians including eight children and four women. It should be noted that the same warplanes carried out eight airstrikes on Idlib city on that day that resulted in three massacres in which 29 civilians, including 15 children and 11 women, were killed, and about 30 others were wounded. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front.

Tuesday, February 7, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired two missiles at two residential buildings in al Qosour neighborhood in southern Idlib city, which resulted in the killing of five civilians including one female child and three women. It should be noted that the same warplanes carried out eight airstrikes on Idlib city on that day that resulted in three massacres in which 29 civilians, including 15 children and 11 women, were killed, and about 30 others were wounded. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front.

Monday, February 27, 2017, around 03:40, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian



fired two missiles at [three residential buildings](#) to the west of [al Noun gas station](#) in the northern parts of Ariha city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in [the killing of 19 civilians](#) including [nine children](#) and four women. Additionally, about [20 others were wounded](#). Ariha city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front.



### **Deir Ez-Zour governorate**

Tuesday, January 24, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired missiles at al Salhiya village in the southeastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 16 civilians. Additionally, about 20 others were wounded. On Sunday, February 12, 2017, we contacted activists from the area who confirmed the incident. Al Salhiya village is under the control of ISIS.

### **Extremist Islamic groups**

**- ISIS**

### **Aleppo governorate**

Friday, February 24, 2017, a bombed car exploded in front of the security institution which is affiliated to [“The Military Council of al Bab city”](#) in [Susyan town](#), which follows al Bab city, in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. According to a statement that was



published one of ISIS's accounts, the car was driven by an ISIS bomber. [The bombing](#) resulted in the killing of [73 individuals](#). Susyan town is under the control of Euphrates Shield (Turkish forces-backed armed opposition factions).

As of this writing, we haven't been able to verify the civilian death toll or whether the incident constitutes a [violation](#) to the international humanitarian law or not.



## **C. International coalition forces**

### **Al Raqqa governorate**

Tuesday, February 21, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Sahhamiya village, which followed Ma'dan city, in the eastern suburbs of al Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of 10 civilians including six children and two women. Al Sahhamiya village is under the control of ISIS.

## **D. Other parties**

### **Aleppo governorate**

Friday, February 3, 2017, a landmine exploded on the road connecting al Bab and Izaz cities in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of five civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including one woman. As of this writing, we haven't been able to determine the party that planted the landmine. The area is under the control of armed opposition factions.



Wednesday noon, February 8, 2017, an explosive device exploded in the vicinity of Zaid ben Haretha mosque in Bostan al Qaser neighborhood in eastern Aleppo city, which resulted in the killing of five children at once. As of this writing, we haven't been able to determine the group behind the bombing. Bostan al Qaser neighborhood is under the control of Syrian regime forces.

Monday morning, February 13, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes that back Euphrates Shield forces (Turkish forces-backed armed opposition factions) fired missiles at the southeastern parts of al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of 18 civilians, who were mostly from two families, including 10 children and five women. Al Bab city was, at the time of the massacre, under the control of ISIS, whereas it is, at the time of this writing, under the control of Euphrates Shield forces.

Monday noon, February 13, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes that back Euphrates Shield forces (Turkish forces-backed armed opposition factions) fired a number of missiles at al Jadid street in al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of 17 civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including three children and five women. Al Bab city was, at the time of the massacre, under the control of ISIS, whereas it is, at the time of this writing, under the control of Euphrates Shield forces.

Wednesday noon, February 15, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes that back Euphrates Shield forces (Turkish forces-backed armed opposition factions) fired a number of missiles in the vicinity of Aisha mosque in al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of 12 civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including five children and two women. Al Bab city was, at the time of the massacre, under the control of ISIS, whereas it is, at the time of this writing, under the control of Euphrates Shield forces.

Thursday noon, February 16, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes that back Euphrates Shield forces (Turkish forces-backed armed opposition factions) fired missiles in the vicinity of al Hal market in al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of 10 civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including two children and four women. Al Bab city was, at the time of the massacre, under the control of ISIS, whereas it is, at the time of this writing, under the control of Euphrates Shield forces.



Monday, February 20, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes that back Euphrates Shield forces (Turkish forces-backed armed opposition factions) fired missiles at the residential buildings in al Najjar area in Al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of 12 civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including five children and four women. Al Bab city was, at the time of the massacre, under the control of ISIS, whereas it is, at the time of this writing, under the control of Euphrates Shield forces.

Wednesday afternoon, February 22, 2017, a landmine exploded near a car on the road connecting Aleppo city and Khanaser town in the southern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of five individuals at once including one child and one woman. As of this writing, we haven't been able to determine the group that planted the landmine. The area is under the control of Syrian regime forces.

## IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

#### Syrian regime forces and Russian forces

1- SNHR can confirm the bombing cases, deliberate or indiscriminate, targeted armless civilians, thus, Syrian and Russian regime forces have violated the rules of the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. Furthermore, these violations were perpetrated during a non-international armed conflict which amounts to war crimes as all elements of a war crime have been fulfilled.

2- SNHR believes that the acts of killing that took place during these massacres can be classified as crimes against humanity.

3- These attacks, especially bombardment, have resulted in collateral damages that involved casualties, injuries, and damages to civil facilities. There are strong indicators that compel to believe that the damage was deeply severe compared to the anticipated military benefit. In all of the cases, we couldn't confirm that there were any military targets before or during these attacks.

4- The magnitude of the massacres, its frequent pattern, the exaggerated use of strength, its military nature, the indiscriminate manner of the bombing, and the coordinated approach of these attacks must be based on high orders, and a state policy.

#### Other forces

According to this report, international coalition forces, and other parties (includes groups that we weren't able to identify in addition to Turkish, Lebanese, and Jordanian forces) have committed massacres that constitute war crimes. However, these crimes are not crimes against humanity as in the case of Syrian regime forces and its pro-forces that are committing massacres in a widespread and systematic manner.



## V. Recommendations

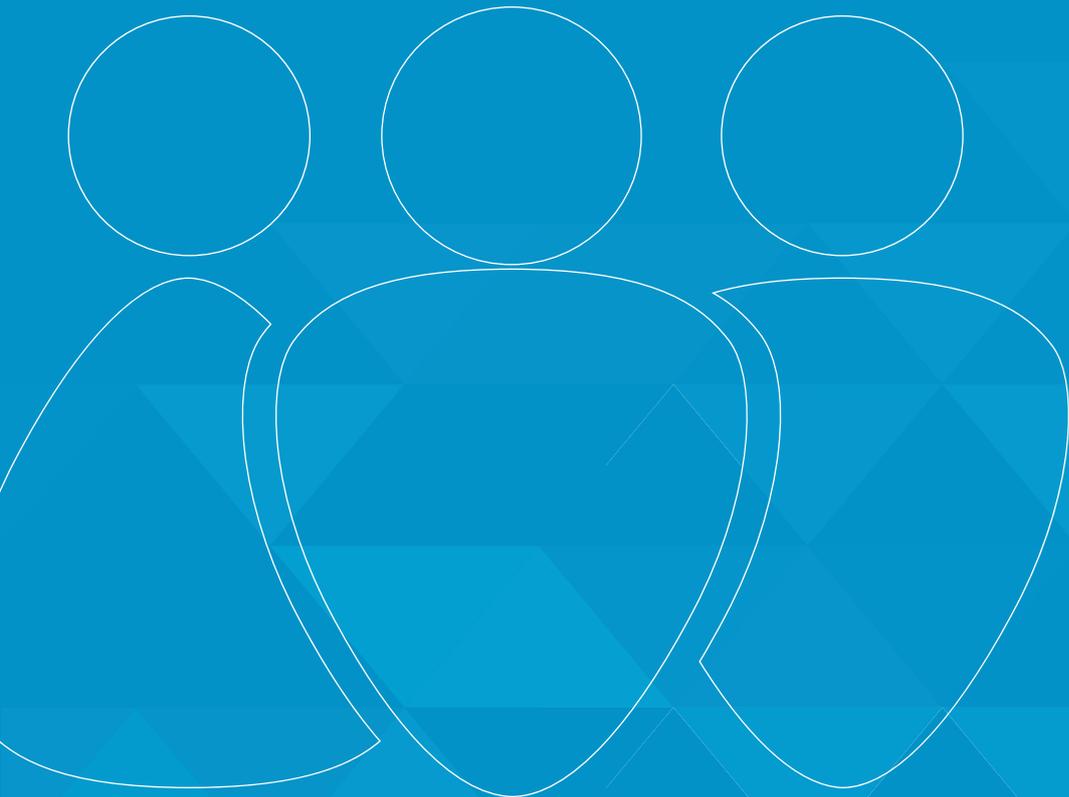
### The United Nations and the Security Council

1. Refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court and stop the disrupting of the decisions that must be adopted by the Security Council against the Syrian government. This disruption is a wrong message to all dictatorships around the world and supports the culture of crime.
2. Impose urgent punishments on those who are involved in widespread violations of human rights in Syria.
3. Bind the Syrian government to allow all relief and human rights organizations to enter Syria as well as the International Intendent Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and journalists and let them work without any obstructions.
4. Insure that all weapon imports to the Syrian government, who is using weapons in widespread attacks against civilians, are halted.
5. the Security Council must shoulder its responsibility in preserving security and civil peace in Syria considering that the violations of the Syrian government entail a gross threat to the international peace and security.
6. List the militias that are fighting with the Syrian government and have committed widespread massacres, like Iranian militias, the Lebanese group Hezbollah, other Shiite brigades, National defense Army and “Shabiha” militias, on the international list of terrorist organizations.
7. Implement the “Responsibility to Protect” norm, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, in Syria as it is direly needed there.
8. With the crimes against humanity committed by the Syrian government, the international community should stop dealing with this government as an “official side” concerning the relief issues, and stop supplying the Syrian government with most of the financial and humanitarian aids that, in most cases, are not being delivered to those who are in need and go instead to the people and parties that support the Syrian government.

### Acknowledgment and Condolences

Our thanks and appreciations go to the victims' families, eyewitnesses, and local activists whose accounts contributed majorly to this report. Our most profound consolations go out to the victims' families and friends.





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