

No less than 48 Incidents of Attack on Vital Civilian Facilities in August 2017

Including 21 at the hands
of Syrian Regime Forces

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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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 bombardment and what it entails of systematic killing and destruction by the ruling regime seems to aim mainly to undermine the establishment of any alternative governing system. Also, it leads to residents displacing from opposition-held areas to the regime-held areas which are relatively safer.

If the Security Council is unable to bind the conflict parties to implement Resolution 2139, adopted on April 22, 2016, which states: "Demands that all parties immediately 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", it should at least apply pressure mainly on Syrian regime forces to cease attacks against vital facilities such as schools, hospitals, markets, bakeries, and places of worship.

The fourth round of negotiations was held in Astana city, Kazakhstan's capital, on 3rd and 4th 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.

Following an extensive round of talks between Russia, USA, and Jordan that commenced in May 2017 in Amman, Jordan's capital, the American and Russian presidents announced, on the sidelines of the 2017 G20 summit in Hamburg, that a ceasefire agreement has been reached in southwestern Syria – Daraa, Quneitra, and Suwayda governorates. The agreement went into force at 12:00 on Sunday July 9, 2017, and provided for the passage of humanitarian aids in addition to a ceasefire between the conflicting parties (Syrian regime forces and their allies on one side, and armed opposition factions on the other side). Also, the agreement specifies that maintaining security in this region is the Russian forces' responsibility in coordination with the Americans and Jordanians.

Since these agreements went into effect, these areas saw a relatively noticeable and good decrease in killing rates compared with the previous months since March 2011.

In addition, there have been a number of other local agreements in July and August, such as Eastern Ghouta agreement between armed opposition factions, on one side, and officials from the Russian side, while a similar agreement was struck with the opposition in northern suburbs of Homs. However, the texts of these agreements haven't been made public on Russian government's websites, and the same for armed opposition factions who didn't publicize these agreements, except for Failaq al Rahman who published the [text of the agreement](#) on their official website. At the end of the agreement, according to the copy on Failaq al Rahman's website, a signature by a Russian sponsor was shown but without an explicit name, which is a great flaw, as apparently all of this helps the sponsoring Russian side to easily dissolve themselves from these agreements with no subsequent political or legal obligations and repercussions.

On Saturday, July 22, 2017, Russian Ministry of Defense announced that a de-escalation agreement has been signed in Eastern Ghouta following a round of talks between Russian military officials, on one side, and Jaish al Islam faction, on the other side, in Egypt's capital Cairo. The agreement was to come into effect at 12:00 of the same day. On Wednesday, August 16, 2017, a Failaq al Rahman representative and a Russian representative have signed an agreement in Geneva city that established Failaq al Rahman's inclusion in the de-escalation zone in Eastern Ghouta. The agreement was to come into effect at 21:00 of Friday, August 18, 2017.



On Monday, July 31, 2017, another de-escalation agreement was signed in Egypt's capital Cairo for northern Homs suburbs and southern Hama suburbs following a round of talks between armed opposition factions in the area and the Syrian regime represented by the Russian government as a sponsoring party, as the agreement was to commence at 12:00 on Thursday, August 3, 2017.

Most notably, the two most recent agreements provided for a full cessation of hostilities between the conflicting parties in the relevant areas -with the exclusion of the areas in which ISIS and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham are present- and for humanitarian aids to enter these areas and for detainees to be released as per the demands of each party as to which detainees are to be released.

The number of civilians killed by the Syrian regime and its widespread violations imply a lack of commitment to the last two signed agreement on the regime's part.

Despite Ankara Ceasefire Agreement and the string of de-escalation agreements that followed, 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 sponsoring states- won't see are still going on as nothing had changed.

We recorded in last August, and for the fourth month in a row, a drop in the rates of incidents of attack on vital civilian facilities by the Syrian-Russian alliance compared to the months preceding the de-escalation agreement which went into effect on May, 6, 2017. However, the Syrian regime still exceeds all the other parties to the conflict in terms of incidents of attack on vital civilian facilities. It is also worth noting that the incidents of attack by international coalition forces included in this report are only what we have been able to verify, as there are tens of incidents in the eastern region, in general, and Raqqa city particularly that are still being investigated.

Methodology

SNHR implements a high-level documentation methodology. In this report, SNHR sheds light on the attacks against vital civilian facilities by the parties to the conflict that we have been able to document. This operation is primarily carried out through our researches who are scattered across Syrian governorates with the cooperation and coordination of the local residents and activists. It should be noted that this is the bare minimum in light of the many



practical obstructions we encounter during documentations. SNHR can confirm, through its investigations, that there were no military centers in the centers mentioned in the report before or during the attacks. The Syrian regime, and other perpetrators, are going to have to justify their actions before the United Nations and the Security Council.

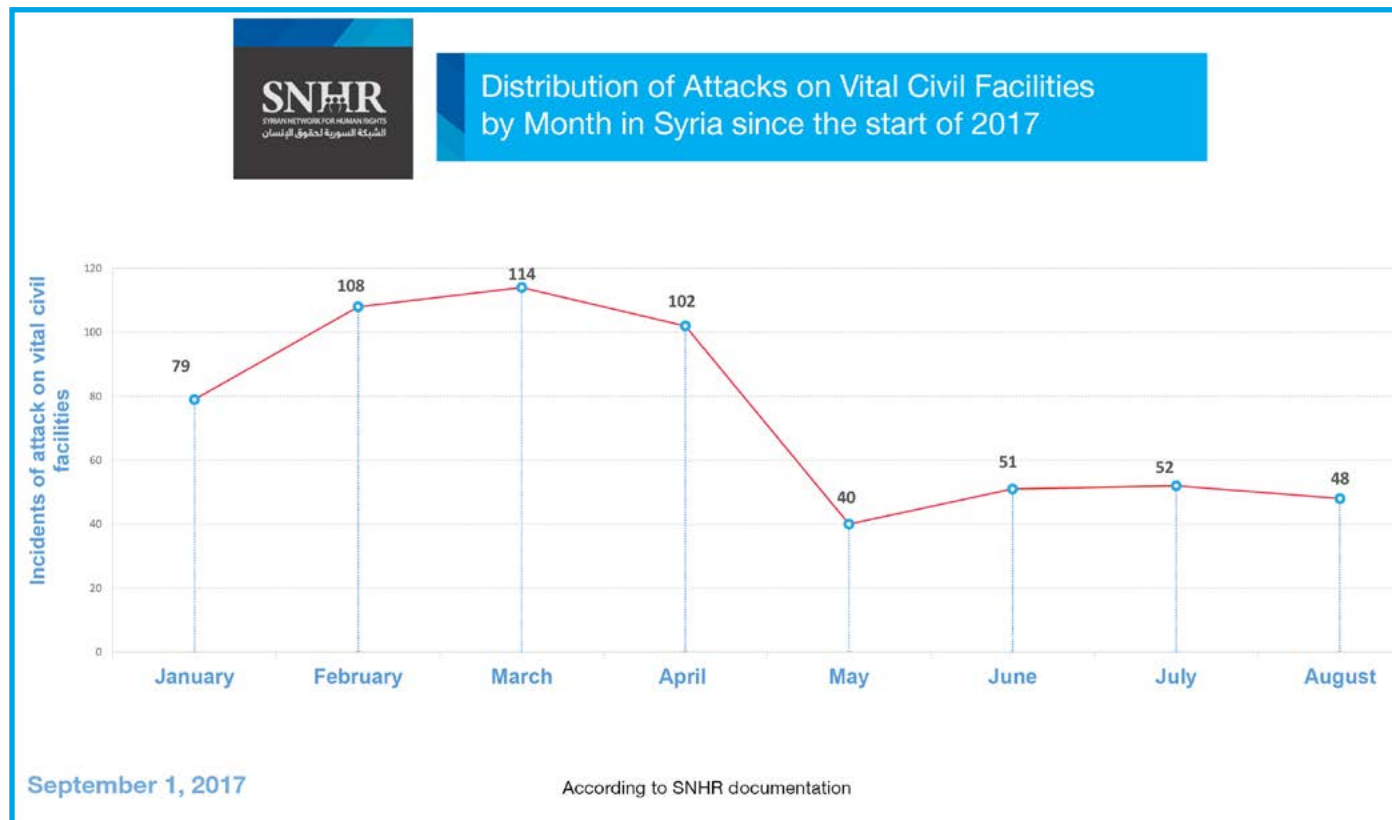
The type and number of evidences vary from one case to another. In light of the challenges we mentioned above, many of the incidents' legal description change based on new evidences or clues that surface after we had released the report. We add these evidences and clues to our data archive. On the other 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.

You can read the methodology adopted by SNHR in classifying vital civilian facilities on this [URL](#)

II. Executive Summary

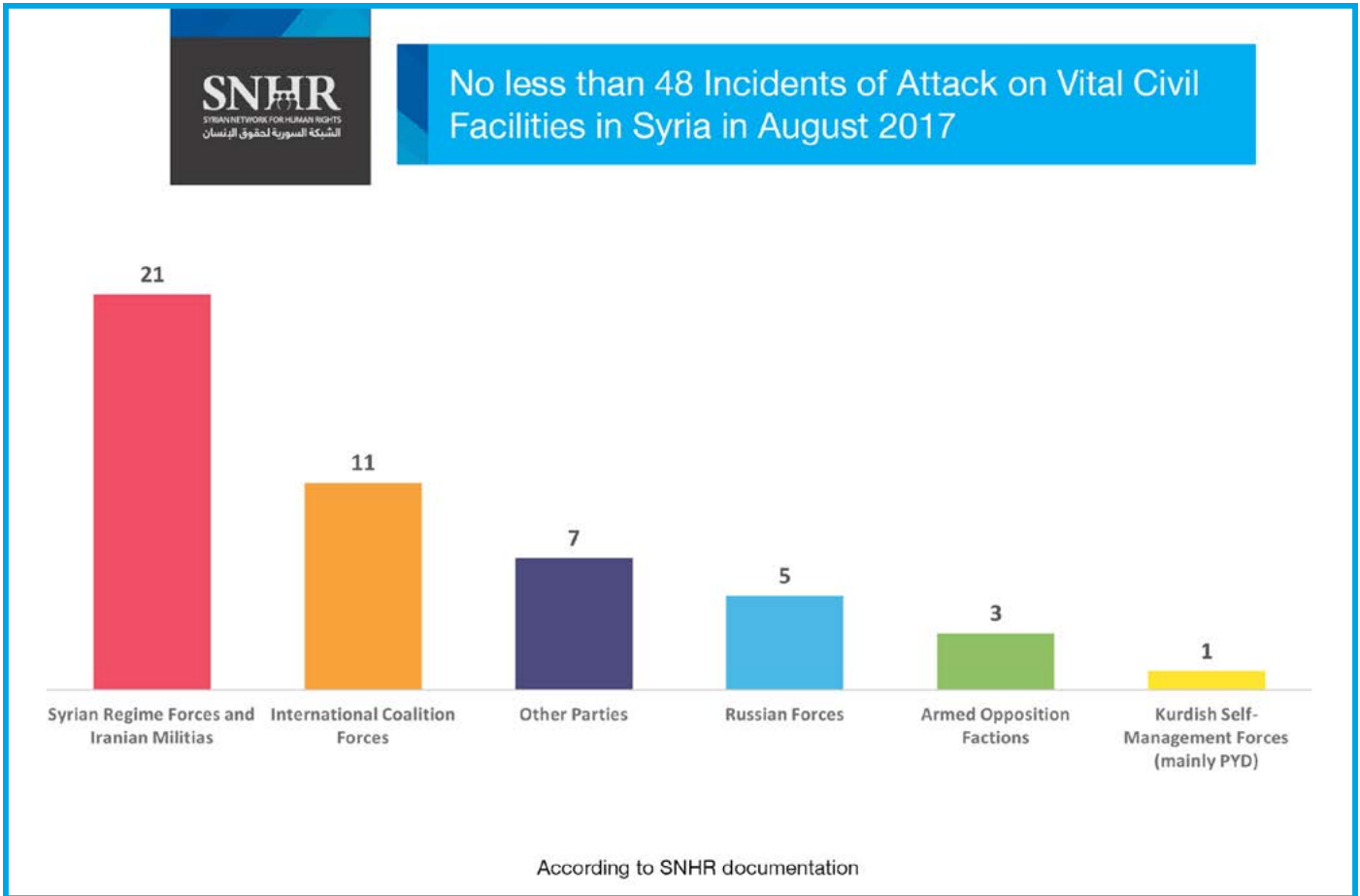
A. Toll of incidents of attack on vital civilian facilities since the start of 2017

SNHR has documented 594 incidents of attack on vital civilian facilities between the start of 2017 and September of the same year



B. Toll of Incidents of Attack on Vital Civilian Facilities in August

Through daily documentation and monitoring at SNHR, we recorded no less than 48 incidents of attack on vital civilian facilities in August 2017



Distributed as follows

- A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 21
- B. Russian forces: 5
- C. Armed opposition factions: 3
- D. Self-Management forces (primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party): 1
- E. International coalition forces: 11
- F. Other parties: 7



Most notable facilities that were targeted in August 2017

17 infrastructures, 10 vital educational facilities, eight places of worship, six communal facilities, six vital medical facilities, one refugee camp.

Distribution of Attacked Vital Civilian Facilities by the Perpetrator Party in August 2017						
Perpetrator Party	Syrian Regime Forces	Russian Forces	Armed Opposition Factions	Kurdish Self-Management Forces	International Coalition Forces	Other Parties
Targeted Facility						
Place of Worship^a						
Mosques	5				3	
Vital Educational Facilities						
Schools	1	2	1		1	2
Universities			1			1
Orphanages	1					
Vital Medical Facilities						
Medical Facilities		1		1	4	
Communal Facilities						
Markets	4		1		1	
Infrastructures						
Civil Defense Facilities	5					3
Water Systems						
Official Headquarters	3	1				
Bakeries		1			1	1
Transportation Systems	1				1	
Refugee Camps						
Refugee Camps	1					
Total	21	5	3	1	11	7



III. Details of August's Incidents

The report sheds light on incidents of attack against vital civilian facilities except for the details of the attacks on vital medical facilities, civil defense centers, and international humanitarian insignia which were put in a past monthly report: "[13 Medical and Civil Defense Personnel Killed, and 14 Incidents of Attack on their Vital Facilities in August 2017, International Coalition Forces Top all other Parties in Terms of Violations](#)"

A. Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

Places of worship

- Mosques

Tuesday, August 8, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Nour Mosque on the road connecting Hazza, [Zamalka](#), and Ein Tarma towns near Hazza town, Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate. The mosque building was partially destroyed, and its furniture was [heavily damaged](#). The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



The destruction in the aftermath of a bombing on al Nour Mosque in Hazza town, Damascus suburbs by Syrian regime forces – August 8, 2017

Wednesday, August 9, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian-Russian alliance (investigations are still ongoing to accurately determine the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles at Abu Bakr al Siddeeq Mosque in [Hamada Omar village](#), which administratively follows Aqeirbat county in eastern suburbs of Hama governorate. The mosque building was heavily destroyed. As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.





The destruction in the aftermath of a bombing on Abu Bakr al Siddeeq Mosque in Hamada Omar village, Hama – August 8, 2017

Friday, August 11, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian-Russian alliance (investigations are still ongoing to accurately determine the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles at Omar ben al Khattab Mosque in [Soha village](#), which administratively follows Aqeirbat county in eastern suburbs of Hama governorate. The mosque building was heavily damaged. As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Friday, August 11, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian-Russian alliance (investigations are still ongoing to accurately determine the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles at Belal ben Rabbah Mosque in Soha village, which administratively follows Aqeirbat county in eastern suburbs of Hama governorate. The mosque building was heavily damaged. As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Friday, August 11, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian-Russian alliance (investigations are still ongoing to accurately determine the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles at al Rahma Mosque in Soha village, which administratively follows Aqeirbat county in eastern suburbs of Hama governorate. The mosque building was heavily damaged. As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Vital educational facilities

- Schools

Wednesday afternoon, August 23, 2017, Syrian regime forces fired a number of “Pheel” rockets near Ashbal al Hurraya School – which is a building basement – in [Ein Tarma town](#), Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate. The school building and its furniture was moderately damaged. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

- Orphanages

Sunday, August 6, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [Tawq al Hamam Orphanage](#) in [Jobar neighborhood](#), east of Damascus city. The Orphanage building was [partially destroyed](#), and its [cladding materials](#) and furniture were heavily damaged. As a result, the orphanage was rendered out of commission. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



The destruction in the aftermath of a bombing on Tawq al Hamam Orphanage in Jobar neighborhood, Damascus by Syrian regime forces – August 6, 2017



Communal facilities

- Markets

Friday noon, August 11, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a shell at the local market in Kafr Batna town, Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate. The shell fell on top the roof of a residential building in the market. The building was moderately damaged, and no damages were recorded in the shops. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Saturday noon, August 12, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired three mortar shells at al Hal market in [al Sharqiya](#) neighborhood, [Douma city](#), Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, the market facilities were moderately damaged. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Wednesday afternoon, August 23, 2017, Syrian regime forces fired a number of “Pheel” rockets at the local market in Ein Tarma town, Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate. A number of shops were moderately damaged. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Monday, August 28, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a number of mortar shells at the local market in Ein Tarma town, Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, a number of shops were heavily damaged. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Infrastructures

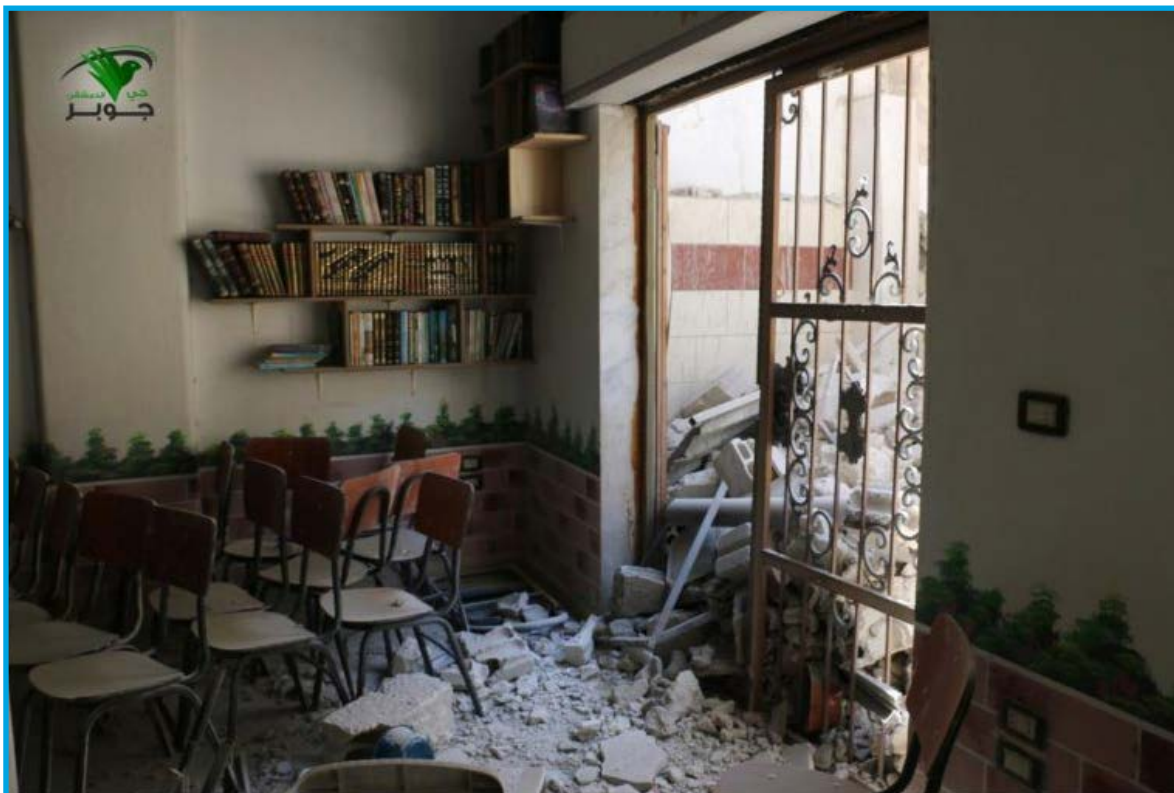
- Official headquarters

Thursday, August 3, 2017, Syrian regime forces fired a number of “Pheel” rockets at the service office, which is affiliated with the local council in Jobar neighborhood, east of Damascus city. The office building was partially destroyed, and its equipment was heavily damaged. As a result, the office was rendered out of commission. It should be noted that the office was bombed for a second time with ‘Pheel” rockets on Saturday, August 5, 2017, by the same forces. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Monday, August 7, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles near the emergency center, which is affiliated with the service in Jobar neighborhood, east of Damascus city. The center building and some of its equipment were slightly damaged. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Thursday, August 17, 2017, Syrian regime forces fired a number of “Pheel” rockets at the cultural center in Ein Tarma town, Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate. The center building was partially destroyed, and its cladding materials and furniture were heavily damaged. As a result, the office was rendered out of commission. It should be noted that Jobar neighborhood residents founded their cultural center in the town. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



The destruction in the aftermath of a bombing on the cultural center in Ein Tarma, Damascus suburbs by Syrian regime forces – August 17, 2017

- Transportation systems

Tuesday, August 8, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Ein al Bojouma Bridge, which is located on the road between Deir Ez-Zour and Raqqa governorate, in western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The bridge was heavily destroyed, and was rendered out of commission. The area was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Refugee camps

Thursday, August 10, 2017, about 07:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Rwyeshed Camp (known as Hadalat Camp) on the Syrian-Jordanian borders in the southeastern suburbs of al Suwyada governorate. The missiles fell in an empty area inside the camp that is located 300 meters away from the camp. We haven't recorded any damages. The area in which the camp is located was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

B. Russian forces

Vital educational facilities

- Schools

Wednesday, August 2, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at al Ekisat Elementary School that is located in al Ekisat area in [al Tabni town](#), western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The school building was heavily damaged. As a result, the school was rendered out of commission. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Friday, August 11, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at Alya bent al Muhtadi School in [Ma'adan city](#), eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The school building was heavily damaged. As a result, the school was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Infrastructures

- Official headquarters

Wednesday, August 2, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at the Electricity Company in al Tabni town, western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The company building was heavily destroyed. As a result, the company was rendered out of commission. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

- Bakeries

Friday, August 11, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at the automatic bakery in Ma'adan city, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The bakery building was heavily destroyed. As a result, the bakery was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



C. Armed opposition factions

Vital educational facilities

- Schools

Thursday, August 17, 2017, around 21:30, a locally-made rocket shell landed near [Mustafa al Aqqad](#) School in Jam'ieyat al Zahraa neighborhood, west of Aleppo city. We believe the shell's source was an artillery located in an area under the control of armed opposition faction. The school wasn't damaged. The neighborhood was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

- Universities

Wednesday, August 16, 2017, around 16:00, locally-made rocket shells landed in the vicinity of the [faculty of law](#) at Aleppo University, west of Aleppo city. We believe the shell's source was an artillery located in an al Rashideen city, which is under the control of armed opposition faction. The faculty building was moderately damaged. al Jamea neighborhood (The university neighborhood) was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

Communal facilities

- Markets

Wednesday, August 9, 2017, armed men from Nour al Din Zinki Movement, an armed opposition faction, raided the charity mall warehouses -the charity mall in al Dana city- which is supported by the Turkish organization IHH, located in [Termanein town](#), northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The group seized the food supplies in the warehouses and wrecked some of its furniture. The town was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.

D. International coalition forces

Places of worship

- Mosques

Saturday, August 5, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the Grand Mosque in Shamsani Sharqi, which administratively follows Markada town, northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. The mosque building was heavily damaged. As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Tuesday, August 8, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al [Thakana Mosque](#), which is located near Adnan al Maliki Street in the middle of Raqqa city. The mosque building was heavily damaged. As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission. The area was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Saturday, August 19, 2017, around 16:00, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at a mosque in al Jazza village, which administratively follows al Shdadi city, southern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, which resulted in a massacre. Additionally, the mosque building was heavily destroyed, and was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Vital educational facilities

-Schools

Friday, August 11, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Fayez Mansour School in al [Bokamal city](#), eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The school building was completely destroyed, and the school was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



A picture showing Faye Mansour School in al Bokamal city, Deir Ez-Zour before and after it was bombed by international coalition forces – August 11, 2017

Communal facilities

- Markets

Tuesday, August 8, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the livestock market, known as al Makef Market, in [Markada town](#), southern suburbs of al Hasaka governorate. A number of shops and some of the market facilities were moderately damaged. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Infrastructures

- Transportation systems

Monday, August 28, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [al Hadid Market](#), known as al Baq'an Bridge, that connects al Ramadi and al Bohasan village, which both administratively follow al Bokamal city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The bridge was heavily destroyed, and was rendered out of commission. The area was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



The destruction resulting from a bombing on al Hadid Bridge in al Bokamal city, Deir Ez-Zour by international coalition forces – August 28, 2017

- Bakeries

Saturday, August 12, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the automatic bakery in al Ferdous neighborhood in the middle of Raqqa city. The bakery building was heavily destroyed. As a result, the bakery was rendered out of commission. The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



E. Other parties

Vital educational facilities

- Schools

Wednesday, August 9, 2017, unknown group raided Ibn Hayyan School in al Sharqi neighborhood, [Kafrouma village](#), southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, and wrecked and trashed [the school](#) furniture. As of this writing, we haven't been able to determine the party behind the assault. The village was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, August 9, 2017, unknown group raided al Rabiya School, in al Sharqi neighborhood, Kafrouma village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, and [wrecked](#) and [trashed](#) the school furniture. As of this writing, we haven't been able to determine the party behind the assault. The village was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.

- Universities

Tuesday, August 8, 2017, an IED blew in front of the main door of the emergency medicine faculty, which is located in southeastern [al Dana city](#), northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The university entrance and its main door were heavily damaged. As of this writing, we haven't been able to determine the party behind the bombing. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.

Infrastructures

- Bakeries

Saturday, August 12, 2017, an IED blew near the [automatic bakery](#) in northern Ma'arat Misreen town, northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The IED blew 20 meters away from the bakery with no damages recorded in the bakery building. As of this writing, we haven't been able to determine the party behind the bombing. The town was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.



IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

According to the international humanitarian law, indiscriminate, deliberate, or disproportionate attacks are considered as unlawful attacks. Syrian regime forces' attacks against schools, hospitals, mosques, and bakeries is an utter disregard for the most basic standards of the international humanitarian law and the Security Council Resolution.

Additionally, Russian forces, armed opposition factions, Self-Management forces, international coalition forces, and other parties (Includes groups that we weren't able to identify and the Turkish, Lebanese, and Jordanian forces) have attacked some of these facilities. The indiscriminate random shelling is a violation of the international humanitarian law and amounts to a war crime.

Recommendations

The Security Council

- 1- Bind all parties, especially Syrian regime forces considering that they are the main perpetrator of most of these violations, to implement Resolution 2139 and, at least, condemn the targeting of vital civilian facilities that are indispensable for the lives of civilians.
- 2- A comprehensive arms embargo must be imposed on the Syrian government as it has been involved in gross violations of international laws and Security Council Resolutions.
- 3- Deem the states that supply Syrian regime forces and groups that have been involved in crimes against civilians with weapons partners in these crimes in addition to all supplies and distributors.

The sponsoring Russian side

- 1- 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.
- 2- Start making progress in the detainees issue by revealing the fates of 76,000 forcibly-disappeared persons at the hands of the Syrian regime.





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