

Seven Medical and Civil Defense Personnel Killed

11 Incidents of Attack on Vital Medical and Civil Defense Facilities in January 2017

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Sunday, February 5, 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 and Methodology

SNHR's high-level methodology for documentation relies on survivors and families' direct accounts in addition to the process of verifying and analyzing pictures, videos, and some medical records. However, we can't claim that we have documented all cases in light of the ban and pursuit by Syrian regime forces and some of the other armed groups.

To read more about SNHR [methodology](#) for documenting victims, please see the following URL.

The consistent bombing and targeting of medical facilities and civil defense centers by Syrian regime forces since 2011, and the killing and arrest of medics and civil defense personnel at the hands of different conflict parties, especially Syrian regime forces, indicates a systematic policy that only aims to shed more blood and deepen the suffering of the injured – civilians and armed.

Fadel Abdul Ghani, chairman of SNHR, says:

“The Russian attacks on medical and civil defense centers as well as medical and civil defense personnel are considered a blatant violation of the international humanitarian law and constitute war crimes considering the chaotic, and in many cases, deliberate, targeting of protected objects. All of this have only deepened the suffering of the wounded and injured and is one of the main reasons behind the displacement of the Syrian people as it sends a very clear message: there is no safe area, or a red line, including hospitals, you either flee or perish.”



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, dying 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.

This report only represents the bare minimum of the actual magnitude and severity of the violations that occurred. Additionally, the report doesn't cover the social, economic, and psychological ramifications.

II. Executive Summary

SNHR documented in the month of January 2017 the following main violations against medical and civil defense personnel and their respective facilities:

A. Killing

We documented the killing of seven medical and civil defense personnel as follows:

- Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): killed four medical personnel as follows:

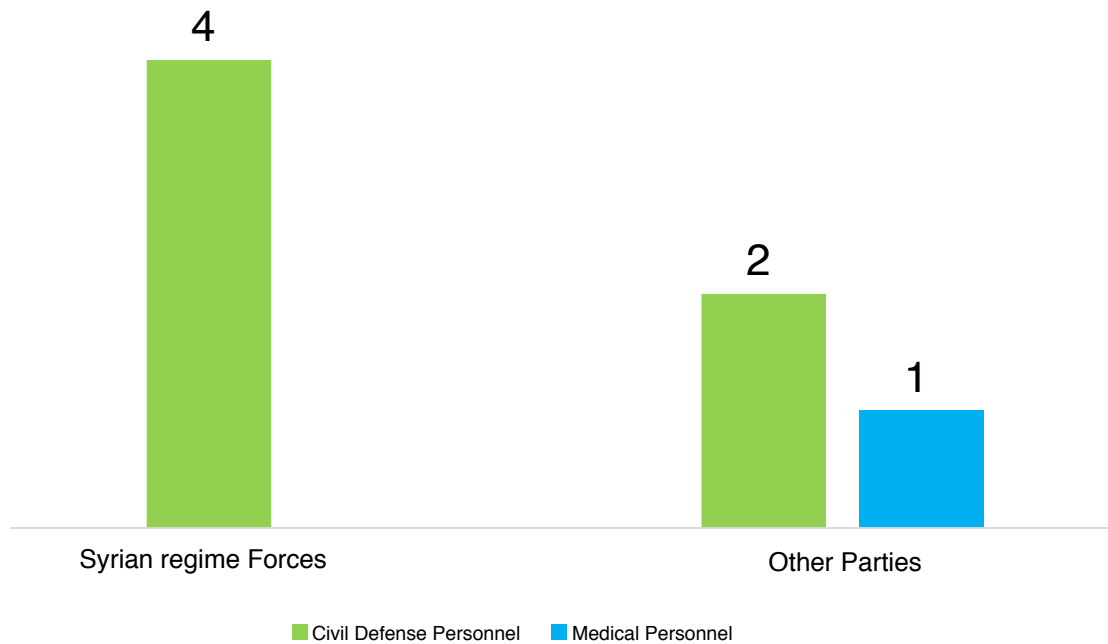
- 2 nurses
- 1 paramedic
- 1 medical personnel



- Other parties: killed three medical and civil defense personnel as follows:

- 1 nurse
- 1 paramedic
- 1 civil defense personnel

Medical and civil defense personnel killed in the month of January are distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:



B. Targeting of vital medical and civil defense facilities

SNHR documented 11 incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities as follows:

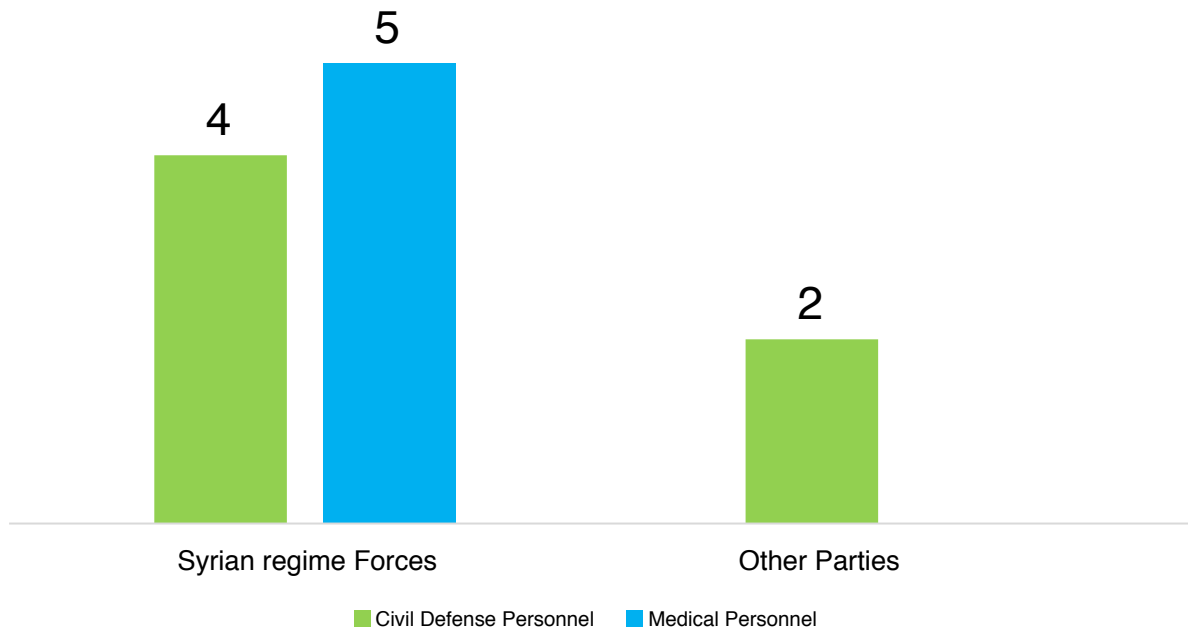
- Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, foreign Shiite militias): we recorded 9 incidents as follows:

- 1 Medical facilities
- 3 ambulances
- 5 civil defense centers

- Other parties: two incidents of attack on ambulances were recorded.

Incidents of attack on vital medical and civil defense facilities are distributed by the influential party as follows:



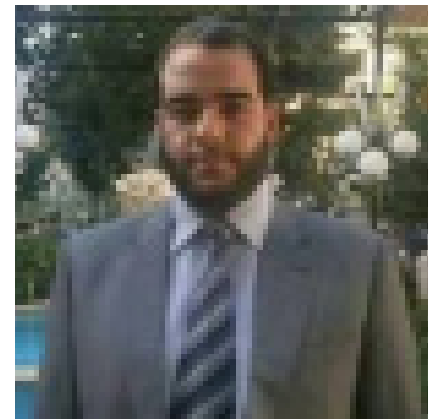


III. Details

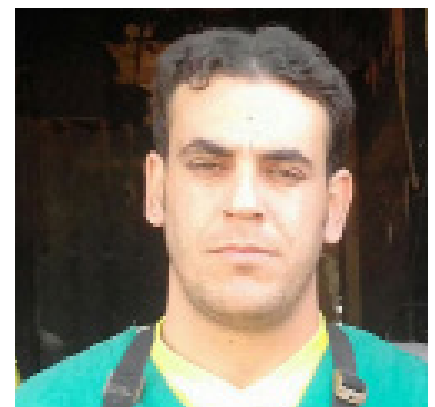
A. Killing

1- Syrian regime forces

Ryad Al Dalati, nurse, from Bassima town in Wadi Barada area, located in northeastern Damascus suburbs governorate, 35-year-old, works as a nurse in operation room with the Medical Commission in Wadi Barada area. He was killed on Saturday, January 7, 2017 in Bassima town by a sniper from the Syrian regime forces and pro-regime militias stationing on the outskirts of the town.



[AbdulMajid Mahmoud Waqiya](#), paramedic, from Talibsa city in the northern suburbs of Homs governorate, born in 1987, works with the Aiding Network in Talbisa city, has a high school diploma, single. [He](#) was killed on Monday, January 16, 2017 by a Syrian regime artillery's shell in the northern neighborhood of Talibsa city as he was tending to wounded from a previous shelling.



Mohammad Salim Najim, nurse, from Ain Al Fija town in Wadi Barada area, located in northwestern Damascus suburbs governorate, a member of the Medical Commission in Wadi Barada area. He was killed by a sniper from the Syrian regime forces and pro-regime militias stationing in the vicinity of the town.

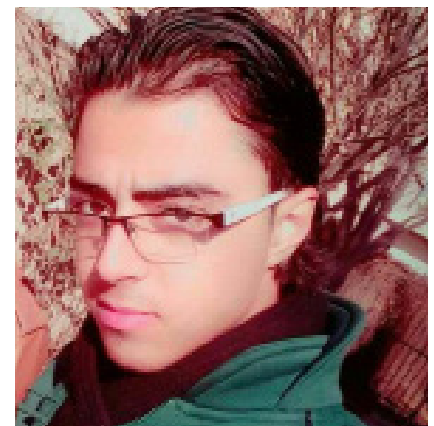


Ahmad AbdulMun'im Al Ali, a medical staffer, from Taldo city in the northern suburbs of Homs governorate, born in 1974, he works with a makeshift hospital in Taldo city, married and has five kids. He was killed on Sunday, January 22, 2017, in an airstrike carried out by Syrian regime warplanes that fired two missiles in the southern parts of Taldo city.



2- Other parties

Mohammad Taha Ba'aj, paramedic, from Izaz city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1998, works with Izaz Aiding Network, has an intermediate education certificate, single. He was killed on Saturday, January 7, 2017, by a car bomb that detonated near the central court building in Izaz city. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the group behind the bombing.



[Hasan Ghazi Al Haj](#), a member of the rescue squadron which works for the civil defense in Al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, from Al Bab city, born in 1986, married. He was killed on Saturday, January 14, 2017 by the Turkish force-backed Euphrates Shield forces artillery that shelled Al Bab city using shells.



[Eissa Mahmoud Al Hasan](#), nurse, from Aleppo city, 47-year-old, works at Ibn Khaldoun hospital for mental illness, has a degree from the nursing institution, married and has kids. On Sunday, January 22, 2017, he was found shot dead near Jibreen town in the southern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. It should be noted that the victim was abducted a few days ago. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the group that abducted and killed him.



B. Targeting of vital medical and civil defense facilities

1- Syrian regime forces

1-Medical facilities

- Medical centers

Wednesday, January 11, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired a missile near a hospital in Tafas city, located in the southern suburbs of Daraa governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The [hospital](#) building, as well as its cladding materials, were moderately damaged.

- Ambulances

Thursday, January 5, 2017, about 13:00, Syrian regime artillery fired a mortar shell near an ambulance belonging to Sham Aiding Network in Harasta city, located in eastern Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The ambulance was moderately [damaged](#).

Monday, January 16, 2017, around 14:30, Syrian regime artillery fired a shell near an ambulance belonging to Talbisa makeshift hospital in the northern neighborhood of Talbisa city, located in the northern suburbs of Homs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions, which resulted in the killing of one paramedic. Additionally, the ambulance structure was slightly [damaged](#).



Friday, January 20, 2017, Syrian regime artillery fired shells at an ambulance (belonging to the Medical Commission) in Ain Al Fija town in Wadi Barada area, located in northwestern Damascus suburbs and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The ambulance structure was heavily destroyed, and, as a result, it was rendered out of commission.

2-Civil defense centers

Sunday, December 4, 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes (Su-24) fired a missile near the civil defense center in Joni area, located in the northwestern parts of Kafr Nabbol city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The missile fell 50 meters away from the center, while no damages were recorded in the center. On Thursday, January 12, 2017, we contacted activists from the area and confirmed the incident.

Tuesday, January 3, 2017, around 14:15, Syrian regime helicopters dropped two barrel bombs near [the civil defense center](#) in Khan Shaikhoun city, located in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The center building was slightly damaged, and the glass windows of a vehicle used to remove rubbles were shattered.

Wednesday, January 25, 2017, Syrian regime artillery fired a number of [shells](#) near an ambulance (belonging to the civil defense – center 90) in Harasta city, located in eastern Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The glass windows of the vehicle, and its structure were moderately damaged.

Tuesday, January 31, 2017, Syrian regime artillery fired a [shell](#) near an ambulance (belonging to the civil defense – center 114) in Hazrama town, located in eastern Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. The ambulance structure was slightly damaged.



2. Other parties

1- Medical facilities

- Ambulances

Tuesday, January 1, 2017, Turkish forces-backed Euphrates Shield artillery fired a number of shells at an ambulance (belonging to “Al Madina” hospital) in Al Ashra area in Al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo. The ambulance was partially destroyed.

Tuesday, January 24, 2017, around 16:00, armed men stopped and confiscated three SAMS [ambulances](#) -which operates in the suburbs of Hama governorate- after opening fire at the ambulances in Ma’aret Al Nu’man city, located in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front. The vehicles were detained for two hours. Also, one of them were slightly damaged in its glass windows. As of this writing, we haven’t been able to identify the group behind the assault.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendation

Legal conclusions

1- The incidents mentioned in this report are considered, beyond any doubt, violations of Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2254 which both state that indiscriminate attacks must be halted. Also, these incidents are violations of Article 8 of Rome Statute through the act of willful killing which constitutes war crimes.

2- We can confirm that most of the incidents included in this report have targeted arm-less civilians. Therefore, Syrian regime forces have violated the rules of the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. Additionally, these violations were perpetrated in a non-international armed conflict which amount to a war crime where all elements were fulfilled.

Also, other parties (which includes parties that we weren’t able to identify as well as Turkish, Lebanese, and Jordanian forces) have committed acts that amount to war crimes through the crime of extrajudicial killing and targeting vital civilian facilities.

3- The attacks mentioned in this report are considered a violation of the customary international law as the shells were fired at populated areas rather than a specific military object.

4- Aerial bombardment has caused collateral damages that involved loss of lives, injuries, and significant damages to civil facilities. There are strong indicators suggesting that the damage was too excessive compared to the anticipated military benefit.



Recommendations

The Security Council

- The Security Council has to take additional steps as it has been more than two years since Resolution 2139 was adopted and no pledges to cease the indiscriminate bombardment operations have been made. All the conflict parties must respect these steps and adhere to the rules of the international humanitarian law.
- The Syrian case must be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible must be held accountable including the Russian regime whose involvement in committing war crimes have been proven.
- Instill security and peace in Syria and implement the norm of the Responsibility to Protect in order to protect the lives, culture, and history of the Syrian people from being destroyed, stolen, and ruined.
- Expand the sanctions to include the Syrian and Iranian regimes and all of their who are directly involved in committing crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people.

The International Community

- In light of the split of the Security Council and its utter inability, Steps must be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people that would protect them from the daily killings and siege and enhance the support for the relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction must be activated in local courts regarding these crimes in order to conduct fair trials for all those who were involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect in tens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) after all political channels through the Arab League's plan and then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan were drought out. Therefore, steps under Article 7 of the Rome Statute must be taken and the norm of the Responsibility to Protect, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, must be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.
- Renew the pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- Work on fulfilling justice and achieving accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights council and work on utilizing the principle of the universal jurisdiction.



Medical organizations around the world

There is a severe shortage in medical manpower in Syria because of the ceaseless killing of medical personnel. Firstly, Syrian doctors must come back to Syria to compensate for the severe shortage in medical personnel. Also, international organizations can send volunteers to safe areas where wounded are sent for treatment. We have recorded many cases where wounded died due to lack of medical resources.

Acknowledgment

Our most sincere thanks go to the victims' families and friends and to the local activists who contributed majorly to this report.





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