

Press Release

Attacks Intensify in Syria's 'De-Escalation' Zones

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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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.

[10 January 2018] The Near Year has witnessed a dangerous intensification of the violence in Syria, with at least 155 civilians killed in the first ten days of 2018. Syrian human rights monitors warn of mounting atrocities in Syria's designated de-escalation zones, with schools, hospitals and rescue centres in Idlib and Eastern Ghouta confronting systematic targeting by Syrian regime and Russian warplanes.

The recent surge in the violence – taking place just weeks before Russia's proposed 'Sochi' conference – has caused a mass exodus of Syrian civilians, with an estimated 113,000 Syrians fleeing Idlib in recent weeks. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini issued a [statement](#) today condemning the intensifying assault.

"We are witnessing a clear intensification of Russia's military strategy, with systematic attacks on civilian facilities perpetrated with total disregard for international law", warns Fadel Abdul Ghany, Chairperson of the [Syrian Network for Human Rights](#) (SNHR). "While Russia talks of 'peacemaking' in Sochi, it is committing war crimes on the ground in Syria. No Russian 'peacemaking' initiative is credible as long as Russia continues its blitzkrieg against the Syrian people."



Recent [reports](#) by SNHR have shown that the Syrian regime and Russia were responsible for attacks on more than 100 schools, including 10 kindergartens, 84 medical facilities and 87 civil defense facilities in 2017 alone – despite binding de-escalation agreements sponsored by Russia itself. On 7 January, 3 medical facilities were targeted in only 24 hours.

“Syrian civil society cannot support Russian initiatives like Sochi while Russia continues daily attacks against defenseless civilians - and the international community shouldn't either. Only a comprehensive UN-led peace process that reflects the genuine aspirations of the Syrian people can achieve a lasting peace in Syria”, he concludes.

As violence in Syria surges, Syrian activists call on the international community to:

(i) Say **no to Sochi**: Over 130 Syrian civil society groups agree that only a UN-led Geneva peace process can achieve a solution that reflects the views of all Syrians and leads to a sustainable, just peace;

(ii) Increase **support to Geneva** by ramping up pressure on the Syrian regime to negotiate in earnest;

(iii) Increase genuine **engagement with civil society**, whose views are invaluable to negotiating a solution to the conflict and whose buy-in is crucial for any settlement;

(iv) **Break the siege in Eastern Ghouta**, where 400,000 civilians continue to be in urgent need of food, water and medical care.



A photograph of a man in a dark jacket holding a young child in a red and white striped sweater. They are standing in a rubble-filled area, likely a destroyed building. The background shows debris and a dark sky.

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- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR)

#AgainstSochi

Photo: Getty





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