

The Eighteenth Report Documenting Violations by International Coalition Forces in Syria

With the End of ISIS in Syria,
International Coalition Forces
Must Open Further Investigations
and Compensate the Victims

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

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.

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I. Introduction

The process of monitoring and follow-up conducted by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) team since International Coalition forces began their military operations in Syria on Tuesday, September 23, 2014, until the date of releasing this report shows that violations by International Coalition forces have become a widespread and frequent pattern in many cities and towns in Syria, which undermines the credibility of these forces, despite their declaration of a noble goal in helping to rid the Syrian people and all the other peoples of the world of terrorist organizations and the danger they pose. These forces delay, more than a year after defeating ISIS in several areas, in starting the reconstruction process, compensating victims, and establishing real local elections that lead to genuine stability in the north-east of Syria, has significantly impaired its stated goals and objectives.



In addition, no state participating in the International Coalition in Syria, except for the United States of America, has published any reports and investigations into incidents of violations in which civilians were killed, making it impossible for us to know which state or states were responsible in each case for carrying out those attacks which caused casualties, meaning that all we can do is refer to the International Coalition forces as bearing collective responsibility. For this reason, all the states participating in the coalition are required to issue periodic reports in the event that their forces perpetrate incidents that cause human or material loss, and should accept their responsibilities in terms of human rights and legal liabilities, as well as revising their methodology so as to avoid subsequent violations.

SNHR has documented the attacks carried out by International Coalition forces that constituted violations of customary international law, compiling a dedicated database of all the incidents which we were able to document, including all the details such as place and date of incidents, as well as the names, photographs and video footage of those killed whenever possible, in addition to first-person accounts provided by survivors or eyewitnesses of the bombardment, and pictures of the destruction among other data. This is achieved through ongoing monitoring and documentation by our team, and collation of these incidents. We have previously released a total of 17 reports detailing these incidents, with this being the 18th such report. These reports contain data on the most notable incidents that took place, with some of these incidents involving horrific massacres in which dozens of civilians were killed at the same time.

The following link contains the previous reports that document the most notable attacks by International Coalition forces since the start of the intervention in Syria, in September 2014, listing the violations that resulted from those attacks, including killing and forced displacement. These reports reflect a large portion of the information pertaining to the incidents that SNHR has been able to document:

<https://bit.ly/2HuYzb8>



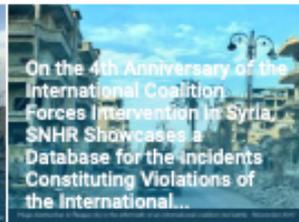


Brief Report: Human Rights Implications of the Withdrawal of US Forces from Syria

January 9, 2019



Urgent Action Must Be Taken to Save Nearly 6,000 Civilians in Hajin District



On the 4th Anniversary of the International Coalition Forces Intervention in Syria, SNHR Showcases a Database for the Incidents Constituting Violations of the International...



Ridding Raqqa of ISIS Costed Extraordinarily Too Much in Lives and Resources



Three Years since International Coalition Forces Intervention Started in Syria – The Bloody Price



Most Notable Violations from November 2016 until the End of June...

July 22, 2017

"The Yellow Assault" SNHR has released a report entitled: "The Yellow Assault" which tackles the most notable violations in Raqqa governorate between November 6, 2016...



1000 Days Have Passed Since the International Coalition's Operations Started in...

May 5, 2017

1256 Civilians Have Been Killed Including 383 Children Since the intervention of the US-led international coalition forces started on September 23, 2014. SNHR has been...



For the first time International Coalition forces kill more civilians than...

February 6, 2017

View full Report [english/International_Coalition_forces_](#)



The International Alliance's Airstrikes Killed 24 Civilians and Destroyed a Number...

October 26, 2014

In the same period of time, the Syrian regime killed 1447 civilians. The international alliance started a military campaign against ISIS on 23 September, 2014...



649 individuals Killed at the Hands of the International Coalition Forces...

October 21, 2016

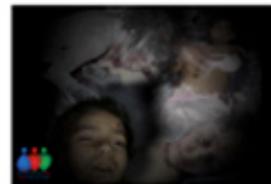
The only Way to Defeat ISIS is to Ally with the whole Syrian People SNHR has released the report: "The only Way to Defeat ISIS..."



New Attacks by the International Coalition Forces Result in Losses and...

February 13, 2016

The Killing of 267 Civilians at the hands of the International Coalition I-Introduction Since the US-led international coalition commenced its military intervention on Syria...



International Coalition Forces Targets Armed Opposition Groups for the Third Time

September 10, 2015

246 individuals were killed as a result including 243 civilians I- Introduction: SNHR previously issued eight reports that documented civilian's death by the international coalition...



Coalition Forces Airstrikes Killed Civilians in Idlib

September 24, 2014

Incident Details: A warplane affiliated to the coalition forces made an airstrike on the east of Kafar-Daryan village in the northern countryside of Idlib at...



Civilian's Death Toll due to the International Coalition Airstrikes

August 11, 2015

International Coalition Aviation Killed 225 Civilians, including 65 Children and 37 Women I- Introduction Since 23 September 2014, International Coalition forces joined the four major conflict...



More Evidences Proving the International Coalition's Involvement in the Massacre of...

May 20, 2015

First: The International Coalition Warplanes were Probably Behind the Bombing Usually, the international coalition warplanes' airstrikes are accurate and focused. The international coalition targeted six...



169 Civilians including 42 Children and 30 Women have been Killed...

May 6, 2015

Documenting the targeting of Ber Mahli village in Aleppo suburbs where 64 civilians were killed First: Geographic Location and Military Control Ber Mahli village is located...



Civilians Death Toll of the First Day of Coalition Forces Airstrikes

September 24, 2014

The Syrian Regime The Syrian regime and its militias killed no less than 28 civilian, including four children, 2 women, and eight under torture National Coalition...



The International Alliance Responsible for the Deaths of 103 Civilians, Including...



Alliance Forces' Shelling Kills Civilians in Der Ezzor



The International Alliance Airstrikes Kill More Civilians and Target Ahrar Ash-Sham...



Methodology:

This report highlights the outlawed attacks carried out by International Coalition forces in Syria from September 23, 2018, to March 2019, in addition to analyzing the data concerning the violations perpetrated by International Coalition forces which were documented by the Syrian Network for Human Rights from September 23, 2014, to March, 2019.

The SNHR team carries out the ongoing monitoring of incidents and developments through consulting an extensive network of highly credible contacts including dozens of various sources which has been built up since the start of our work. When we receive information or hear reports about a violation via the internet or media outlets, we work to follow up this news and try to verify and collect evidence and data. In some cases, the researcher is able to visit the incident location soon after the incident. However, this is a rarity in light of the incredibly high security risks and given the frequency of such daily incidents and due to the shortage of available human and material resources. Therefore, the opportunity to gain immediate first-hand access to evidence and thus the degree of certainty in its classification varies from one case to another. Usually, what we do at SNHR in such cases is to rely on accounts from survivors who experienced the violation firsthand, whom we try to consult directly, and, to a secondary degree, eyewitnesses who saw or filmed the violation. We also analyze available materials from open sources such as the internet and media outlets. Fourthly, we try to speak with medical personnel who treated the wounded, assessed the symptoms, and determined the cause of death.

Please read the details on the methodology¹ followed by the Syrian Network for Human Rights.

SNHR has analyzed videos and pictures posted online or sent by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media. Some of the videos posted by activists show the sites of the attacks, dead bodies, injuries, and the massive destruction inflicted in the aftermath of the bombardment.

This report only covers the bare minimum, which we have been able to document, of the severity and magnitude of the violations that occurred, and does not feature any analysis of the devastating social, economic, psychological, and demographic ramifications.

¹“Syrian Network for Human Rights Methodology”, Syrian Network for Human Rights, <http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR_Methodology_en.pdf> March 19, 2019



II. How International Coalition Forces Have Increased Violations Over the Years Rather Than Reducing or Mitigating the Damage

We conducted an analysis of the attacks of International Coalition forces, which we were able to document in our database, based on two variables: the death toll of victims and the targeting of vital and civilian facilities. We noted that the attacks in the first year (September 2014 to 2015) were specific, focused and less likely to cause civilian casualties, mostly targeting oil installations and supply routes used by ISIS. In addition, most of these targets were in uninhabited areas. For a full year, the impact of the intervention of International Coalition forces was not significantly reflected in the control of ISIS over the Syrian territory except for Ein al Arab city and some areas in the southern and western suburbs of Hasaka. In the second year (September 2015 to September 2016), the attacks by International Coalition forces began to take a more chaotic and random form, with most of these attacks being carried out on the centers of cities and villages controlled by ISIS, particularly in areas in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo. The Kurdish -led Syrian Democratic Forces, with the support of International Coalition forces, were able to expand southwards from Ein al Arab city towards Manbej city and its villages, as well as eastwards towards areas of the northern suburbs of Raqqa. However, in early 2016, ISIS was able to expand in some areas in the suburbs of Homs and Hama, with the percentage of Syrian territory controlled by ISIS reaching approximately 58 percent after they had controlled around 38 percent in the first year of the intervention of International Coalition forces.

In the third year (September 2016 to September 2017), the frequency of attacks and air strikes increased dramatically, with International Coalition forces appearing to be negligent in observing the principles of customary humanitarian law, which is clearly visible according to the amount of unjustified human loss which we documented during that period. International Coalition forces perpetrated dozens of massacres and did not take any steps to ensure accuracy in many of their attacks. In addition, they supported Syrian Democratic Forces in their battle to control the whole of Raqqa governorate, which started in the northern suburbs of Raqqa before expanding to its western and eastern suburbs, then moving to dominate most neighborhoods of the city. During this period, we recorded attacks in which International Coalition forces targeted displaced civilians, as happened in al Tabaqa city in the western suburbs of Raqqa, in addition to frequently and deliberately targeting [bridges](#) and [water crossings](#), whose destruction has adversely affected the economic and social life of the already traumatized population.



In the fourth year (September 2017 to September 2018), following the end of the battle of Raqqa in October 2017, the frequency of attacks carried out by International Coalition forces decreased, with the extent of violations decreasing accordingly. During most of this period, the coalition's military operations were concentrated on Deir Ez-Zour governorate and the southern suburbs of Hasaka. Also, the Coalition supported Syrian Democratic Forces in the Battle of al Jazeera Storm, which began in September 2017 and aimed to take control of Marqada city in the southern suburbs of Hasaka and the villages of Deir Ez-Zour north of the Euphrates River (al Jazira villages), and in the battle announced on September 10, 2018, to take control over the Hajin district in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, with both these areas still under the control of ISIS that time.

This phase was characterized by an increased use of artillery by International Coalition forces in cooperation with Syrian Democratic Forces in Deir Ez-Zour governorate, where we monitored the presence of artillery forces in al Omar oil field in the Badiya of Zebiyah city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour.

The attacks by the International Coalition in the period between September 2018 and March 2019 were focused on the Hajin area. In addition, Syrian Democratic Forces were able to gain control over most of the Hajin area, with only a few square kilometers left in al Baghouz town in which ISIS was present. Intensive air strikes by International Coalition forces forced hundreds of members of ISIS to surrender along with their families and turn themselves in to Syrian Democratic Forces.

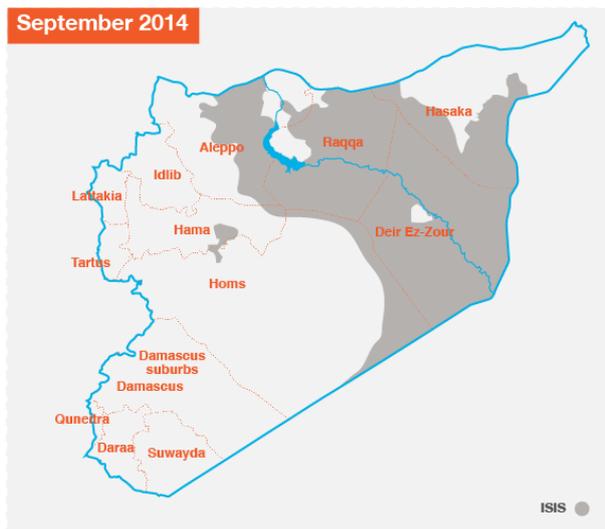


Maps showing reduction of ISIS-controlled territories in Syria as a result of International Coalition forces' attacks:

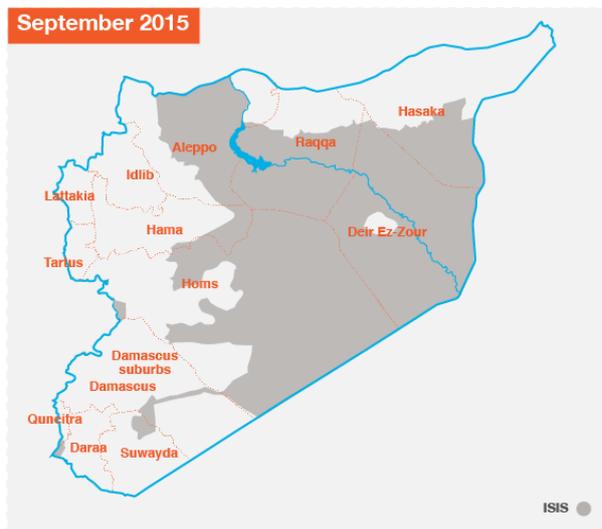


Reduction of ISIS-controlled territories in Syria as a result of International Coalition forces' attacks from September 23, 2014 to March 2019

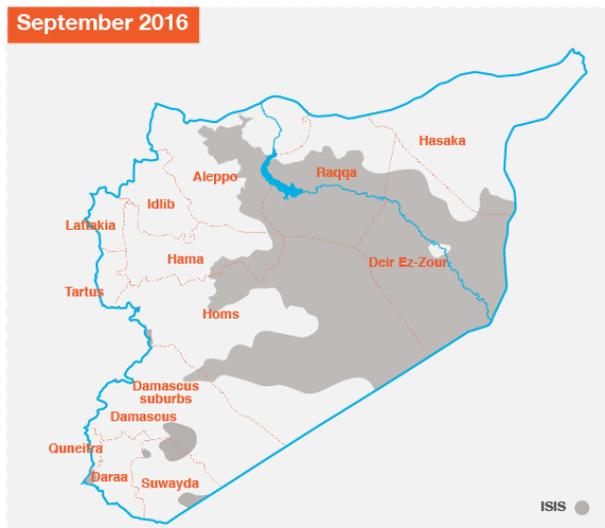
September 2014



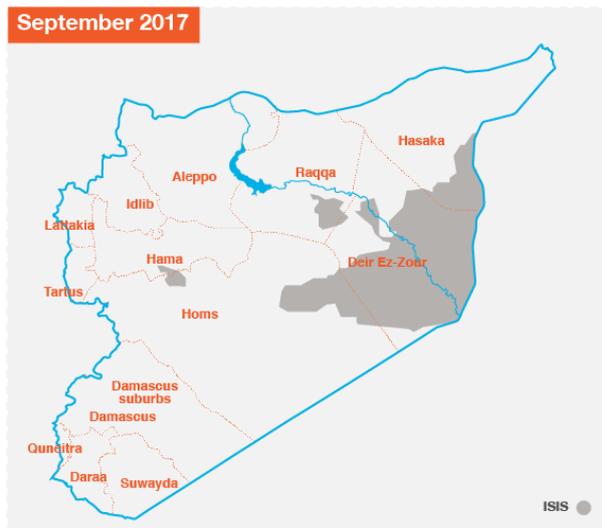
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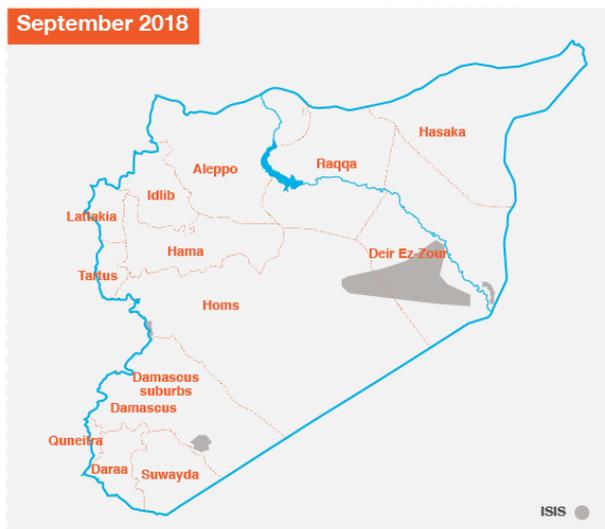
September 2016



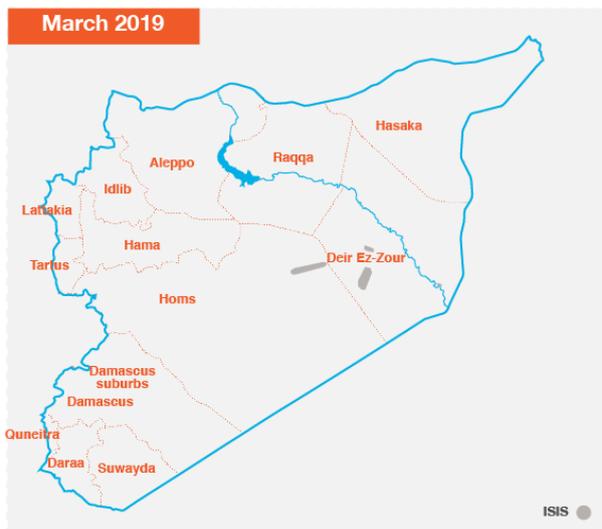
September 2017



September 2018



March 2019



III. The High Toll of Victims and Targeting Vital Civilian Facilities show a Recurring Pattern of Indifference

Based on SNHR’s database on International Coalition forces, we shall outline a number of figures concerning the most notable violations by International Coalition forces from September 23, 2014, to March 2019:

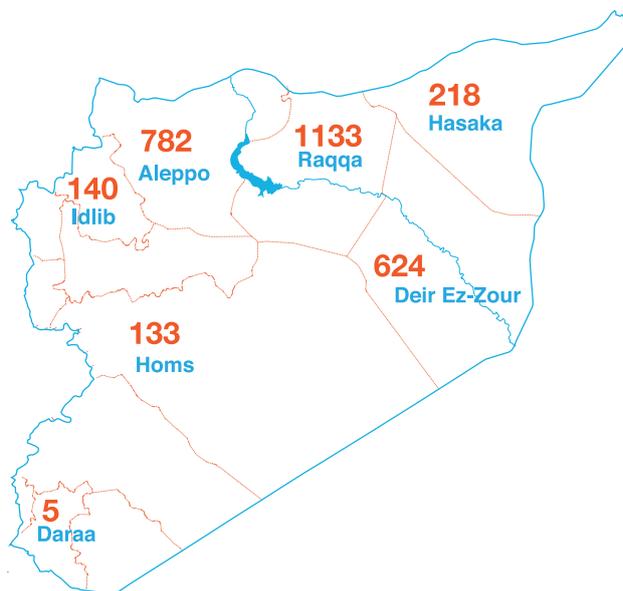
A. Death toll

SNHR has documented the deaths of 3,035 civilians, including 924 children and 656 women (adult female), at the hands of International Coalition forces since the start of their military intervention in Syria until March 2019.

Chart showing the death toll of civilians killed at the hands of International Coalition forces from September 23, 2014, to March 2019:



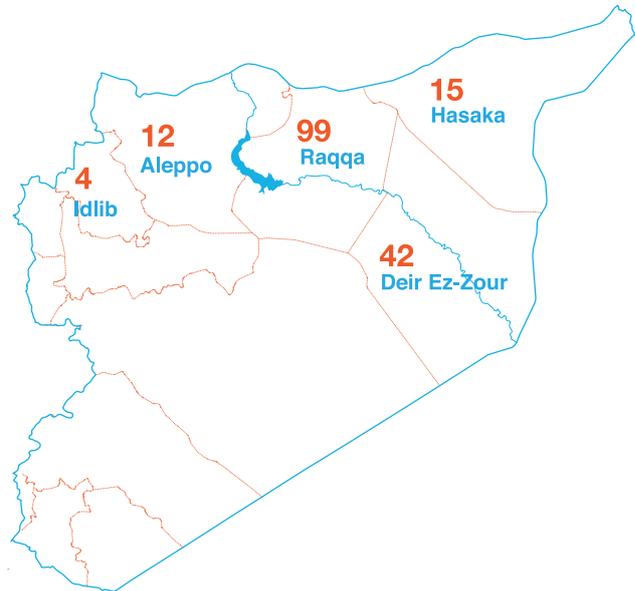
The civilian death toll at the hands of International Coalition forces was distributed across governorates as follows:



B. Massacres (five individuals or more killed in the same attack)

SNHR has documented that International Coalition forces perpetrated at least 172 massacres since the start of their military intervention in Syria to March 2019.

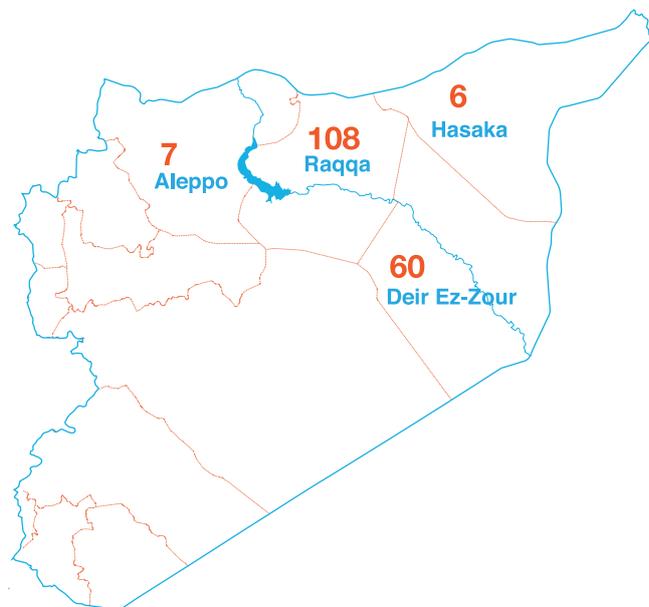
Record of massacres was distributed across governorates as follows:



C. Attacks on vital civilian facilities

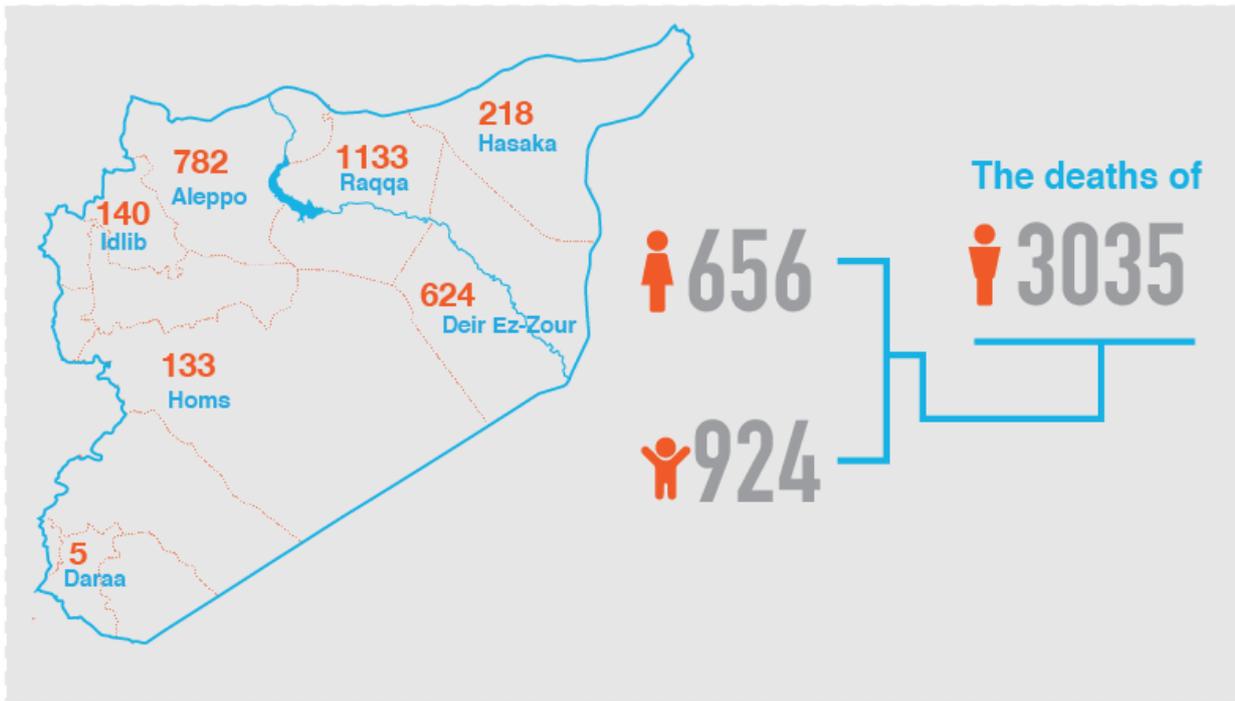
SNHR has documented at least 181 attacks on vital civilian facilities by International Coalition forces since the start of their military intervention in Syria until March 2019, including 16 attacks on medical facilities, 25 attacks on schools, and four attacks on markets.

The record of attacks on vital civilian facilities was distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



Infograph outlining the most notable human rights violations by International Coalition forces since their intervention in Syria:

The most notable violations of International Coalition forces since the start of their intervention in Syria on September 23, 2014, until March 2019



The military attacks of International Coalition forces resulted in the displacement of **560,000 inhabitants** mostly from the governorates of Raqqa, Hasaka and Deir Ez-Zour



As documented by SNHR



D. Forced displacement

The continued air raids carried out by International Coalition forces forced hundreds of thousands of civilians to flee for their lives, being displaced as a result. No safe corridors or suitable accommodation were provided prior to these attacks, despite the knowledge that they would inevitably result in the displacement of civilians. On the contrary, in some cases, the attacks directly targeted fleeing civilians, particularly in the governorates of Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zour.

We estimate that at least 560,000 inhabitants of these areas have been forcibly displaced. Most of the displaced have been forced to stay in camps set up by Syrian Democratic Forces, where they are detained with their identity papers confiscated and prevented from leaving. We have recorded such practices in Ein Eisa Camp north of Raqqa, and in the Badiya of Hajin Camp in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour. So far, more than a year since defeating ISIS in some areas, a large part of the population has been unable to return safely to their homes.

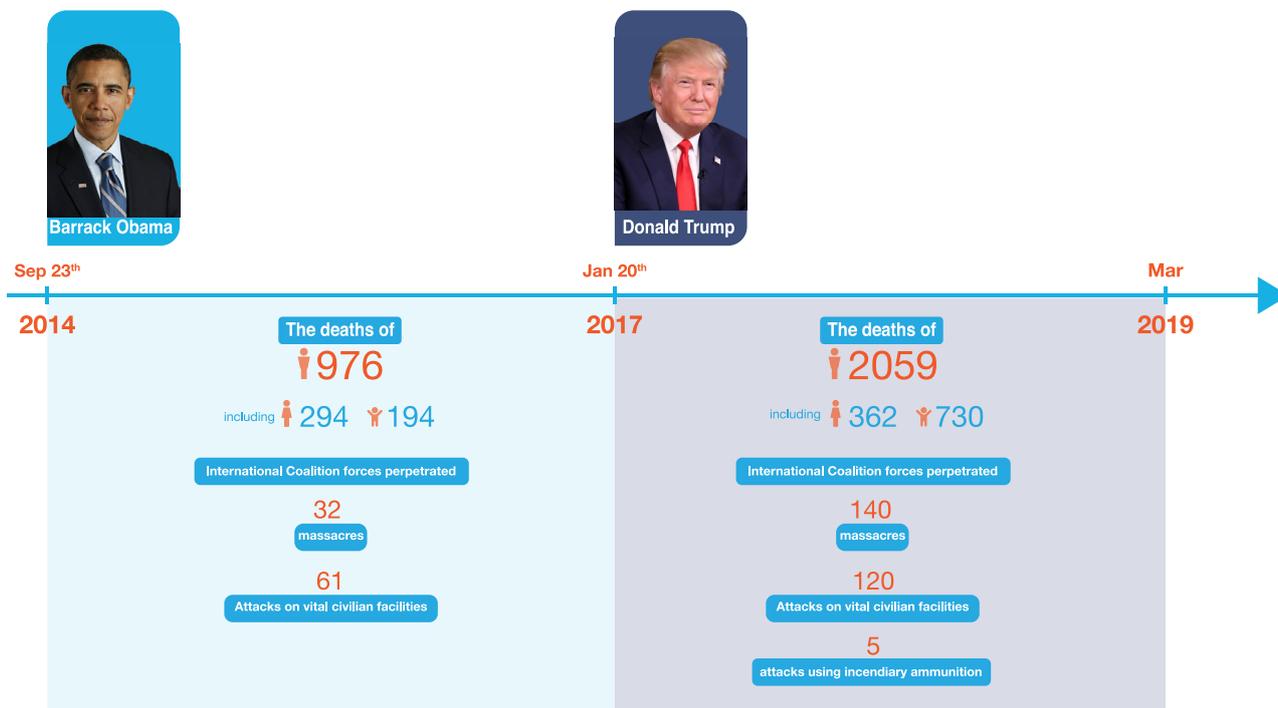
IV. A Comparison Between the Record of the Most Notable Human Rights Violations Committed by International Coalition Forces During the Terms of US Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump

The attacks carried out by International Coalition forces in the Term of US President Barack Obama did not yield any significant change in the capabilities of ISIS or reduce areas that were under their control in Syria. Despite this, however, at the same time, at least 976 civilians, including 194 children, and 294 women (adult female) were killed, which is nearly 32 percent of the total death toll of victims killed by International Coalition forces, as well as 32 massacres and 61 attacks on civilian objects.

During the term of US President Donald Trump, meanwhile, the killings escalated in a frightening manner. The death toll of victims killed during this time reached at least 2,059 civilians, including 730 children and 362 women, which is nearly 68 percent of the total death toll of victims killed by International Coalition forces. In addition, the Coalition attacks began to take on a more systematic and chaotic character. SNHR has documented at least 140 massacres and at least 120 attacks on civilian objects, as well as documenting the use of incendiary munitions for the first time, with our team documenting at least five attacks carried out by International Coalition forces using incendiary munitions. Although International Coalition forces have been able to force ISIS to withdraw from vast areas, the cost paid by civilians has been excessively high.



A timeline comparing the most notable violations of International Coalition forces during the terms of US Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump:



V. A Comparison Between What International Coalition Forces Have Acknowledged and What Is Documented in the Syrian Network for Human Rights' Database

International Coalition forces have published monthly reports outlining the attacks which caused civilian casualties. In February 2019, they published their latest report, which reported the deaths of at least 1,257 civilians in attacks carried out by International Coalition forces in Syria and Iraq. SNHR's team has reviewed all the reports issued by International Coalition forces to date, totaling 27 reports so far. We compared and cross-checked the incidents of violations included in those reports with those catalogued the SNHR database. Our audits concluded that International Coalition forces acknowledged 119 attacks that caused civilian casualties in Syria alone, 31 of which resulted in massacres (defined as attacks in which five or more individuals were killed in the same attack), while the SNHR team documented at least 172 massacres in the same period; that is, a difference of 141 massacres between the numbers documented by the International Coalition and the SNHR, which is a significant rather than a minor difference.



As the United States of America is the leader of the International Coalition, the SNHR has repeatedly called the attention of the US Department of Defense - our last visit was this March - to the necessity and importance of coordination and cooperation in the field of investigations and data-sharing and the need to identify the imbalances accurately, in order to avoid incidents of violation in the future.

VI. Details Outlining Some of the incidents Documented in the Syrian Network for Human Rights' Database

This report outlines 10 attacks carried out by International Coalition forces on civilian areas and vital civilian facilities, of which resulted in civilian casualties, from September 23, 2018, to March 2019.

We have classified these attacks in the database into several categories; for example, there have been incidents that resulted in massacres, and attacks on vital civilian facilities, as well as attacks that resulted in the death of medical and Civil Defense personnel.

A. The most notable attacks that resulted in massacres:

On Saturday, October 27, 2018, wing-fixed International Coalition warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Boubadran neighborhood in al Sousa town, which is administratively a part of al Boukamal area in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, resulting in the deaths of five civilians, including two children and a woman. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

On Thursday, November 15, 2018, at around 05:30, wing-fixed international coalition warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Boubadran neighborhood in al Sousa town, which is administratively a part of al Boukamal area in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, resulting in the deaths of 18 civilians, including 14 children (nine females and five males), and three women, all of whom were members of one family of IDPs who had been displaced from al Bagouz. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, December 5, 2018, wing-fixed International Coalition warplanes fired a number of missiles at [Hajin city](#) in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, resulting in the deaths of 13 civilians, including seven children and three women. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

On Tuesday, January 29, 2019, wing-fixed International Coalition warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Baghouz Tahtani, which is administratively a part of al Boukamal area in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, resulting in the deaths of 15 civilians, including four children and four women. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



B. The most notable attacks on vital civilian facilities:

Places of worship:

- Mosques:

On Friday, October 19, 2018, at around 12:00, wing-fixed International Coalition warplanes fired a number of missiles at the [Ammar bin Yasser Mosque](#) “ formerly [al Mustafa Mosque](#)” also known as the Ali al Dagher Mosque in al Boubadran neighborhood in al Sousa town, which is administratively a part of al Boukamal area in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, resulting in a massacre, in addition to the complete destruction of the mosque building, putting it out of service. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Destruction in Ammar bin Yasser Mosque - known as Ali al Dagher Mosque – inflicted in an air strike by International Coalition forces on al Sousa town, Deir Ez-Zour - October 19, 2018

On Saturday, December 1, 2018, fixed-wing International Coalition forces warplanes fired missiles at [al Jaber Mosque](#) in Hawwama neighborhood in Hajin city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The mosque building was severely damaged, putting it out of service. The city, which was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces at the time of this report’s publication.

On Sunday, December 16, 2018, fixed-wing International Coalition forces warplanes fired missiles at [al Boukhater Mosque](#) in al Boukhater neighborhood in Hajin city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The mosque building was completely destroyed, putting it out of service. The city, which was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident, is under the control of Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces at the time of this report’s publication.



On Tuesday, December 18, 2018, fixed-wing International Coalition forces warplanes fired missiles near [al Rahma Mosque](#) in al Qal'a neighborhood of Hajin city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The mosque building and furnishings were moderately damaged. The city, which was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident, is under the control of the predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces at the time of this report's publication.

Vital medical facilities:

On Thursday, November 29, 2018, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [al Yarmouk women's hospital](#) in the Twenty-Four neighborhood in [al Sh'afa city](#) in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in a massacre. In addition, the hospital was mostly destroyed, being put out of service. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

C. The most notable victims of medical personnel and Civil Defense:

[Manaf Nayef al Hamidi](#), a nurse, from Kafranbel city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate and a graduate of nursing school, died on Sunday, January 27, 2019, in an air raid by fixed-wing International Coalition forces warplanes using missiles, which took place simultaneously with coalition artillery forces firing a number of shells at the outskirts of al Baghouz area, which is administratively a part of al Boukamal city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. Manaf was assisting people injured in earlier bombardment when he was killed.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

- The indiscriminate and disproportionate incidents of bombardment carried out by International Coalition forces constitute explicit violations of international humanitarian law and serious violations of the rules of customary humanitarian law amounting to war crimes, including the targeting of civilians or civilian objects.
- These incidents of bombardment have resulted in collateral damages involving civilian deaths, injuries, or significant damages to civilian objects. There are strong indicators suggesting that the damage was excessive in comparison to the anticipated military advantage.

Recommendations

- **The Joint Command of the International Coalition Forces:**
- Support the team working on investigating and following up on incidents with more manpower, and increase the current level of efforts and capabilities in this regard in order to dedicate greater attention to this issue.



- Create a data map showing the areas worst affected by aerial attacks
- Make greater efforts towards starting to address the economic and moral ramifications resulting from those attacks
- Build upon the military victory over ISIS, rid the remaining areas of their effects, and seriously work on establishing democratic community leadership involving the residents of those areas
- Work seriously to provide the means for making a decent life for the forcibly displaced in displacement camps
- Publicly hold everyone who was convicted, through investigations, of being implicated in attacks that resulted in massacres against civilians to account and discharge them from service.
- International Coalition forces must respect international humanitarian law and customary international law. Consequently, the states of the international coalition are deemed responsible for the violations that have occurred since the beginning of the attacks, some of which are highlighted in this report. Those states should bear all the consequences ensuing from these violations, and make every possible effort to avoid any recurrence.
- Assist the Syrian community in eliminating terrorist groups akin to ISIS, such as those terrorist groups supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran which have already begun to establish bases in Aleppo and Damascus suburb

Independent International Commission of Inquiry (Col)

- Investigate and follow up on the incidents included in this report. SNHR is willing to provide the data it possesses in this regard.

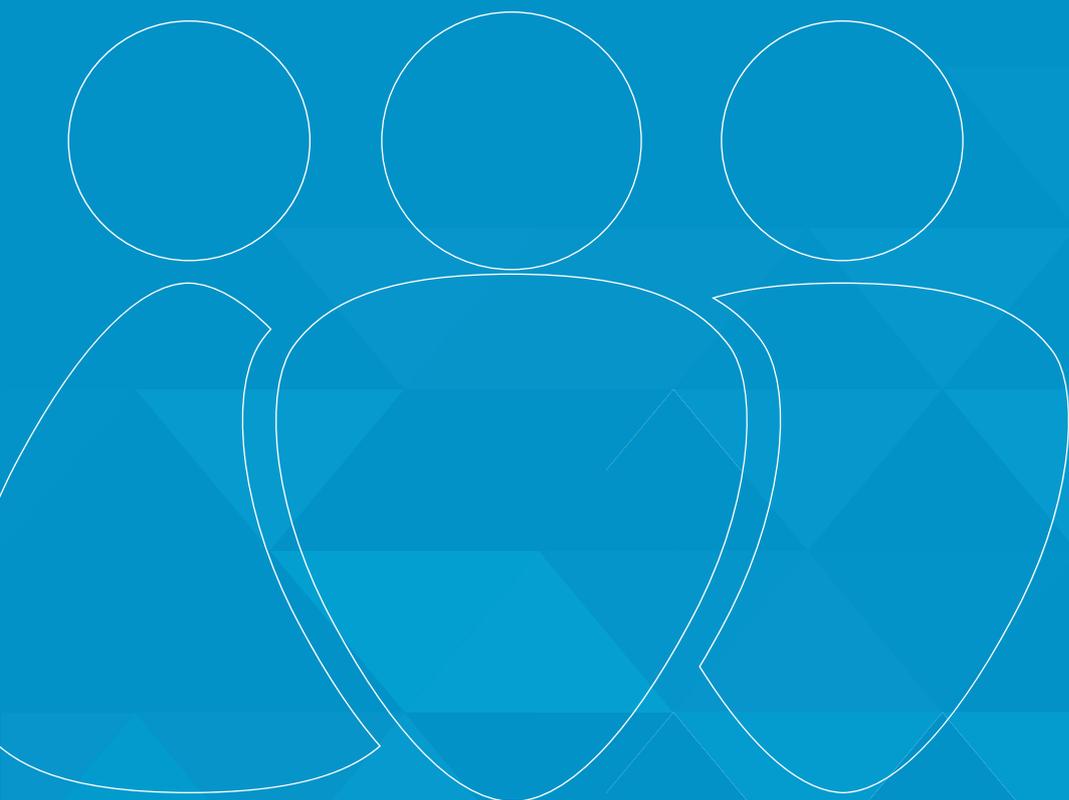
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- Address the issue of the forcibly displaced people living in SDF-held areas and issue a report on the violations they are experiencing, while also touching upon the results of the bombardment by International Coalition forces on those areas.
- Issue a report addressing the repercussions of the illegal attacks of International Coalition forces in Syria, addressing several of the attacks in areas and towns detailed in this report.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

We wish to extend our most heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and all those affected who we had the opportunity to speak with and to document their names. We would also like to thank the residents, local activists, and victims' families whose contributions made our database and this report possible.





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