



Ghuwayran Neighborhood Caught between Fires of Government and Kurd Self-Management Forces

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I-Introduction:

Ghuwayran neighborhood is located in the south-east of Al Hassaka City and its population is estimated to be more than 80 thousand individuals, most of them are from Al Bakara and Jabour tribes.

Armed opposition groups and An-Nusra Front gained control over the neighborhood in the mid of 2012 (most of them were from the neighborhoods' residents). We were not able to reach the neighborhood due to serious security risks, however, we interviewed some of the displaced residents who fled the neighborhood and went to Turkey. We were able to record the detainees and victims' names, in addition to other important details like locations, time and pictures.

II-Executive Summary:

This report documents violation committed by government and PYD Kurdish forces and covers a time period from mid August 2014 until mid September 2014.

A-Extrajudicial Killings:

SNHR documented the killing of 46 civilians, including 3 children and 3 women in Ghuwayran neighborhood in Al Hassaka governorate. These victims were killed by government forces (including army, security forces, local militias and foreign Shiite militias like Hezbollah) and Kurd Self-Management forces (mainly PYD forces and Al Assayesh forces)

B-Arbitrary Arrests:

SNHR documented the arrest of 48 civilians by government forces while they were fleeing their neighborhood.





III-Details about the Military Campaign and its Consequences on Civilians

Government forces and Hezbollah (the terrorist Lebanese party, led by a person called Abu Al Hajj) and PYD forces launched a military campaign on the neighborhood where it used different kinds of weapons, aviation forces and random shelling, in addition; government forces besieged the entire neighborhood.

Government forces were stationed in the following neighborhoods: Al Nashwa, Al Merdian, Al Vilat Al Humur, and Al Hara Al Askariya, while Hezbollah militia was stationed between Fawji Kawkab neighborhood and Al Baath Party headquarters in that region.

The military campaign started when PYD forces closed the main entrance to the neighborhood (Al Bayrouti Bridge) with earth mounds and military barriers. Snipers were deployed in high buildings surrounding to the neighborhood then government forces random shelled the neighborhood from tanks and government artillery that were stationed in Kawkab Mountain and Al Vilat Al Humur neighborhood. Also, PYD forces and government militias tried to storm the neighborhood.

SNHR recorded the death of 46 civilians, including 3 children and 3 women, due to random shelling, who were killed by government forces, its supporting militias and PYD Kurdish forces. Below, we record the most significant aerial attacks on the neighborhood: On 31 August 2014, SNHR recorded almost 60 missiles that were shelled from joint military checkpoints between government forces and PYD Kurdish forces. As a result, 3 civilians from one family were killed, including a woman. Also, the neighborhood was greatly destroyed.

On 2 September 2014, government military helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on the neighborhood. It targeted the Great Mosque and Al Seteen Street, which caused great destruction to the houses.

On 4 September 2014, government forces killed 10 individuals due to random shelling and sniping.

Due to this military campaign, the medical and health situation in that neighborhood deteriorated, especially when pharmacies ran out of medicine and the medical service was restricted to a small makeshift infirmary.

In not less than 45 days since the military campaign started, more than 60 thousand civilians were displaced to nearby neighborhoods like Al Nashwa and Al Zouhour neighborhoods. Some of the displaced residents sheltered in public gardens and under construction





buildings. Some of the displaced residents had to pass by government checkpoints and thus more 48 civilians were arrested. The most known detainees were Yasser Ahmad Al Taweel, Moustafa Ahmad Al Taweel, and Ammar Fahed Al Taweel, who were arrested after they were displaced to Al Nashwa neighborhood on 6 September 2014.

Government and PYD Kurdish forces justified their attack and shelling by saying that gunmen were stationed in residential and civilian buildings (which is if proven to be true, armed opposition groups would have violated the International Humanitarians Law). Nonetheless, our investigations proved that most of the shelled sites were civilian locations and the neighborhood was free of any opposing military presences. Also, government forces and its allies did not take into consideration the principle of proportionality of forces and therefore, we believe that the human loss and destruction outweighed the military interest which was achieved.

IV-Attachments:

Footages and Images:

-[Al Hassaka governorate](#), Ghuwayran neighborhood: Footages that depict shelling and targeting buildings and civilians

[A video](#) that depicts the shelling aftermath on [Ghuwayran neighborhood](#) on 4 September 2014.

-[Al Hassaka](#) - Ghuwayran neighborhood – 4 September 2014:

Shelling aftermath on Ahmad Yaseen School by one of the rockets

-Shelling over Ghuwayran neighborhood – Al Hassaka – 2 September 2014

[An image](#) that depicts the explosion next to the Great Mosque in Ghuwayran neighborhood due to the barrel bomb selling by government for





Al Hassaka - Ghuwayran neighborhood shelling aftermath on the neighborhood – 9 September 2014



V-Conclusions and Recommendations:

Legal Conclusions:

1. The Assad regime and the PYD Kurdish Forces flagrantly violated UN Security Council Resolution 2139, which calls for stopping of indiscriminate attacks that amount to a crime against humanity under Article VII of the Rome Statute.
2. We emphasize that these aerial attacks have targeted unarmed civilians, which constitutes a violation of the international human rights laws and a war crime under international laws and treaties
3. The aerial attacks contained in the report carried out by the Assad regime and PYD Kurdish forces are considered as a violation of international humanitarian law as they deliberately targeted populated areas.
4. The scale of the systematic rocket frequent attacks, and the level of excessive force used in it confirms that they were issued with the consent of Assad, who bears full responsibility for these attacks.

Recommendations:

To the Security Council:

1- The UN Security Council must take further action as a year has passed since the adoption of resolution No . 2139 without the Assad regime or PYD Kurdish forces showing the least commitment to halting indiscriminate shelling, which has caused destruction and daily killings.

2-It must put pressure on the Assad regime and its allies (i.e local and foreign militias and PYD Kurdish forces) to stop supplying it with arms and military experts after its proven involvement in crimes against humanity and war crimes. It also must pass a resolution to condemn the sides that supply it with weapons.





3-The Syrian file must be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those involved in war crimes and violations must be held accountable.

4-The UN Security Council must establish peace and security and protect Syrian civilians and their heritage from looting, destruction and vandalism.

5-It must expand the sanctions to include all pillars of the Assad and the Iranian regimes as they are directly involved war crimes and crimes against humanity.

To the International Community:

1- Given the divisions at the UN Security Council, measures must be made at the national and regional level to build coalitions to aid the Syrian people through protecting it from the daily killings, lifting the siege, and stepping up the relief aid.

2-We call upon the international community to exercise the universal jurisdiction over these crimes before national courts and in trials for all those involved.

3- Pressure must be put on the UN Security Council to refer the Syria file to the International Criminal Court.

4-It must seek to achieve justice and accountability in Syria through the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and the use of the principle of universal jurisdiction.

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