

## Government Forces Deliberately Target Mosques and Churches

**A Report Prepared by:** The Syrian Network for Human Rights ([SNHR](#))

**Date of Issue:** 17, February, 2014

**The Scope of the Report:** Documenting the Shelling of the Mosque of the Town of Madyara in Damascus Countryside, on Friday, February 17, 2014.

### Introduction

The town of Madyara is about 14 KM to the northeast of the capital Damascus with 8000 population.

Here is a link that shows the location of the town:

### Details

The methodology of the report is based on interviews conducted by the team of [SNHR](#) with activists and eyewitnesses from Damascus Countryside. The report contains recorded testimonies of two eyewitnesses. The team of [SNHR](#) has also checked the pictures and videos provided by activists from the town who cooperate with us.

[SNHR](#) contacted Thaer, ambulance person who took part in aiding the injured, he gave his testimony:

“After we finished Friday prayer and prayers left the mosque between 12.30 and 1 PM, we heard the sound of a massive explosion. After a while we discovered that the source of the explosion was a 120 MM mortar that targeted the mosque.

The target of the shelling was a gathering of civilians who were gathering after Friday prayer. There were no military appearances or members of the Free Syrian Army in the place, though the area in general was under the control of Free Syrian Army, which doesn't usually appear around.

I went to the aid of the injured. There was an injured child whom I tried to save, but he instantly died because of his injury. I saved another child by giving him a lift on my motorcycle to the closest medical point. He was injured in the leg. I went back to the place to help save the rest of the injured. The total number of the injured was more than 70; lots of them acquired sustainable handicaps. Some were martyred few days later because of their sever injuries.”

Fadel Abdl Ghani, the head of [SNHR](#), says:

“The government forces targeted mosques and churches knowing that they contain civic gatherings. There are strong evidences that the government forces don’t distinguish between civil and military targets; violating, by doing so, the International Common Law and committing what can be considered war crimes.”

**Media activist “Abu Muhammad” from Madyara, who was injured in that incident, told [SNHR](#):**

“Friday prayer ended at about 12.30 PM and there was a gathering of about 250 people from the town close to the mosque. Suddenly we heard the sound of a massive explosion and shrapnel started to spread around me. My right hand was injured and it started bleeding heavily. People were laid on the ground around me. The leg of one man was cut. We entered the mosque fearing that another shell might hit. After that we tried to save the injured with all possible means. We were carrying them on our shoulders to the nearest hospital. Ambulance cars were not working because of the lack of fuel in Eastern Ghota. The number of martyrs and injured was very big; cut limbs and blood were filling the place.”

The team of [SNHR](#) could document 19 deaths, all of them are civilians and among them are 2 children.

A link that shows the victims’ names:

[https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9dF5VO4iR18dk45MnAzcXIJM3M/edit?usp=drive\\_web](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9dF5VO4iR18dk45MnAzcXIJM3M/edit?usp=drive_web)

## **Appendixes and Attachments**

A video and photos that show the place of the shelling that targeted the mosque:

[https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9dF5VO4iR18SWF2d0Y5OEV3VGc/edit?usp=drive\\_web](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9dF5VO4iR18SWF2d0Y5OEV3VGc/edit?usp=drive_web)

[https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9dF5VO4iR18dm9jMEhNR2hRNUU/edit?usp=drive\\_web](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9dF5VO4iR18dm9jMEhNR2hRNUU/edit?usp=drive_web)

Videos that document the victims of the shelling:

<http://youtu.be/4Q1ZNHbGOAI>

<http://youtu.be/bFTPOH7yneA>

A video that shows number of the victims inside the hospital:

<http://youtu.be/-wPyUYxOeKY>

A video that shows some of the victims:

<http://youtu.be/AJD1YuKDUUw>

## **Conclusion:**

Note that the Syrian regime has committed a war-crime related to property destruction crime as covered by the 1949 Geneva Convention where these actions committed in non-international armed conflict and it was civilian target.

## **Recommendations:**

### **Human Rights Council:**

- Considering attacks that occurred in Syria on the sanctity of the mosques as violation on the basic human rights that affect his sanctities and dignity
- Denounce violations committed by Syrian Government's Armed Forces such as warship houses, mosques and churches, and document those attacks
- Pressure on the Syrian Government's Armed Troops and formally request to stop its violations on mosques
- Hold alias and supporters of the Syrian Government's Armed Troops (support with weapons and gear) to take clear positions on those violations and make diplomatic and political pressure to stop and end these violations

### **Arab League:**

- Denounce violations of warship houses and churches, and document those attacks
- Pressure regionally and internationally to make effective decisions in this regard
- Pressure on the Syrian regime to stop those violations that affect Muslims all around the world
- Demand the states that can effect on Alassad regime to make it stop deliberate and widespread violations on churches.

### **Security Council:**

- Denounce violations of warship houses and churches, and criminalized those attacks
- Issue a binding decision against Syrian regime to stop all violations, specifically warship houses and churches