



Government and Russian Forces burn Aleppo Governorate «The Red Death»

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I. Introduction:

The neighborhoods of Aleppo Governorate, which is under the control of the armed opposition factions, witnessed daily bombardment by Syrian and Russian forces, and that one day after the declaration of the High Negotiations Committee to postpone its participation in the Geneva negotiations held on the 19th of last April.

Many political declarations about the presence of the «Al Nusra Front» in Aleppo had contributed to the increase of violence and cruelty of those attacks. However, even the presence of «Al Nusra» or even ISIS or any armed organization does not justify randomly bombing targets in the city which is located within the control of any military faction and without taking into account the distinction between military and civilian people. Moreover, the violations targeted greatest goals-mentioned in the report-which were never military headquarters, and not even close to military headquarters. It is also relatively far from the lines of the clash, thus, no military benefit is found judging from the names of the victims and their pictures, and the percentage women and children in addition to the residents' accounts.

The report pointed out that government forces are still using explosive barrels that are thrown from the sky and





based on the principle of free fall. This is considered as an distinctly indiscriminate weapon. We consider that every explosive barrel is a war crime, because it does not respect any norm of international humanitarian law, and is still permitted in spite of Security Council resolutions, reports, and condemnations. The Network recorded, during the period covered, around 86 explosive barrels that wer dropped on Aleppo city.

In this regard, Fadel Abdul Ghani, director of SNHR states:
«The responsibility for determining the places and the distributions of military sites for «Al Nussra» and ISIS exclusively, lie mainly on the states that sponsored the Cessation of Hostilities. We have noted this in the first days of launching the statement of the agreement in order to not justify bombing any civilian target, easily, even if it is located in an area under Al Nussra or ISIS. The Syrian and the Russian Forces have exploited this deliberate hole in the agreement and justified the killing of hundreds of civilians since the commencement of the statement.»

This report is intended to document violations by government forces and their allies in Aleppo City in the period from 20 April 2016 until 29 April 2016, in particular. We will, during the next two days, issue a special report documenting violations of some armed opposition factions in the Aleppo city, in the same time frame; as investigations in the areas that are controlled by government forces and its allies are more difficult than the areas that are outside its control.

The group of SNHR communicated with a large number of survivors of the bombardment, the relatives of the victims, and a number of activists of the media. The report also covers a great number of incidents where we couldn't visit all, and we have received a large number of photos and videos. A specialized team worked on verifying validity and reliability, and then cross-checked it with events, witnesses, and survivors. We explained to the witnesses the aim of the interviews, and we got their consent to use the provided information in this report.

All the targeted areas were proven that they are related to civilians, where there are no military or weapons stores belonging to the armed opposition or Islamic group organizations during the attack or even before.

This report represents the bare minimum, which we were able to document, of the actual magnitude and severity of the violation that occurred. Also, it doesn't cover





the social, economic, and psychological fallouts.

II. Executive Summary:

The report covers the period from 20 April 2016 until 29 April 2016, where we discuss the most prominent massacres and the vital centers that were bombed by government and Russian forces.

A. Massacres and extrajudicial killing:

SNHR documented the killing of 147 civilians, including 27 children, and 35 women distributed as follows:

- Government forces: 92 civilians, including seven children, and 27 women.
- Russian forces: 55 civilians, including 20 children, and eight women.

Also, we recorded at least seven massacres as follows:

- government forces: four massacres
- Russian forces: three massacres

B. Attack on vital centers:

We have recorded not less than 13 civil vital centers that were assaulted, distributed as follows:

- Government forces: 11 vital centers of civilians: 3 mosques, 2 medical centers, 1 ambulance, 1 school, 1 bakery, 1 water station, 1 a center of civil defense, 1 a market.
- Russian Forces: 2 centers, a hospital and an ambulance.

III. Details:

1. Government forces:

A. Massacres and other acts of extrajudicial killings:

SNHR documented the killing of 92 civilians, including seven children, and 27 women at the hands of government forces in the period between 20 April 2016 and 29 April 2016, and we have acknowledged at least 4 massacres:

- Friday, 22 April 2016, government warplanes bombed several missiles that targeted «Bab Al Nairab Neighborhood» controlled by the armed opposition factions, which resulted in the death of five individuals, including a child, and wounded 12 others.

SNHR communicated with the local media activist «Karam», where he visited the bombing site and told us:





«I was in the mosque, when warplanes bombed a missile on the «Industrial Round-Point» which is located between the district of Bab Al Nairab Neighborhood and «Al Marjah» district. I headed to the bombed site and saw a microbus and a van which were completely destroyed. The four civilians who were in the two cars were killed; a child who was a picking mulberry near the «The Industrial Round-Point» was also killed. In addition to the full damage to the water network that feeds the whole neighborhood. After about an hour and a half, I learned that warplanes resumed bombing the area itself by two missiles. The first missile fell on the wall of «Zaid Bin Thabet» mosque; what caused medium damages in the outside wall of the mosque and some material damages in the mosque furniture as a result of the explosion. While the second missile fell on the fence of the «Industrial School» near the round-point. The second bombardment destroyed an ambulance carrying the injured in the first bombing; which led to the death of the driver called Ramadan Abu Ahmed. It was a bloody day in the district where a child, an old man and a paramedic were killed.»

- Saturday, 23 April 2016, government warplanes bombed [several missiles that targeted «Tareeq Al Bab Neighborhood»](#) that is controlled by the armed opposition factions, which resulted in the death of 10 individuals, including a child, and wounding 12 others.





SNHR communicated with the local media activist «Karam», where he visited the bombing site and told us:

«The bombing happened around 11:00 am; they were two warplanes, one of them targeted the main road of «Tareeq Al Bab Neirborhood» and the other targeted the residential Bourj Al Bakhera. Less than ten minutes between the two missiles.

I arrived at the site when the rescue and civil defense teams were picking the corpses and the rubble. They were able to pull out 15 individuals from the rubble of the ruins of the upper floors, while about 12 persons were killed under the rubble.

The destruction was very huge as it extended to reach 5 houses, a food warehouse, a pharmacy, a store for used tools, and store to sell diesel fuel; in addition to the destruction of a pickup car (Suzuki) and a motorcycle.

The targeted place is a civilian neighborhood, where there are no centers for army or any Islamic organizations and the victims were all civilians.»

Sunday, 24 April 2016, government warplanes [bombed several missiles](#) that targeted «Al Sakhour» district, controlled by the armed opposition factions, [causing the deaths of 11 individuals](#), including a child and a woman.

Tuesday, 26 April 2016, government warplanes bombed several missiles that targeted the civil defense center in «Al Atarib» city, under the control of the armed opposition factions, which resulted in the death of six individuals, including five members of the Center at once, and injuring two others.

B. Attack on the vital centers:

SNHR documented no less than 11 vital civil centers that were attacked by government forces.

Friday, 22 April 2016, government warplanes [bombed several missiles near «Zaid Bin Harithah» mosque](#) in the district of Bab Al Naireb, controlled by the armed opposition factions, which resulted in a medium [material damage to the mosque construction](#).





Friday, 22 April 2016, government warplanes bombed a missile on an ambulance related to the ambulance system and emergencies in the district of Bab Al Neirab, controlled by the armed opposition factions, which led to the burning of the car and caused damages.

Saturday, 23 April 2016, government warplanes bombed several missiles near the field hospital in «Al Atarib» city, under the control of the armed opposition factions, which led to a medium material damage to the hospital building.

Sunday, 24 April 2016, government warplanes bombed a missile at a [public market in the district of «Al Sakhour»](#), controlled by the armed opposition factions, what caused a massacre, in addition to [the mass destruction](#) and [damages to a number of shops](#).



Tuesday, 26 April 2016, government warplanes bombed a [missile](#) at [the Civil Defense Center](#) in the city of [Al Atarib](#), under the control of the armed opposition factions, which caused [the death of five](#) of [the civil defense members](#) at once, in addition to a [big destruction](#) in [the construction of the Center](#) and [damaging](#) three of its [mechanisms](#) (an [ambulance](#), a fire truck, and a house).



Thursday, 28 April 2016, government warplanes bombed a missile at a bread bakery in the «Al Ameriya» district, controlled by the armed opposition factions, causing huge destruction in the building of the bakery. As a result, the bakery was rendered out of commission.





Thursday, 28 April 2016, government warplanes bombed a missile at the Arab Renaissance School in the district Bab Al Hadid, controlled by the armed opposition factions, which led to a big destruction in [the building of the school](#). As a result, the school was rendered out of commission.

Friday, 29 April 2016, government warplanes bombed a missile at «Awise Al Qarni Mosque» in the district of Al Sokari, controlled by the armed opposition factions, which led to medium damages to the building of the mosque and partial damages to its fence.



Friday, 29 April 2016, government warplanes bombed a missile at [the health center](#) in the «Marjah» district, controlled by the armed opposition factions, which led to the destruction of some of the building blocks of the [Center](#) nearly completely. As a result, the center was rendered out of commission.





Friday, 29 April 2016, government warplanes bombed a missile at [the water station](#) in the district of Bab Al Naireb in Aleppo city, controlled by the armed opposition factions, which led to the eruption of fire in the station and several damages within water lines.

Friday, 29 April 2016, government warplanes bombed a missile at [Al Hussien Mosque in Al Qaterji district](#), controlled by the armed opposition factions, which led to a partial destruction in the building of the mosque. As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission.

2. Russian forces:

A. Massacres and other acts of extrajudicial killings:

SNHR documented the killing of 55 civilians, including 20 children, and eight women in attacks believed to be Russian in the period between 20/ April 2016 and 29 April 2016, and we have documented at least three massacres.

Wednesday 27 April 2016, government warplanes, allegedly Russian, carried out a missile [attack against «Al Sokkari» district](#), controlled by the armed opposition factions, which led to the death of [36 individuals](#), including 14 children and eight women, and injuring about [40 others](#).



Mr. «Mujahed Abu Al Joud», local media activist states to SNHR:

«I headed to the site of the bombing of Al Quds hospital after approximately 10 minutes of bombardment. The front façade of the hospital is totally destroyed as well as the entrance of the ambulances. Because of this bombardment, I lost my friend doctor Abu Abdul Rahman.

There was a targeting of the street located behind the building of the hospital after five minutes of being bombed. I saw two completely destroyed buildings, and six partially destroyed ones. The Civil Defense teams prevented us from straying in place due to the fear of the repetition of the bombardment because warplanes had not left the place.

The corpses were found under the rubble and the rescue teams tried to save what can be saved, I heard a girl yelling and crying as the corpses of her family are under the rubble».





The names of the victims:



Thursday, 28 April 2016, government warplanes, allegedly Russian, [made a missile attack](#) against [«Al Kallasa» district](#), controlled by the armed opposition factions, which led to the [death of 10 individuals](#), including two children, and injuring 10 others.

The names of the victims



Thursday, 28 April 2016, government warplanes, allegedly Russian, made a missile attack against [Bostan Al Qaser Neighborhood](#), controlled by the armed opposition factions, [killing nine individuals](#), including four children, and wounding 10 others.

The names of the victims





B. Attack on the vital centers:

Wednesday 27 April 2016, government warplanes, allegedly Russian, made a missile attack against «[Basil Aslan Field Hospital](#)» (Jerusalem) in the district of «Al Sokari», controlled by the armed opposition factions, what caused a massacre. Among the victims, there were two doctors, a nurse, and two of the medical cadres, in addition to a big destruction in the hospital building. As a result, the hospital was rendered [out of commission](#).

Thursday, 28 April 2016, government warplanes, allegedly Russian, shelled several missiles near an ambulance in [Al Kallasa district](#), controlled by the armed opposition factions, which led to a medium damage to the vehicle.

IV. Legal Conclusions and Recommendations:

Legal conclusions:

1. The Russian and Syrian regimes have, beyond any doubt, violated Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2254 which both state that indiscriminate attacks must be halted. Also, they violated Article 8 of Rome Statute through the act of willful killing which constitutes war crimes.
2. We can confirm that the bombardment mentioned in this report has targeted armless civilians. Therefore, the Russian and Syrian 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.
3. The attacks mentioned in this report, which have been perpetrated by the Russian and Syrian regimes, are considered a violation of the customary international law as the shells were fired at a populated area rather than a specific military object.
4. The 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.
5. The bulk of the bombardment which is systematic and repetitive, the level of excessive used force, and the coordination of the attacks could not be but with a mere high guidance and policy of the ruling regime.
6. The Syrian regime in all its forms and its leaders is involved in committing crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people, in addition to all who provide material and political assistance, such as Russian and Iranian forces and the Lebanese group Hezbollah and the suppliers of military weapons» companies are considered a partner in those crimes, and shall be liable to criminal prosecution





Recommendations:

To the two parties of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and to the Support of Syria Group (SSG):

We ask the Joint American Russian Committee to investigate these incidents as soon as possible, and to inform the Syrian society on the results of the investigations, and to ensure the prevention of recurrence.

We ask the the International Community to link the ceasefire with launching a political process toward a stage of transition leading to a democratic system; this is what will end the suffering of the Syrian society.

If the violations continue as it is without a real deterrent to the Syrian regime, the ceasefire will be, unfortunately, prone to breakdown at any moment. the United States, as the primary sponsor, has to make a greater effort to convince the other party of the Russian Federation to stop as well, and apply the pressure on their ally, the Syrian regime, to stop it.

To the Security Council:

- The Security Council must take additional measures for the implementation of its resolutions no. 2139 and 2254, as no pledges were made to stop the indiscriminate bombardment operations which causes daily killing and destruction.
- Apply pressure on the states supporting the Syrian regime to cease the supply of weapons and expertise as it has been proven that the regime is involved in perpetrating crimes against humanity and war crimes.
- The Security Council must stop using the veto in case of war crimes and crimes against humanity as what is happening in Syria.
- The Syrian file must be referred to the International Criminal Court and punish all those involved.
- The restoration of peace and security and the application of the principle of the responsibility to protect civilians, to save the lives of the Syrians, the heritage, and the arts of destruction, looting, and sabotage.
- Expand the sanctions to include all Syrian Regime and Iranian system that are involved directly in the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Syrian people.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:

Provide a report to the Human Rights Council and other bodies of the United Nations on the major and serious incidents included in this report.





To the International Community:

- Under the Security Council full rift, actions at the national and regional level for alliances to support the Syrian people must take place. And this is reflected in protecting them from the daily murder operations, terminating the siege, and increasing doses of support provided at the aid. There must be seeking to exercise universal jurisdiction over such crimes by the national courts, in fair trials of all the persons involved.
- SNHR repeatedly called, in dozens of studies and reports, as member of the international coalition, the application of the principle of the responsibility of protection (ICRtoP); and the political steps through the Convention on the Arab League has been exhausted; and then the plan of Mr. Kofi Annan; therefore, resorting to Chapter VII and the application of the principle of the responsibility of protection (R2P) that was endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations is a must. Also, the Security Council hinders the protection of civilians in Syria.
- The renewal of the pressure on the Security Council to refer the file of Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- The quest for justice and accountability in Syria through the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Council of Human Rights and the use of the principle of universal jurisdiction.

Acknowledgment

Our sincere thanks and condolences to all the people of the local activists whose contributions enriched this report effectively.

