



## Russian Forces Breach Idlib City Truce Civilians Killed as the City Market was Bombed 64

### Report contents

- I. Introduction
- II. Details
- III. Appendixes and Attachments
- IV. Conclusions and Recommendations
- Acknowledgment

### I. Introduction

Idlib city has been under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh Al Sham Front since 28 March 2015. It is populated by no less than 170,000 people.

On 24 September 2015, A truce went into effect in the city. The truce was made mainly by Ahrar Al Sham faction, one of the factions that compose Jaish Al Fateh, and the Syrian regime which provided for a full cease of military operations and aerial bombardment in Idlib city and some of the affiliated villages in return of some demands including the passage of aids to Al Fou'a and Kafrya villages which are of a majority that supports the Syrian regime. This truce was breached multiple times where we highlighted the one of the most notable massacres in the report: "[Russian Forces Breach UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and Kills Idlib Residents](#)".

On 11 June 2016, the two parties agreed to extend the truce. Government forces, however, breached the truce again and targeted the vegetables market in the city on the next day, 12 June. which resulted in a massacre that we documented in the report: "[The Syrian Regime even Betrays the Local Truces it Makes](#)".

In this report, we document the targeting of the very same market by fixed-wing warplanes we believe is Russian where SNHR teams contacted a number of the city residents, eyewitnesses, and survivors in addition





to local media activists. This report includes three accounts. We have explained the purpose of the interviews to the witnesses who gave us their permission to use the information they provided in this report.

Also, we have reviewed the pictures and videos we received and verified their authenticity. These pictures and videos show the huge destruction that resulted from the bombardment and the many shops and vehicles that were burned in the bombardment. We have copies of all the videos and pictures mentioned in this report.

The investigations included in this report have proven that the targeted areas are civil areas where there were no military centers or weapon warehouses for armed opposition factions or extremist Islamic groups before or during the attack.

This report only represents the bare minimum of the actual magnitude and severity of the violation that occurred. Additionally, the report doesn't cover the social, economic, and psychological ramifications.

## II. Details

On Saturday 10 September 2016, at approximately 12:25, a fixed-wing warplane we believe was Russian targeted a number of residential building in the middle of the vegetables market in Idlib city with four missiles. The bombing resulted in the killing of 64 civilians including 16 children and 15 women. Additionally, no less than 60 others were injured and two residential buildings and no less than 15 shops were destroyed.

The following picture show the approximate location of the targeted location inside the market





**SNHR spoke to Mr. Suhaib Al Mkahhal, a local media activist, via Facebook:**

“I heard warplanes soaring from the east side which is the side of Al Fou’a town. The sound was followed by the sound of four explosions which were very strong. I headed to the market area where the missiles were dropped in the internal market area which is the most crowded area with people, vendors, and shops.”

“Everything around me was burning, it looked like explosive containers were dropped. A number of buildings were leveled and a lot of cars and shops were burned. I saw a girl under the rubbles of a shoe shop where the only thing left of her was her head. I also saw civil defense teams pulling out the dead bodies of three women.”

“One of the missiles was dropped on a bakery that sells Eid desserts and everyone inside was killed. Civil defense teams were able to rescue 100 wounded who were rushed to the makeshift hospitals. The number of martyrs exceeded 40 martyrs who were pulled over the course of the next five days.”

“There isn’t any military centers in the market that would justify the bombing. Also, there allegedly should be a truce going in the city and according to it we shouldn’t be bombed.”

**SNHR spoke to Mr. Mohammad, via Facebook, who works at the documentation department in the specialized surgical hospital which took in a number of the wounded:**

“I was near the market location when we were attacked by the Russian warplanes, we immediately laid on the ground after the strong explosion. I looked around me and saw destruction everywhere. Whole buildings were leveled and body parts were everywhere.”

“I aided three children and we went to the hospital, which alone took in more than 60 wounded. The surgery room was overwhelmed as most of the wounded and injured were laying on the ground. The medical teams were incapable of treating everyone.”

“At the end of the day, I went back to the place that was bombed and I found that civil defense teams were still pulling out victims and wounded.”





## The activist Ahmad Rahhal, told us of what he saw via Facebook:

“The observatories announced that a Russian warplane was soaring and the warning sirens went on in the city, and then the missiles were dropped in the middle of the market. I went to the place and saw the huge destruction and the fires that broke out in several locations where many were burned to death.”

“I saw Civil defense teams rescuing two women after they were trapped inside a burning shop. They were also able to rescue more than 100 wounded who were pulled out from the rubbles. Everyone in the market was preparing for Eid, but the Russian missiles killed them before Eid even came.”

### III. Appendixes and Attachments

#### Victims' names



SN4HR also documented the killing of 64 civilians including 16 children and 11 women in a bombing by warplanes we believe are Russian that targeted the vegetable market on Saturday 30 September 2016.

- 1- Hour Al-Din Ghifri
- 2- Ghassan Ghafar, victim, from the Adiboun family
- 3- Mrs. Sakhr Abdul-Affou and her unborn child
- 4- Saira Al-Faraj, female child
- 5- Muhammad Al-Faraj, child
- 6- Abdulkarem Al-Faraj, child
- 7- Raed Ghafar
- 8- Amr Ghafar
- 9- Sadeh Hamidou, from Binnash
- 10- Sameer Sadeh Hamidou, child, from Binnash
- 11- Lina and Rifaqat, women, wife of Sadeh Hamidou, from Binnash
- 12- Bassel Saadiah Dabir, child
- 13- Kamal Al-Din Shamayra
- 14- Mrs. Hajar Nagga
- 15- Hashem Al-Halhouk

[Video showing](#) the destruction and the fires after a bombing by a fixed-wing warplane we believe was Russian against the market of Idlib city

Pictures show the destruction in [Idlib city market](#) after a bombing by a fixed-wing warplane we believe was Russian against the market







## IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Legal conclusions

1- The Russian regime has, 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 carried out by the Russian regime, 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- 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.

### Recommendations

#### The Security Council

- The Security Council has to take additional steps as it has been a year since Resolution 2254 was adopted and no pledges to cease the indiscriminate bombardment operations have been made. All the conflict parties must respect the Resolutions and adhere to the rules of the international humanitarian law.
- The Syrian case must be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible must be held accountable including the Russian regime whose involvement in war crimes has been proven.
- To instill security and peace in Syria and implement the norm of the Responsibility to Protect in order to protect the lives, culture, and history of the Syrian people from being destroyed, looted, and ruined.
- To expand the sanctions to include the Russian and Iranian regimes who are directly involved in committing crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people.





## **The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

The Office must submit a report to the Human Rights Council and other organs of the United Nations on this massacre specifically considering that it was perpetrated by forces which we believe that they are Russian.

## **The International Community**

- In light of the split of the Security Council and its utter inability, Steps must be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people that would protect them from the daily killings and siege and enhance the support for the relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction must be activated in local courts regarding these crimes in order to conduct fair trials for all those who were involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect in tens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) after all political channels through the Arab League's plan and then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan were drought out. Therefore, steps under Article 7 of the Rome Statute must be taken and the norm of the Responsibility to Protect, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, must be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.
- To renew the pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- To work on fulfilling justice and achieving accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights council and work on activating the principle of the universal jurisdiction.

## **Acknowledgment**

Our thanks and condolences for the families and local activists who enriched this report majorly.

