

Syrian-Russian Alliance Forces Commit Violations That Constitute War Crimes in and Around Idlib While the International Community Watches

The UN Secretary-General Doesn't Specify in His Statement Who's responsible for the Aerial Bombardment of Medical Centers and Schools

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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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 and Methodology

Since the de-escalation agreement went into force in May 2017, the fourth de-escalation zone (Idlib governorate and parts of the governorates of Hama, Aleppo and Latakia) has been the scene of ferocious military campaigns launched by the Syrian-Russian-Iranian forces. We have documented a large amount of the details on those campaigns and the resulting violations [in number](#) of [reports](#). The Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance forces returned at the beginning of 2018 to repeat the breach of the agreement, and were able to control vast areas of the eastern suburbs of Hama, the southern and eastern suburbs of Idlib, and the southern suburbs of Aleppo, and after the collapse of the agreement in the areas of the Eastern Ghouta, the southern region of Syria and the northern suburbs of Homs as a result of the intensive intervention of Russian forces and aircrafts, and after the denunciation of all bilateral agreements, most of the people of these areas were displaced to and around the area of Idlib, where residents of areas that broke free of the control of the Syrian regime in northern Syria feared that the Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance forces would launch attacks against them and implement a scenario similar to that seen in those areas.

On September 17, 2018, the Sochi Agreement entered into force, serving as a way out to maintain the fourth and final de-escalation zone, and succeeding in ensuring a phased reduction of the intensity of bombing which contributed to the cessation of air strikes by the Syrian regime. However, ground attacks did not stop, with the Syrian regime using missile launchers to launch missile attacks on the villages and towns of the northern suburbs of Hama and southern suburbs of Idlib that are adjacent to the contact lines, after which the Syrian Regime expanded its deployment of air force and cluster munitions in a systematic and widespread manner.



From September 2018 up to the time of preparation of this report, the Idlib area saw a constant military escalation, which was detailed by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) in a number of reports. These military campaigns launched by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces have killed at least 544 civilians to date, including 163 children and 105 women (adult female) and displaced nearly 900,000 civilians, hundreds of thousands of whom have been displaced more than once. In addition, the living situation of nearly 4.7 million people has deteriorated in an area of about 6800 square kilometers, which is the area of the last de-escalation zone, meaning a population density estimated at 691 people per square kilometer, which is a very high percentage, a large number of whom are wholly reliant on aid, in light of the widespread poverty and unemployment, with a large number of international organizations ceasing to function after the radical Hay'at Tahrir al Sham controlled large areas of Idlib governorate, making the situation for the displaced and the local residents even more difficult and complicated. Meanwhile, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham does not care about these repercussions, and cannot fulfill the people's needs, using most of its resources in the military and security sector. With the escalation of military attacks by Russian and Syrian forces, the situation for civilians has become indescribably dreadful, particularly given the absence of camps, and the inability of the people in the area to take refuge outside Syria away from the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.

On April 26, 2019, in conjunction with the 12th round of the Astana Conference in the Kazakh capital of Nursultan (Astana) on April 25-27, the Syrian-Russian alliance forces began a military escalation of unprecedented ferocity, which included extensive air and ground attacks. It seems to us through monitoring and comparing processes with our reports and the previous data of SNHR that this military campaign is the most violent since the entry into force of the Sochi Agreement on September 17, 2018. It is, therefore, the worst to date on every human level in terms of the toll of victims and the waves of displacement that resulted from it and of the weapons used by the Syrian regime. Even Turkish observation points that have been installed according to the Sochi agreement have not been spared from targeting operations. Several local activists told us that the tenth observation point in 'Sheir Maghar' in the northern suburbs of Hama had been targeted with artillery bombardment.



Fadel Abdul Ghany, Chairman of SNHR, says:

“It is true that the countries that have concluded the bilateral or tripartite agreements have the responsibility to maintain the ceasefire and not to commit violations of the agreements, but these agreements should not make us forget that there is a law of war, which is the most important, the foundation, and that many of the violations that are currently committed constitute war crimes, and that the responsibility to fight war crimes according to the four Geneva Conventions rests with all countries that have ratified them, who must act to stop war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria. The inaction of the Security Council, which failed in Syria, does not exempt the countries of the world from protecting international law and preventing the recurrence of war crimes and crimes against humanity “

Methodology:

This report highlights events in the fourth and final de-escalation zone (consisting of Idlib governorate and parts of the governorates of Hama, Aleppo and Latakia) and outlines the record of the most notable human rights violations following the escalation of the Syrian-Russian alliance forces in the region from April 26, 2019, to May 7, 2019.

We relied on our field researchers, who gathered direct accounts from survivors, relatives of victims, relief workers and media activists, relying on the extensive network of relations we have built up through our eight years of work.

SNHR works to document violations on a daily basis, with murder being considered the gravest and most prevalent crime and therefore a key indicator for assessing the impact of agreements, as well as the targeting of vital civilian facilities. This report documents the civilian victims only, and catalogues them according to where they were killed rather than the governorate from which they came. The methodology adopted by the Syrian Network for Human Rights in documenting the victims can be seen at this link¹.

SNHR has analyzed videos and photographs, which were posted online, or submitted by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media platforms. These videos and photos show, amongst other things, the sites of attacks, bodies of the victims and the injured, and the scale of destruction caused in the attacks.

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>



We also retain copies of all the videos and photographs included in this report, in a confidential electronic database and in hard disk backup copies, and we ensure always that all these data are stored with their original source. We do not claim, however, that we have documented all cases, given the severe prohibitions, restrictions and persecution by the Syrian Regime forces and some other armed groups.

This report only represents the bare minimum of the actual severity and magnitude of the violations that occurred. Also, it doesn't include any analysis of the profound social, economic, and psychological ramifications.

II. The Fourth De-escalation Zone is Living Through a Humanitarian Disaster

The Syrian-Russian alliance forces began their military escalation in the area on April 26, 2019, specifically targeting towns in the northern suburbs of Hama at first, then extending these attacks to villages in the western suburbs of Hama - the area extending from the outskirts of Jabal al Zaweya to Qal'at al Madiq, including the villages of Sahl al Ghab and Jabal Shahshabo.

The most serious escalation occurred on April 30, when Syrian Regime forces used barrel bombs weapon for the first time since the Sochi Agreement entered into force. Our records indicate that the last previous use of barrel bombs was on September 10, 2018, in al Latamena town, Kafr Zita city, the villages of al Bwaida and al Lahaya in the northern suburbs of Hama, and al Habit village in the southern suburbs of Idlib. Often, according to our monitoring in other areas, the Syrian regime uses barrel bombs and other indiscriminate improvised explosive devices, to target residential communities, causing extensive destruction to infrastructure, with attacks involving barrel bombs often preceding upcoming military advances.

In conjunction with the Syrian regime's use of barrel bombs, the Syrian-Russian alliance forces have increasingly stepped up their air attacks on Kafr Zita city and Kafr Nbouda town in the northern suburbs of Hama, and towns and villages of al Habeit, Tramala, Ureinba, Ma'aret Harma, Heesh, Kafr Sajna, Abdin and al Nqayer in the southern suburbs of Idlib. This has resulted in a massive population displacement towards northern Idlib.

On May 2, these aerial attacks were expanded to include air raids on all the villages and towns in the Jabal al Zaweya area, including al Mozara, Ein Larouz, Arnaba, Kansfara, Ebleen, Ebdita, Ihsem, Mar'yan, Shnan, Farkya, Beneen, Deir Senbul, Hass and Kafranbel in the southern suburbs of Idlib.



On May 5, the Russian-Syrian escalation included attacks on villages in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate for the first time since the Sochi Agreement entered into force, resulting in the deaths of civilians and severe damage to vital civilian facilities.

On May 6, activists informed us that Syrian Regime forces had made military advances on al Janabra and Tal Othman fronts in the northern suburbs of Hama.

From April 26, to May 7, we documented 1,068 air raids by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the de-escalation zone, 496 of which were carried out by the Syrian regime air force and 572 by the Russian Air Force. We further recorded at least 132 ground attacks by Syrian Regime forces on the fourth de-escalation zone during the same period, despite the relatively low number of ground attacks by these forces.

In the context of its military attacks, the Syrian regime regularly resorts to targeting medical facilities in a deliberate manner, which contributes to the obstruction of the provision of medical services and increases the shortages of medical aid for the injured. In this campaign, Syrian-Russian alliance forces have repeatedly targeted medical facilities and schools, such as al Latamena Surgical Hospital in the northern suburbs of Hama, which was twice attacked by Russian forces, and the Surgical Unit in Kafr Zita city in the northern suburbs of Hama, which was also attacked twice, one at the hands of Syrian Regime forces, and second time at the hands of Russian forces.

Even displaced IDPs have not been spared from bombings and other targeted attacks. We have recorded numerous attacks on civilians fleeing from military operations, with Syrian Regime forces deliberately targeting vehicles carrying displaced civilian and launching numerous attacks targeting their primitive camps. These attacks resulted in civilian casualties.

Air raids and artillery bombardment carried out by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces have resulted in a massive wave of displacement from the northern and western suburbs of Hama, which included approximately 90 percent of the residents of the area, towards the camp area in Deir Hassan and Atma in the northern suburbs of Idlib, and Armanaz and Kafr Takhareem area in the western suburbs of Idlib, in addition to the suburbs of Idlib city. As the violence escalated and spread to the southern suburbs of Idlib, the inhabitants of this region were displaced to the northern suburbs of Idlib. Our estimates indicate that some 130,000 people have been displaced since April 26, most of whom were displaced to relatives or to areas they previously fled to in Atma camps in the northern suburbs of Idlib, or to areas of Deir Hassan, Sarmada, Kafr Takhareem, Harem and Armanaz. Thousands of displaced people are still suffering from a lack of shelter, being forced to sleep in the open air on agricultural farmland in light of a weak response by aid organizations to their demands.





Displaced people in agricultural land near Atma camos in the northern suburbs of Idlib following the military campaign by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the northern and western suburbs of Hama and the southern suburbs of Idlib - May 5, 2019

The strategy of deliberate and intelligence-based targeting of hospitals and shelter centers is a tactic adopted by the Syrian regime over many years and in dozens of areas, which has been encouraged by the silence of the international community. In the scale and intensity of these attacks, the Syrian conflict is far ahead of other conflicts in which hospitals and medical centers have been targeted in this manner, with these facilities being specifically targeted in order to spread terror and fear in the community, and push people to massive displacement, exposing the displaced to the risk of pollution and infection, causing deaths and the large-scale spread of diseases, with the Syrian regime's objective being to inflict as much damage and loss as possible.

III. Record of the Most Notable Violations Against the De-escalation Zone According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights' Database

SNHR documented the deaths of at least 108 civilians, including 26 children and 24 women (adult female), as well as three massacres in the fourth de-escalation zone from April 26, 2019, to May 7, 2019, distributed as follows:

- Syrian Regime forces: 71 civilians, including 12 children and 18 women, distributed as follows:

Idlib governorate: 52, including nine children and 14 women

Aleppo governorate: Four

Hama governorate: 15, including three children and four women



- Russian forces: 37, including 14 children and six women, as well as three massacres in Hama governorate, distributed as follows:

Idlib governorate: 18 civilians, including 13 children and three women

Hama governorate: 19 civilians, including one child and three women

The attacks by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces also resulted in at least 82 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including 11 on places of worship, 28 on schools, 18 on medical facilities and nine on Civil Defense centers. These incidents were distributed as follows:

- Syrian Regime forces: 42 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including seven on places of worship, 15 on schools, eight on medical facilities, and six on Civil Defense centers, distributed as follows:

Idlib governorate: 32

Aleppo governorate: Three

Governorate of Hama: Seven

- Russian forces: 40 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including four on places of worship, 13 on schools, 10 on medical facilities, and three on Civil Defense centers, distributed as follows:

Idlib governorate: 17

Hama governorate: 23

We documented Russian forces carrying out one cluster munition attack on al Jamasa in the western suburbs of Hama governorate on May 3.

We also recorded the Syrian regime air forces dropping at least 188 barrel bombs during the same period, distributed by governorate as follows:

Idlib: 112

Hama: 76

It must be emphasized that most of the attacks were carried out by the air force, both by helicopter gunships and fixed-wing warplanes. The aircraft of these specific types used are owned in Syria only by the Syrian and Russian regimes. Despite this, however, there was a complete absence of any reference to the identity of those responsible for the air attacks on hospitals and schools in the [statement](#) issued by the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on May 6. This has caused outrage among human rights defenders and sends a harmful and hurtful message to the survivors and victims' families about a situation of inability to clearly identify the perpetrator of these violations. This failure may encourage the perpetrators of these violations, namely the Syrian and Russian regimes, to continue and commit further killings and indiscriminate bombardment, and to target hospitals and schools, which is what has actually happened.



IV. The Most Notable Violations in the Fourth De-escalation Zone

A. The most notable extrajudicial killings:

On Friday, April 26, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a [number of missiles](#) at the east of al Amqeya village in Sahl al Ghab area in the western suburbs of Hama governorate, resulting in the simultaneous deaths of five civilians. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Monday, April 29, 2019, Syrian Regime artillery forces fired shells at a group of IDPs' tents near the Turkish observation point in Sheir al Maghar village in Jabal Shahshabo area in Hama governorate's western suburbs, killing two civilians, including a child. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, May 1, 2019, fixed-wing Syrian Regime warplanes strafed civilians with [machinegun-fire](#) as they were crossing a road in [front of cars](#) carrying IDPs to the east of Abdin village in Idlib governorate southern suburbs. The people in the vehicles were fleeing bombardment in the suburbs of Hama governorate, heading for safer areas at the Syrian-Turkish border in the north of Idlib governorate. The machinegun-fire killed four civilian IDPs, most of whom were from the same family, including a child and a woman. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

At around dawn on Thursday, May 2, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, [fired missiles](#) at a poultry farm sheltering IDPs in the east of Kansfara village in Jabal al Zaweya area in Idlib governorate's southern suburbs, resulting in the deaths of two children and their parents, and injuring their sister. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





A child victim killed in an air attack by Russian forces on Kansfara village, Idlib – May 2, 2019

On Sunday, May 5 2019, Syrian Regime forces' helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on Ureinba village in Idlib governorate's southern suburbs, resulting in the deaths of four civilians most of whom were from the same family, including a child and a woman. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Monday, May 6, 2019, fixed-wing Syrian Regime forces' warplanes fired [two missiles](#) at al Zerba Dispensary in al Zerba area in Aleppo governorate's Southern suburbs, resulting in [the deaths](#) of two civilians who were in front of the dispensary, in addition to [partially destroying the dispensary building](#). The area was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

B. The most notable attacks on vital civilian facilities:

On Sunday, April 28, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles directly targeting al Latamena [Surgical Hospital](#) - established inside a fortified underground cave - in al Latamena town in Hama governorate's northwestern suburbs, causing moderate [material damage](#) to the equipment of some of the hospital sections, the garage and an ambulance belonging to the hospital, and putting the hospital out of service. We note that the hospital was attacked by the same forces the previous day. The town was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.



On Sunday dawn, April 28, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles at the northern neighborhood of Qal'at al Madiq town in Hama governorate's western suburbs. [The missiles](#) landed in the vicinity of a group of vital facilities, namely the Fawaz Haj [Hussein Primary School](#), Akram Ali al Ahmad Preparatory School, Akram Ali al Ahmad Secondary School, and the '111' Hospital for Women and Children, established on the ground floor of the secondary school, as well as the 'Free' Directorate of Education of the National Coalition in Hama. The bombing caused partial damage to the Directorate of Education building, and caused variable material damage to the school buildings and the hospital equipment. We note that the same forces repeated their bombing on the perimeter of the same centers on Tuesday May 7, 2019 at around noon, causing further damage to the buildings and equipment. Qal'at al Madiq town was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of both incidents.

On Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at around 01:30, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to shell the '33103' [Civil Defense Center](#) located near the [Surgical Unit](#) in Kafr Nbouda town in Hama governorate northern suburbs. The shelling partially destroyed the building of the Civil Defense Center, and caused moderate material damage to the Surgical Unit building and equipment. We note that the same forces repeated the shelling on the site during an attempt by the Civil Defense teams to reach it, causing moderate material damage to two vehicles belonging to the Civil Defense (a service car and an ambulance). Kafr Nbouda town was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Thursday, May 2, 2019, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on the Ebleen Automatic Bakery in Ebleen village in Idlib governorate's southern suburbs, [partially destroying](#) the building, and causing moderate material damage to the bakery equipment. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Destruction inflicted in Ebleen Automatic Bakery in an air attack by Syrian Regime forces using barrel bombs on Ebleen village, Idlib – May 2, 2019

On Friday, May 3, 2019, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to shell a complex of four schools ([al Reefiya School](#), [Ma'aret Harma School for girls](#), Ahmad Yasin Primary School, and Ma'aret Harma High School) in the middle of Ma'aret Harma village in Idlib governorate's southern suburbs, causing variable material damage to the schools' buildings. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Friday, May 3, 2019, Syrian Regime forces' helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on [al Hal Market](#) in the west of Kafranbel city in Idlib governorate's southern suburbs. The barrel bombs fell at the market entrance, leading to the outbreak of fire in several shops there, and partially damaging the market facilities. The city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Sunday, May 5, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles at Tarmala village in Idlib governorate's southern suburbs. The missiles landed consecutively, 200 square meters away from each other, in a residential area housing Tarmala Hospital for Women and Children, Tarmala Primary School, and al Kabir Mosque of Tarmala. The bombing killed three civilians, including a child and a woman, in addition to causing moderate material damage to the three facilities' buildings and equipment. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



On Sunday, May 5, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles directly targeting Nabd [al Hayat Hospital](#) - established in a cave- in Hass village in Idlib governorate's southern suburbs, causing severe [material damage](#) to the [hospital and its equipment](#). We note that the hospital patients and medical staff were evacuated two days previously following the military escalation against the area by the Syrian-Russian Alliance forces. Hass village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



On Sunday, May 5, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, carried out four attacks directly targeted [Kafranbel Surgical Hospital](#)- part of which is fortified inside caves that were dug underground under the building of the [main hospital](#) – to the north of Kafranbel city in Idlib governorate's southern suburbs, resulting in the death of a civilian who was reviewing the hospital, in addition to causing significant destruction to the hospital building, and causing moderate [material damage](#) to the equipment. The city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Destruction inflicted in Kafranbel Surgical Hospital by a Russian air attack on Kafranbel city, Idlib – May 5, 2019

V. Legal Profile and Recommendations

- Syrian and Russian forces violated several rules of international humanitarian law, primarily by failing to discriminate between civilians and combatants, between civilian and military targets, instead bombing hospitals, schools, centers and civilian neighborhoods, with these violations amount to war crimes.
- Launching a deliberate attack on medical personnel in the context of a non-international armed conflict is a war crime punishable by international humanitarian law and international criminal law (Articles 8 (2) (b), 24, 8 (2) (e) (2) of the Statute of the International Criminal Court), and we believe that Russian and Syrian forces deliberately targeted medical personnel in a number of attacks.
- Displacement or forced displacement is a war crime in non-international armed conflicts when committed as part of a deliberate or widespread attack against the civilian population (Articles 8 (2) (b) (7) and 8 (2) (e) (8) of the Statute of the International Criminal Court), and may also be considered crimes against humanity (Articles 7 (1) (d) of the Statute of the International Criminal Court).
- The Syrian-Russian alliance forces has violated the de-escalation zone agreement in all regions, including the Idlib region, and repeatedly violated the Sochi Agreement signed in September 2018.
- Syrian Regime forces have explicitly violated the Sochi Agreement by carrying out artillery bombardment of a number of villages and towns in the area of the fourth de-escalation zone, mostly in the demilitarized zone, in the eastern suburbs of Hama and in the south-eastern suburbs of Idlib. These attacks have resulted in civilian casualties.



- The Syrian Regime forces and Shiite militias broke the Sochi agreement by attacking factions of the Armed Opposition and killing a number of their members.
- The Syrian Regime forces has practiced the crime of displacement in a systematic, widespread and organized manner against the civilian population. This constitutes a flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and amounts to a crime against humanity under Article VII of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We have not recorded any measures by these forces to provide shelter, health care or food to the displaced civilians.

Recommendations:

International Security Council:

- The Security Council must pass a resolution to stabilize the ceasefire in Idlib and include punitive measures for all violators of the ceasefire.
- Genuine support for serious implementation of the peace process in Syria and for achieving a just political transition that guarantees security and stability
- The Syrian issue must be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those involved, including the Russian regime, must be held accountable, having been implicated in committing war crimes.
- The establishment of peace and security and the implementation of the principle of Responsibility to Protect civilians and to save Syrians' lives, heritage and cultural artefacts from destruction, pillage and vandalism.
- The UN Security Council must pass a resolution concerning some seven million internally displaced persons in Syria that addresses forced displacement, to ensure that this does not become a long-term crisis, and must put pressure on the Syrian regime to end displacements, and enact laws aimed at preventing the plunder of displaced persons' properties and possessions.

The UN Secretary-General:

- Should clearly identify perpetrators of violations contributes in condemning their actions, disclosing their practices, sending a message of solidarity to the affected community, while ignoring mentioning the perpetrators of apparent violations encourages them to commit more violations and repeat them.
- Should request that the Security Council take urgent action, and hold an emergency meeting to ensure a ceasefire and to protect tens of thousands of displaced civilians.



International Community:

- In light of the split within the Security Council and its utter inability, action should be taken at the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people that can protect them from the daily killings and siege and increase support for relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction should be applied in local courts regarding these crimes in order to conduct fair trials for all those who were involved.
- The SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ principle in dozens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) after exhausting all political channels from the Arab League’s plan, then Mr. Kofi Annan’s plan proved fruitless, as did the Cessation of Hostilities statements and Astana agreements that followed. Therefore, the steps recommended under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations should be adopted and the norm of the “Responsibility to Protect”, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, should be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.
- Renew pressure on the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court
- Work to fulfil justice and achieve accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and on implementing the principle of the universal jurisdiction.
- The countries that support the parties to the conflict in Syria, especially Russia, must put pressure on their allies on the ground to ensure the neutrality of the Idlib area of combat operations, and protect the lives of at least 4.7 million people living there.

UN General Assembly

- The Syrian regime has full responsibility for the displacement of one-third of the Syrian people, including legal and material responsibility, and must ensure that victims receive full compensation for the heavy losses they have suffered, including the return of looted properties to their owners.

OHCHR

- The OHCHR should submit a report to the Human Rights Council and other organs of the United Nations concerning the violations committed by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces.



UN Envoy to Syria

- Condemn the perpetrators of the crimes and massacres and the main culprits in the collapse of agreements on de-escalation zones, and thus declare the collapse and the end of the political process in full, as well as holding the Syrian-Russian alliance to account for its actions.
- Disclose to the Syrian people Russia's pursuit of full control of Syrian territory by force, and its public desire to rehabilitate the current regime, which means the creation of a political solution which satisfies only its own interests.

Donor countries and UNOCHR

- The international community and donor countries must ensure basic living conditions, pay attention to the needs of and help provide care for thousands of displaced Syrians who are displaced in the north-western Idlib suburbs, with the most pressing basic needs, primarily water, food, housing, clothing and medical care.

Russian forces

- Stop committing all types of war crimes in Syria.
- Reconstruct what was destroyed by the Russian war machine.
- Compensate victims financially and morally and apologize publicly.
- Commit to the outcome of the Sochi Summit and not repeat the scenario of violations we have seen in the agreements of de-escalation zone.
- Stop supporting the war crimes and crimes against humanity which the Syrian regime has been committing for eight years, with the current support being considered as direct involvement in these crimes.
- Contribute to the assistance of displaced persons who were displaced by the Russian war machine from the Eastern Ghouta in the Damascus Suburbs governorate and the governorates of Homs and Daraa, and protect the residents of those areas who remained from the arrests, persecution, kidnappings and enforced disappearances being perpetrated by the Syrian Regime and the Iranian militias.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

Our thanks and most heartfelt condolences to the residents and local community activists who contributed effectively to this report.





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