The Syrian-Russian Alliance Completely Shatters Astana Agreements in Idlib

Excessive, Deliberate Bombing of Tens of Civilian Facilities and Factions at Astana in One Week

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Friday, September 29, 2017
The Syrian Network for Human Rights, founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, non-profit independent organization that is a primary source for the United Nations on all death toll-related statistics in Syria.

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I. Introduction and Historical Context
Idlib governorate is located in northwestern Syria by the Syrian-Turkish borders, with a land area of approximately 6100 square kilometers.

By late-March 2015, Syrian regime forces had lost control of the entirety of Idlib governorate, as armed opposition factions along with al Nussra Front (currently Fateh al Sham) took over the city, effectively ending Syrian regime forces’ existence there.

Idlib governorate houses currently 2.9 million people who are mostly IDPs from Homs, Hama, Damascus suburbs, and areas that saw truces resulting in displacement and forced eviction.

Idlib governorate has been under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front. That is, until July 2017 when Hay’at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance comprising of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of armed opposition factions) carried out a swift offensive against armed opposition factions -most notably Ahrar al Sham Movement- as wide areas of Idlib governorate have become under the control of Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

On May 6, 2017, the de-escalation agreement went into force following the fourth round of Astana Talks between the three sponsoring states (Turkey, Russia, Iran). Idlib governorate and the surrounding areas (parts of Aleppo, Hama, and Latakia governorates) were included as one of the four de-escalation zones agreed upon. In the fifth round of Astana Talks, it was agreed that a work group shall be formed to work on the matter of de-escalation zones, and with the end of the sixth round (September 14-15, 2017) Idlib governorate and the surrounding areas were confirmed as a de-escalation zone, provided that military forces (Russian, Turkish, and Iranian) would be deployed to monitor the agreement, with the passage of humanitarian aids.
Through daily monitoring, we have recorded a significant drop in the rates of bombardment and violations by the Syrian-Russian alliance since the agreement went into effect on May 6, 2017, which reflected on the lives of the residents, as medical and educational facilities were rehabilitated, and many children enrolled in schools after their families had refrained from sending them out to schools, fearing that they might be killed. In addition, markets became more vital and lively.

On Tuesday, September 19, 2017, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, with the support of some factions (The Turkistani Islamic Party, Jaish al Izza, and Jaish al Nukhba) initiated the battle “Ya Ebadallah Uthbotu” carrying out attacks on several Syrian regime forces bases in northeastern Hama governorate, and taking over villages such as al Sha'tha and al Tliyseiya. However, Syrian regime forces, backed by Russian forces, managed to take over these areas on the same day, and retaliated by a vicious offensive against Idlib governorate.

The Syrian-Russian alliance's offensive started on September 19 with heavy airstrikes on southern suburbs of Idlib, and centrally on Khan Sheikhoun city, the back line to eastern suburbs of Hama governorate.

On Wednesday, September 20, the Syrian-Russian alliance resumed its airstrikes in the towns and areas the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, and on day six of the campaign -Sunday, September 24- we documented Russian-Syrian airstrikes in the western suburbs of Idlib. In no more than eight days, we recorded no less than 714 airstrikes on Idlib governorate and 13 barrel bombs that were dropped by Syrian regime helicopters.

The Syrian-Russian alliance targeted, in its airstrikes, vital civilian facilities – most notably hospitals, civil defense facilities, schools, and substations. We have documented that some of the facilities have been targeted more than once, which implies that damaging infrastructure and service facilities was deliberate.

The Russian government has to be fully aware of the bases and areas of control of armed opposition factions. However, some of these bases were targeted in heavy bombardments that resulted in the killing of a large number of fighters, in addition to the great destruction caused.
On Tuesday, September 26, 2017, Major General Igor Konashenkov, the chief spokesman for the Russian Ministry of Defense, denied reports that Russian forces had targeted residential areas in Idlib, assuring that the bombing targeted underground bases for the armed groups, warehouses containing ammunition, armored vehicles, and rocket launcher systems, in addition to workshops to build bomb cars, and that all of these targets were located far away from populated areas.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, says:
“Astana Agreements are now devoid of any meaning. When the forces of the sponsoring Russian side, along with its Syrian ally, bomb bases for armed factions who were part of Astana, and kill their fighters, this is undoubtedly enhancing al Nussra Front position at the expense of these factions. We demand that the perpetrators of these crimes are held accountable, those who were the reason the de-escalation failed, and have killed civilians.”

Methodology
In the course of the ongoing monitoring for incidents and developments by SNHR team through a wide network that include tens of various sources that have been built over an accumulation of extensive relations since the start of our work. When we receive information, or hear some news about a violation via the internet or media outlets, we work on following-up on this news and try to verify and collect evidences and data. In some cases, the researcher is able to visit the incident location at the soonest. However, this is a rarity in light of the incredibly high security risks, and given the frequency of daily incidents and the human and material resources. Therefore, the possibility to access evidences vary from one case to another, and, hence, the degree of its classification. Usually, what we do, at SNHR, in such cases is relying on accounts from survivors who experience the violation firsthand, where we try to access those directly, and, to a second degree, who saw or filmed the violation, in addition to analyzing available materials from open sources such as the internet and media outlets. Thirdly, we try to speak to medical personnel who treated the wounded, assessed the symptoms, and determined the cause of death.

This report contains three accounts that were collected through speaking directly with eyewitnesses, and are not cited from any open sources. We have explained the purpose of these interviews to the eyewitnesses who gave us permission to use the information they provided in this report without offering or giving them any incentives. SNHR has tried to spare the eyewitnesses the agony of remembering the violation, and gave guarantees to conceal the identity of any witnesses who preferred to use an alias.
Furthermore, the investigations that are included in this report have proved that the targeted areas were civilian areas where no military centers or weapon warehouses for armed opposition factions or extremist Islamic groups were found before or during the attack, while we documented that Russian forces targeted no less than four armed opposition factions bases. Also, Syrian/Russian forces didn’t alert the civilians prior to the attack as the international humanitarian law requires.

SNHR has analyzed the videos and pictures that were posted on the internet, and the ones sent to us by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media. Some of the videos published by activists show the location of the attacks, the dead bodies, the injured, and the huge destruction in the aftermath of the bombardment. We have copies of all the videos and pictures included in this report in a secret online database, and backup copies on hard drives. However, we can't claim that we have documented all cases, in light of the ban and pursuit by Syrian regime forces and other armed groups.

Please see the methodology adopted by SNHR in documenting victims, and classifying vital civilian facilities. This report only represents the bare minimum, which we were able to document, of the magnitude and severity of the violation that occurred. It also doesn't cover the social, economic, and mental ramifications.

II. Executive Summary
This report covers the period of time between September 19, 2017 and September 27, 2017, highlighting the most notable attacks by the Syrian-Russian alliance on Idlib governorate.

A. Massacres and other acts of killing
We recorded the killing of 137 individuals, including 23 children, 24 women and 52 fighters, in addition to three massacres, as follows:
- Russian forces: killed 128 individuals, as follows:
  - 76 civilians, including 21 children and 21 women
  - 52 fighters
In addition, Russian forces perpetrated two massacres

- Syrian regime forces: killed nine civilians, including two children and three women. Also, we recorded one massacre by Syrian regime forces.
B. Attacks on vital civilian facilities
We recorded no less than 45 incidents of attack on vital civilian facilities, distributed as follows:
Russian forces: 36
Syrian regime forces: 9

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<th>Attacked Facility</th>
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C. Bombing Military Bases
We documented four incidents of attack on military bases for armed opposition factions by Russian forces.

D. Unlawful attacks: we recorded one attack by Russian forces using cluster munitions
III. Details

1- Russian forces

A. Most notable massacres and acts of killing

We are going to shed light on the most notable bombardments that resulted in casualties in the period of time covered by the report

- Khan Sheikhoun city

First incident
Thursday, September 21, 2017, Fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at al Sharqi neighborhood in the city that is located in southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of six civilians who were mostly from the same family (three children and three women).

Second incident
Thursday, September 21, 2017, Fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at al Gharbi neighborhood in the city, which resulted in the killing of three civilians (one female child and her parents). In addition, the residential buildings were heavily destroyed.

Third incident
Saturday, September 23, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at tents for traveling Bedouin in Tal Ja’far area on the eastern outskirts of the city, which resulted in the killing of three civilians from the same family (one female child and two women).

The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

- Jisr al Shoghour city

First incident
Monday, September 25, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at “Karaj Halab” area in the middle of the city that is located in western suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of 15 civilians, including three women. Additionally, about 20 others were wounded. The bombing also heavily destroyed residential buildings and shops in the area.
Second incident
Monday, September 25, 2017, around 14:10, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at al Gharbi neighborhood in the city, which resulted in the killing of three civilians (two children and one woman). Additionally, about 10 others were wounded. Jisr al Shoghour city is under the joint control of Hay’at Tahrir al Sham and the Turkistani Islamic Party.

- Al Bshiriya village
Monday, September 25, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at the village, which resulted in the killing of three sibling children. In addition, the residential buildings were heavily destroyed. The village, located in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, is under the joint control of Hay’at Tahrir al Sham and the Turkistani Islamic Party.

B. Targeting vital civilian facilities
Places of worship
Mosques

- Abu Bakr al Siddeeq, Jarjanaz town
Wednesday, September 20, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile near the mosque in al Sharqi neighborhood, Jarjanaz town, eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of two civilians, one of whom was a child. Additionally, the mosque building was partially destroyed and its furniture was heavily damaged. The town is under the control of armed opposition factions with a minor presence for Hay’at Tahrir al Sham
Vital educational facilities

- Schools

Al Dar al Kabira Elementary School, al Dar al Kabira village: we recorded two incidents of attack by Russian forces on the school
First incident
Wednesday, September 20, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile at the school. Two classrooms were heavily destroyed in the north part of the school, while the remaining classrooms were moderately damaged.

Second incident
Monday, September 25, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile at the school. The school building was heavily destroyed, and its furniture was heavily damaged. As a result, the school was rendered out of commission.

Al Dar al Kabira village, located in southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, is under the control of armed opposition factions

Ahmad al Ramadan Elementary School, al Tah village
Thursday, September 21, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile that landed in an agricultural land 20 meters away from the school. The school building and its furniture were moderately damaged. Al Tah village, located in southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

Al Rifiya al Shamaliya School, Ma’aret Harma village
Monday, September 25, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at the school that is located in Ma’aret Harma village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The school building and its fence were partially destroyed, and the furniture was heavily damaged. The village is under the control of armed opposition factions.

The Martyr Mohammad Bashir Ali School, Jisr al Shoghour city
Tuesday, September 26, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at the school that is located in al Shamali neighborhood, Jisr al Shoghour city, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. The school fence was partially destroyed, and its building was moderately damaged. The city is under the joint control of Hay’at Tahrir al Sham and the Islamic Turkistani Party.
Vital medical facilities
- Medical facilities and ambulances

**Kafr Nobbol Surgical Hospital, Kafr Nobbol city**
Tuesday, September 19, 2017, around 10:40, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired four missiles near the hospital that is located in Kafr Nobbol city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. Three missiles fell in the vicinity of the hospital about 200 meters away from it, while the fourth missile landed at the hospital entrance. The main gate and the hospital furniture were slightly damaged, while an ambulance belonging to the hospital was moderately damaged. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

**Al Rahman Charity Hospital, al Tah village**
Tuesday morning, September 19, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile at al Rahman Charity Hospital, known as the Maternity Hospital, that is located northwestern al Tah village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. A woman, who was a member of the medical staff, was killed. Additionally, the hospital building and its equipment were partially destroyed. Also, a fire broke out in the hospital's east wing (the garage, the radiology room, and the pharmacy), while an ambulance belonging to the hospital was moderately damaged and was rendered out of commission. The village is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.
Sham Surgical hospital, Hass village: we recorded two incidents of attack by Russian forces on the hospital

First incident
Thursday, September 21, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile near the hospital. The hospital building and its equipment were slightly damaged.

Second incident
Friday, September 22, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile at the hospital. The missile landed in a warehouse for the hospital, moderately damaging the hospital building and its equipment, while the warehouse was partially destroyed.

Hass village, located in southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

Al Rahma hospital, Khan Sheikhoun city: we recorded two incidents of attack by Russian forces on the hospital

First incident
Thursday, September 21, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile near the hospital that is located near the civil defense center in eastern Khan Sheikhoun city. No damages were recorded.
Second incident
Friday, September 22, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired five missiles near the hospital that is located near the civil defense center in eastern Khan Sheikhoun city. The hospital building was rifted, and its external power generators were burnt. Khan Sheikhoun city, located in southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

Kidney Hospital, Jisr al Shoghour city
Monday, September 25, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles near the hospital that is located in al Janubi neighborhood, Jisr al Shoghour city, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. The missiles landed 50 meters away from the hospital, with no damages recorded. The city is under the joint control of Hay’at Tahrir al Sham and the Islamic Turkistani Party.

Sham Central Hospital, Kafr Nobbol city
Tuesday, September 26, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at the hospital that is affiliated to the Free Hama Health Administration. The hospital, which is located in western Kafr Nobbol city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was heavily destroyed, and its equipment was heavily damaged as well as two ambulances belonging to the hospital. As a result, the hospital was rendered out of commission. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.
SNHR contacted the media activist Belal Bayyoush, who lives in a house near Sham Central Hospital, via Facebook. Belal told us:

“Around 06:40, as I was sleeping at home, which is about 200 meters away from the hospital, I heard a loud sound of a heavy explosion. I left the house immediately to see what happened. The smoke was think from where Sham Central Hospital is. Three minutes later, warplanes that made a very loud noise I never heard before carried out airstrikes. That is when the observatory announced that the Russian warplanes are still in the sky, and will attack the same site, which what happened. After they were finished, I went to the attack site, and I saw the huge destruction the minute I arrived. Smoke was still rising. The missiles went through three thick layers and reached the hospital floor and destroyed it, even though the hospital consists of two underground floors. Ambulances and medical equipment were destroyed as well. Everything turned into dust. But thank God there weren’t that many injuries among the medical staff.”

Infrastructures
- Power stations

Khan Sheikhoun Substation, Kafr Ein village
Thursday night, September 21, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at Khan Sheikhon Substation in Kafr Ein village that is located five kilometers to the west of Khan Sheikoun city, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. A fire broke out in the station and its equipment were heavily damaged. As a result, the station was rendered out of commission. It should be noted that the station is the main supplier for a number of areas, cities, and towns in its vicinity, such as Khan Sheikhoun and its suburbs, Kafr Nobbol, Heish, Kafr Sajna, Mouqa, al Habeit, and Ma’arat Harma in Idlib suburbs, and Kafr Zita and Kafr Nbouda in Hama suburbs. The station generates electricity for about 400,000 people. The village is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.
Saraqeb Substation, Saraqeb city

Friday, September 22, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile at Saraqeb Substation, known as Shabour Substation, that is located in south of the city, eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The substation and its equipment were heavily damaged. As a result, it was rendered out of commission. It should be noted that this station generates electricity for approximately 150,000 people in Saraqeb city and its suburbs, reaching as far as the southern suburbs of Ma’aret al Nu’man city. The city is under the control of Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.
- Civil defense facilities (centers - vehicles)

Civil defense center – Kafr Nobbol city

Tuesday, September 19, 2017, around 10:40, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired three missiles near the center that is located in northern Kafr Nobbol city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The center building was partially destroyed, and three vehicles (a fire truck, a service vehicle, and a rescue vehicle) belonging to the center were moderately damaged. It should be noted that the civil defense uses a part of al Ma’loumatiya School as a base in Kafr Nobbol city. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

Civil defense center, Khan Sheikhoun city: we recorded two incidents of attack by Russian forces on the center

First incident

Thursday, September 21, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile near the center that is located next to al Rahma Hospital in eastern Khan Sheikhoun city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The center was moderately damaged.
Second incident
Friday, September 22, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired five missiles at the center that is located next to al Rahma Hospital in eastern Khan Sheikhoun city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The center building was heavily damaged, and its equipment and three vehicles (two ambulances and two vehicles) were damaged to various degrees. The center was rendered out of commission. Khan Sheikhoun city is under the control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

Service vehicle for the civil defense, Mardikh village
Saturday, September 23, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles near the civil defense team of Saraqeb city center as they were aiding wounded from a previous shelling on a military base east of Mardikh village, eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate. Four civil defense members were wounded. Additionally, a service vehicle for the center was heavily damaged. Mardikh village is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

Two vehicles for the civil defense, Jisr al Shoghour city
Monday, September 25, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles near the civil defense center as they were aiding wounded from a previous shelling in the middle of Jisr al Shoghour city, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. An ambulance and a rubble-removing vehicle were moderately damaged. Jisr al Shoghour city is under the joint control of Hay’at Tahrir al Sham and the Islamic Turkistani Party.
- **Official headquarters**  
**The local council building, Kafr Nobbol city**

Tuesday, September 19, 2017, around 10:40, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired three missiles near the building that is located in northern Kafr Nobbol city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The building and its furniture were heavily damaged, as the building was rendered out of commission. It is worth noting that the local council of Kafr Nobbol city uses a part of al Ma'lomatiya School as a base. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.

![Image of the local council building in Kafr Nobbol city](image)

*The damage in the aftermath of a bombing by Russian forces on the local council building in Kafr Nobbol city, Idlib – September 19, 2017*

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**Industrial facilities**

**The Salt Factory, the road between Kafr Sajna village and Khan Sheikhoun city**

Friday, September 22, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at the factory in southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in casualties. In addition, the factory building was heavily destroyed, and was rendered out of commission. The area is under the control of armed opposition factions.

**The Plastic Factory, Farkya village**

Monday, September 25, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at the factory that is located in western Farkya village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The factory building was partially destroyed, and its equipment were heavily damaged. The village is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.
Refugee camps
Al Noor Camp, Jarjanaz town
Saturday, September 23, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired two missiles on the eastern outskirts of the camp, which is housed by IDPs from Hama suburbs. The camp is located in eastern Jarjanaz town, eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The camp was moderately damaged. The town is under the control of armed opposition factions with a minor presence for Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

C. Bombing military bases
Military bases for Jaish Idlib al Hur, al Hlaya area, Kafr Nobbol city: the same bases were targeted twice by Russian forces
First incident
Tuesday, September 19, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at military bases for Jaish Idlib al Hur, an armed opposition faction, that are located on the southern outskirts of Kafr Nobbol city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The bases buildings were heavily damaged.
Second incident
Wednesday, September 20, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a number of missiles at military bases for Jaish Idlib al Hur, an armed opposition faction, that are located on the southern outskirts of Kafr Nobbol city. The bases buildings were heavily damaged.
Driving School “a military base”, the public road between Beneen village and Sarja village
Friday, September 22, 2017, forces we believe were Russian fired a long-range rocket at the driving school that Soqour al Sham, an armed opposition faction, uses as a base on the public road between Beneen village and Sarja village, eastern Jabal al Zawiya, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The attack resulted in the killing of five fighters from the faction, in addition to heavily destroying the school building.

The central bases for Failaq al Sham, Mardikh village
Saturday, September 23, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired no less than 14 missiles at the central bases for Failaq al Sham, an armed opposition faction, that are located on the eastern outskirts of Mardikh village, eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The attack resulted in the killing of 47 fighters from the faction, while around 50 others were wounded. In addition, the bases buildings were heavily destroyed.

D. Unlawful attacks
Cluster munitions
Monday September 25, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a RBK500 missile loaded with ShOAB-0.5 submunitions in the west side of Ma’arat Herma village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. Two civilians were injured in the attack. The village is under the control of armed opposition factions.
2- Syrian regime forces
A. Massacres and other acts of killing
- Jarjanaz town
Wednesday, September 20, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a num-
ber of missiles in the middle of the town, which resulted in the killing of five civilians from
the same family, including one child and one woman. The town, located in eastern suburbs
of Idlib governorate, is under the control of armed opposition factions with a minor pres-
ence for Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

B. Targeting vital civilian facilities
Places of worship
- Mosques
Bdama Grand Mosque, Bdama town
Tuesday, September 26, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes (Su-24) fired a
missile at the mosque in the town. The mosque building was heavily destroyed, and its fur-
niture was heavily damaged. As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission. The
town, located in western suburbs of Idlib governorate, is under the joint control of Hay’at
Tahrir al Sham and the Islamic Turkistani Party.

Destruction in the aftermath of a bombing by Syrian regime forces on Bdama Grand Mosque in
Bdama town, Idlib – September 26, 2017
Vital educational facilities

– Schools

Ma’ar Zita Elementary School, Ma’ar Zita village
Tuesday, September 19, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired one missile near the school that is located in western Ma’ar Zita village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. Four teachers were wounded. In addition, the school fence was partially destroyed and the school building was moderately damaged. Ma’ar Zita village is under the control of armed opposition factions.

Vital medical facilities
- Medical facilities and ambulances

Al Rahma Hospital, Khan Sheikhoun city
Tuesday, September 19, 2017, around 10:50, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the hospital that is located next to the civil defense center in eastern Khan Sheikhoun city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The missile landed on the external aiding annex which was partially destroyed. In addition, an ambulance belonging to the hospital was heavily damaged. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

The destruction of the external aiding annex and an ambulance in the aftermath of a bombing by Syrian regime forces on al Rahma Hospital in Khan Sheikhoun city, Idlib – September 19, 2017
Infrastructures
- Civil defense facilities (centers - vehicles)

An ambulance for the civil defense center, al Habeit village
Tuesday, September 19, 2017, around 11:20, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles near the civil defense team as they were aiding wounded from a previous shelling in western al Habeit village, southern suburbs of Iblib governorate. Five civil defense members were wounded. Additionally, an ambulance belonging to the center was moderately damaged. Al Habeit village is under the control of armed opposition factions.

Civil defense center – al Taman’a town
Tuesday morning, September 19, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles near the center in the town that is located in southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The center building and an ambulance belonging to the center were moderately damaged. The town is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.
**Civil defense center, Khan Sheikoun city**
Tuesday, September 19, 2017, around 10:50, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles near the center that is located next to al Rahma Hospital in eastern Khan Sheikoun city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, where no damages were recorded in the fortified center. The city is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

Hamid Qutaini, a media activist who works for the civil defense center in Khan Sheikoun city, spoke to SNHR, via WhatsApp, about the incident:
“On September 19, around 11:00, a warplane was soaring in the sky of Khan Sheikoun city. Its sound was clearly heard. Moments later and the warplanes attacked us as we were at the center. Approximately five missiles were used in the first airstrike. One of the missiles landed about 30 meters away from the center and caused huge explosions. The rest landed to the west of the center. The warplane was still in the sky after the airstrike, and carried out another airstrike in the same place, but this time it was closer and its sound was higher. Smoke and dust were everywhere in the center.”
“I immediately went out the door. A fire broke out in the external warehouse. There were also two vehicles for Sham Medical Network belonging to the nearby al Rahma Hospital and motorbikes burning. We rushed to put out the fire.”

**Refugee camps**
**IDPs shelter – al Habeit village**
Tuesday, September 19, 2017, around 11:20, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles carried by parachutes near an IDPs shelter in western al Habeit village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The shelter fence was partially destroyed, and its building was moderately damaged. It should be noted that the shelter was formerly al Yarmouk School. Al Habeit village is under the joint control of armed opposition factions.
IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Legal conclusions

1- The Syrian-Russian alliance has, beyond any doubt, violated Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2254 which both state that indiscriminate attacks must be halted. Also, The Syrian regime has 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 Syrian-Russian alliance 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. We also documented that Russian forces targeted no less than four armed opposition factions bases.

3- The attacks mentioned in this report, which were carried out by The Syrian-Russian alliance, 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 Russian regime**
- Launch investigations regarding the incidents included in this report, make the findings of these investigations public for the Syrian people, and hold the people involved accountable.
- Compensate all the damaged centers and facilities, rebuild and rehabilitate them, and compensate all the victims’ families and the wounded who were killed by the current Russian regime.
- Completely cease the bombing of hospitals, protected objects, and civilian areas, and respect the customary international law.

**The Security Council**
- The Security Council has to take additional steps after Resolution 2254 was adopted, which states: “Demands that all parties immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such, including attacks against medical facilities and personnel, and any indiscriminate use of weapons, including through shelling and aerial bombardment.”
- 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.
- 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.
- Expand the sanctions to include the Syrian, 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 should submit a report to the Human Rights Council and other organs of the United Nations on the incidents mentioned in this report, and the massacres that preceded them, as they are a glaring point in a string of daily, sporadic and less significant massacres. The OHCHR also should work on implementing the recommendations included in this report.

**The United Nations special envoy to Syria**
- Expand Security Council briefings rather than only limiting them to the violations of al Nussra Front and ISIS
- Condemn the perpetrators of the crimes, the massacres, and those who were primarily responsible for shattering the de-escalation agreements.
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 killing 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 have been 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.

- Renew the pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court

- 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 and Condolences

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