

Brief Report

The Syrian Regime and Its Allies Bear Full Responsibility for International Sanctions Imposed for Committing Atrocities Against the Syrian People

The Security Council Has Not Imposed Any Sanctions Against the Syrian Regime Despite the Continuing Violations for Eight Years

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. Many of the Violations Committed Against the Syrian People Constitute Crimes Against Humanity

Over the past eight years, the Syrian people have been subjected to various types of violations by the ruling authority, ranging from extrajudicial killings to torture and enforced disappearance, up to the use of chemical weapons against them. A large proportion of these violations have been classified as crimes against humanity and war crimes since the first report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic up to its latest report, as well as in resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, which have repeatedly stated that the Syrian authorities have committed grossly systematic widespread violations.

In this context, in order to visualize the magnitude of the disaster experienced by the Syrian people, we provide a record of the most notable human rights violations that the Syrian people has suffered by the government led by Bashar al Assad, which we have been able to record on the Syrian Network for Human Rights' (SNHR) database since the outbreak of the popular uprising for democracy in Syria in March 2011 up to April 15, 2019. These statistics represent the bare minimum of the total number of violations perpetrated in light of the difficulties and challenges facing the documentation process. For more details on the mechanism used by the SNHR in gathering and obtaining information, you can read the [methodology](#) of our work.



- At least 198,532 civilians have been killed, including 22,523 children, 11,732 women (adult female), 657 medical personnel, 158 Civil Defense personnel, and 544 media workers, in addition to 14,009 persons who died as a result of torture.
- At least 127,916 individuals, including 3,469 children and 7,721 women (adult female), are still detained in the prisons of Syrian Regime forces.
- At least 82,000 forcibly disappeared.
- At least 216 chemical weapons attacks.
- At least 217 cluster munition attacks and 19 incendiary weapons attacks on populated areas.
- At least 77,146 barrel bombs dropped by Syrian regime helicopters and warplanes.
- At least 14.2 million people have been internally displaced or made refugees as a result of attacks carried out by Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance forces.

II. The Security Council Failed to Impose Any Sanctions Against the Syrian Regime, Including Arms Embargo

The unspeakably horrific scale of the violations perpetrated by the ruling authority against the Syrian people must be responded to with matching severity in accordance with Articles 39-41-42 of the Charter of the United Nations with action by the UN Security Council to impose sanctions against the government of Bashar al Assad. These sanctions are supposed to represent the bare minimum as an expression of the Security Council's rejection of the brutal practices of the Syrian regime and are supposed to begin with, at the very least, an arms embargo at least, which would constitute a form of pressure on the Syrian regime and send a message of objection that could contribute to alleviating the horrendous level of violations committed. Despite all these violations, however, the Security Council has taken no action whatsoever to protect the Syrian people even through the most basic step of imposing sanctions, which is supposed to be a primary tool in expressing respect for basic human rights in the event of a state's failure to protect its own people – or, as is the case with the Syrian regime, which itself commits horrendous violations against its own people. The failure of the Security Council and the international community in Syria will have serious and negative repercussions on the world's perception of the United Nations and international law and will encourage sadistic regimes similar to the Syrian regime to replicate its behavior.



In this regard, the international community, the Syrian people and the peoples of the region must bear in mind Russia's prominent role, supporting the Syrian regime to perpetrate various types of crimes, and acting in the Security Council through deploying its veto power, which it has used on 12 occasions to date to protect the Syrian regime. In the area of sanctions, we refer to Russia's veto of a draft resolution (S/2017/172) on February 28, 2017, which sought to impose sanctions on companies and individuals associated with Syrian regime organs that have been proven to be involved in the use of chemical weapons, and to prohibit the supply, sale or transfer of any helicopters or related equipment to the Syrian regime, meaning that this draft resolution would have been limited solely to sanctions against those responsible for the use of chemical weapons rather than all kinds of violations; despite these points, Russia vetoed it.

III. The Syrian Regime's Insistence on Ruling Syria, Despite Perpetrating Gross and Continuous Violations, Is the Main Cause of Sanctions

Whilst the UN Security Council has failed completely in its mission in Syria, and through this failure has encouraged the Syrian regime to commit further violations up to and including the use of chemical weapons, a number of countries around the world have taken some of their responsibilities towards punishing the Syrian regime and achieving some kind of accountability against its brutal practices. The United States, the European Union and a number of other countries have imposed economic and political sanctions against the Syrian regime in order to pressure it to change its criminal behavior and to push it to accept a political process leading to a change away from hereditary rule towards genuine elections protected from any effort to manipulate them by the security services. We, at the Syrian Network for Human Rights, can confirm that the Syrian regime does not care about the suffering of the Syrians under its control or those who broke free from its control, with its primary, nay sole, concern being to retain power even if hundreds of thousands of Syrians must be killed and most of the Syrian population displaced with their dignity humiliated in order to achieve this objective. In effect, the Syrian regime has taken the Syrian people and state hostage, linking their fate and survival to its own fate.

IV. Recommendations

Based on all of the above, the Syrian Network for Human Rights recommends:

First, economic sanctions against the Syrian regime alone are vastly inadequate and need a long time to be effective. Therefore, these must be advanced to the second level of sanctions, that is, military sanctions, which must be accompanied by a political process, accelerating a political transition, and an end to the suffering and displacement of the Syrian



people, and contributing to the initiation of a transitional justice process, including compensation for victims, reconstruction and full accountability for the perpetrators.

Second, the UN Security Council should impose sanctions on the Syrian regime targeting bodies and individuals involved in committing atrocities. At the top of these sanctions should be the arms embargo and travel ban.

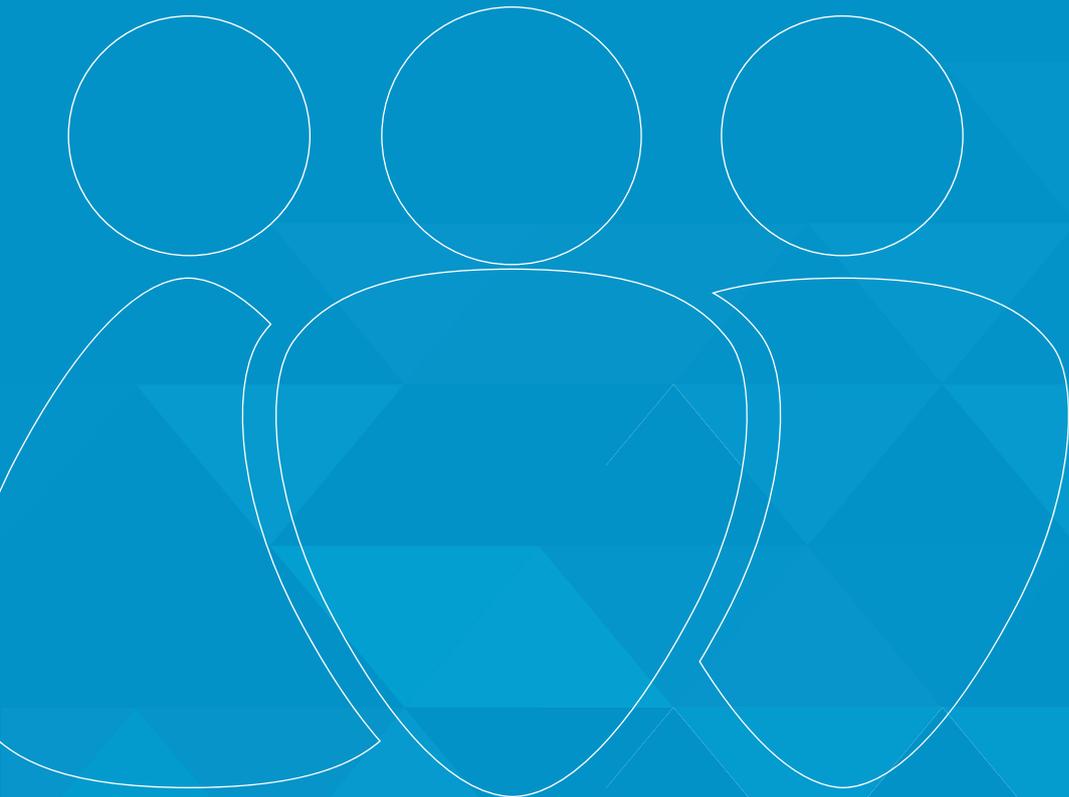
Third, local and international media should contribute to raising awareness among the regional community by holding the Syrian regime directly responsible for the sanctions and their consequences, and stressing that the solution to these is not to lift the sanctions, which would only contribute to the regime rearming its forces and recruiting more local militias and Mafiosi-type gangs, and thus escalate and feed a cycle of horrendous violations for many years, leading to the survival of the Assad family's tyrannical hereditary rule for decades.

Fourth, sanctions have a symbolic meaning, that is, a statement of political and international isolation, and any call for the lifting of sanctions on a regime that continues to this day to commit violations which constitute crimes against humanity is a statement of support for the continuation of these violations and the lifting of international isolation. Instead, there must be a prompt demand for more deterrent and protective measures for the Syrians.

Fifth, based on the High Commission for Human Rights' and the International Commission of Inquiry's documentation of hundreds of violations committed by the Syrian regime, these bodies should recommend that the Security Council impose sanctions against the Syrian regime in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, primarily a comprehensive arms embargo.

Sixth, sanctions, however intelligent, will adversely affect society and cause some degree of suffering and distress. The impact and effectiveness of sanctions, as well as the institutions and individuals targeted, must be periodically re-evaluated, in order to calculate these sanctions so as to maximize the weakening of the regime's forces, militias and allied mafias, in addition to the states that invest in this barbaric regime, whilst having the lowest possible impact on the lives of civilians already being effectively held as hostages under the authority of the ruling regime.





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