

The World Cup in Russia is Tainted with the Blood of 6,133 Syrian Civilians Killed by Russia

6,133 Civilians Killed, including
1,761 Children, at the hands of
Russian Forces since the Start
of its Military Intervention

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.



Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. Methodology for Documenting the Data Included in this Report
- III. The Security Council's Role in Destabilizing International Peace and Security
- IV. The Legitimacy of the Russian Intervention in Syria
- V. Toll of Most Notable Violations by Russian Forces according to SNHR Database
- VI. Attachments
- VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

I. Introduction

The FIFA's World Cup competitions are set to kick off on June 14 in Russia, as FIFA had announced back in December 2010 that Russia won the bid to organize the 2018 World Cup. However, merely a few months later after this announcement, particularly in March 2011, Russia was knees-deep in backing and diplomatically shielding the brutal violations that were perpetrated by the Syrian regime against its people. As Russia was constructing stadiums, hotels, and hospitals, their warplanes were demolishing and exterminating tens of thousands of Syrians thousands of kilometers away from the Russian capital Moscow, especially after its military intervention in September 2015. The Russian regime, hence, is a primary partner in the Syrian regime's serious violations, firstly, and, secondly, a direct perpetrator of serious violations. The World Cup taking place in Russia is an opportune moment to remind the world of the atrocities that Russia have perpetrated in Syria and expose its support for the most barbarian regime of the modern age.

In organizing the World Cup, every state tries to highlight its cultural and artistic aspect. The pictures of children, women, and civilians who were killed by Russian forces, however, and the hospitals, schools, facilities, and buildings that have been destroyed by the savage, indiscriminate bombardment on tens of Syrian cities and towns have laid bare the barbarian and inhumane facet of the existing Russian regime which, most certainly, doesn't deserve the opportunity to organize the World Cup, as its natural place should be on trial.



We have diligently followed and monitored the various violations by Russian forces in Syria, and released [49 extensive reports](#) on that matter. SNHR possesses a comprehensive, detailed database for all the incidents and victims killed by Russian forces that include various details. Targeting many hospitals with directed missiles remains one of the most atrocious acts that Russian forces have carried out, as well as their extensive use of cluster munitions, exterminating whole towns off the face of the map in the region of Eastern Ghouta through hundreds of airstrikes carried out by swarms of warplanes. All of these crimes have generated memories filled with anger and resentment towards the Russian regime for the victims' relatives and friends that won't be forgotten in decades time.

II. Methodology for Documenting the Data Included in this Report

We've relied on SNHR team's ongoing monitoring for news and incidents in documenting the violations perpetrated by Russian forces, as well as an extensive network of relations with tens of various sources that have been built over the course of our work. Also, this report draws upon verifying information from the different accounts provided by survivors, eyewitnesses, and central signals operators. Subsequently, we have built a comprehensive database for the attacks carried out by Russian forces, the victims killed in those attacks, and the facilities that were destroyed in these attacks. To read our [methodology](#), please see the following URL

This report only contains the bare minimum of the violations, which we have been able to document, as we undoubtedly miss a number of incidents and violations in light of the intensified nature of these attacks at times.

III. The Security Council's Role in Destabilizing International Peace and Security

Russia's role at the Security Council with respect to Syria can be summarized in three main points:

1- The primary mission of the Security Council is to protect global peace and security. The permanent members are the ones mainly responsible for preserving this mission. As such, Russia, and the rest of the members of the Security Council, were supposed to act to protect the Syrian people from the daily killing by the Syrian regime, since the very first days, who is committing these crimes against its own people. Nonetheless, Russia has been involved in destabilizing peace and security in Syria, instead, through a barbarian, unprecedented bombing in terms of intensity and indiscrimination. The Security Council hasn't only failed to protect the Syrian people, but even one of the permanent member states was involved in deliberate, brutal acts of killing in many cases against the Syrian people according to



hundreds of incidents that we have documented. This glaring dysfunctionality and failure is the main reason behind the rising rates and patterns of the brutal violations in Syria.

2- Not only did Russia perpetrate tens of thousands of violations, many of which constitute war crimes, it also shamelessly resorted to lying and misguiding by denying those violations, whether through questioning their occurrence or accusing other parties of being responsible for them. It is true that some states might resort to lying and misguiding, but what Russia has done in Syria is considered unprecedented in quantity and quality from a founding member of the Security Council. Russia hasn't even bothered to address any accusations against their forces in Syria, and hasn't launch any investigation into any incidents so far.

3- Using its veto powers 12 times against any resolution that would condemn, confront, or demand the Syrian regime to be held accountable. This gave the Syrian regime an absolute immunity and encouraged it to elevate the various types of its violations, including killing, torture, and shelling, in addition to continuing to disregard and dismiss all Security Council Resolutions on the use of chemical weapons and barrel bombs.

IV. The Legitimacy of the Russian Intervention in Syria

Russia based the legitimacy of its intervention in Syria upon two main objectives. Firstly, the Syrian regime's request, and, secondly, fighting ISIS and terrorist groups. However, it is important to note that by perpetrating tens of thousands of violations, many of which constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes, the Syrian regime is devoid of any representative legitimacy in the eyes of millions of the Syrian people, as the Syrian regime has become a direct enemy and radical, unprecedented threat to the Syrian state and the Syrian nation. In addition, the Syrian opposition has a wide international recognition. As for ISIS, we have confirmed by documenting tens of Russian air attacks that 85% of said attacks have targeted areas other than the areas under the control of ISIS and al Nussra Front, but, rather, targeted civilian populated areas. Intervening to strike ISIS and al Nussra Front was a pretext for all the killing and indiscriminate destruction. The unprecedented brutalities in modern history perpetrated by the Syrian regime and its Iranian and Russian allies against the Syrian people remain the main and primary cause for ISIS's emergence and establishment. Additionally, Russian forces have surpassed ISIS themselves in killing civilians. Finally, we have to always remember that, irrespective of the two points above, Russia is a direct party to the armed conflict in Syria, and, as such, is bound by the international humanitarian law and the customary international humanitarian law, as well as being a party state to the main



treaties of the international humanitarian law, including the 1949's Geneva Conventions and Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflict. However, the incidents we've recorded prove a systematic, deliberate perpetration of thousands of violations, many of which constitute war crimes, and a blatant breach of all of the previously mentioned, in addition to being directly involved in many attacks and violations by the Syrian regime, as well as the deliberate support even though Russia is fully aware of what the Syrian regime has committed in the years before and after the Russian intervention. These violations that were carried out by Russian forces and the backing and supporting of the Syrian regime's violations are all illegal acts in light of Russia's commitments per the international law.

As of this writing, Russia is still perpetrating the most severe violations against the Syrian people, and supports and organizes forced displacement operations. All of the official Russian statements on withdrawing Russian forces are completely in contradiction with the reality on the ground, as we are seeing a heavier and heavier presence for Russian forces at the various Syrian military airbases and an almost complete control over the pillars of the Syrian regime's current army. We have recorded a large number of ground attacks carried out by artilleries, tanks, and rocket launchers under the supervision of Russian generals. We've also recorded a Russian military presence in the areas which were subject to agreements (that effectively led to the forced displacement of the residents of these areas) and were supervised by Russian authorities.

V. Toll of Most Notable Violations by Russian Forces according to SNHR Database

The following is the toll of the most notable violations perpetrated by forces we believe were Russian from the start of the military intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015, until May 20, 2018, according to SNHR archive:

- No less than 6,133 were killed, including 1,761 children and 661 women (adult female)
- No less than 317 massacres
- No less than 939 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including 169 attacks on schools, 167 on medical facilities, 140 on mosques, and 55 on markets
- No less than 223 attacks using cluster munitions
- No less than 122 attacks using incendiary ammunitions
- Nearly 2.5 million Syrians were forcibly displaced as a result of the Russian offensives along with its two allies, the Syrian and Iranian regimes



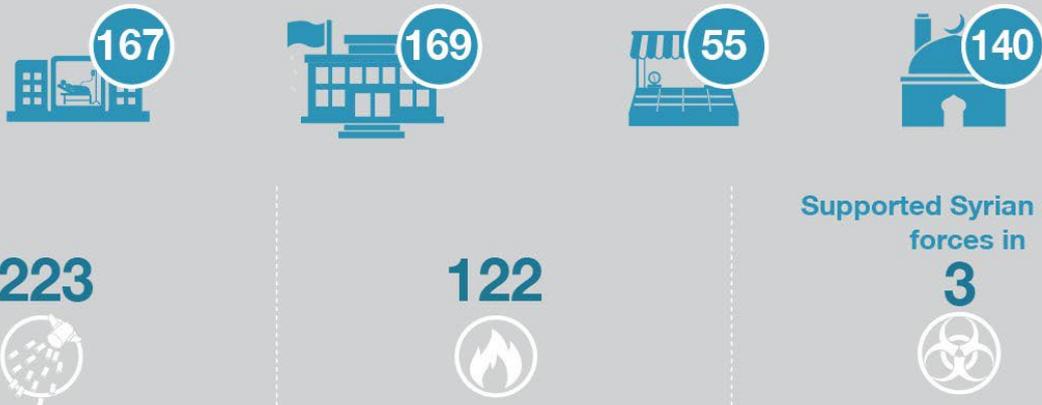
Most notable violations by Russian forces
between September 30, 2015, and May 20, 2018

Russian forces killed



Carried out

939 attacks on vital civilian facilities
including



About **2.5 million** forcibly disappeared as a result of the Russian offensives along with their allies the Syrian and Iranian regimes



A. Extrajudicial killing

We have recorded that Russian forces killed no less than 6,133 civilians, including 1,761 children and 661 women (adult female) from the start of its intervention until May 20, 2018. About 90% of the death toll were killed in Russian aerial bombardments, while a number of victims were also killed in ground and sea attacks carried out by Russian forces. Russian forces have carried out no less than 317 massacres since its intervention.

While most airstrikes were concentrated in areas held by factions from the armed opposition in the period of time between the start of the Russian intervention and the time of this report's release, Russian forces started also directing their attacks, in the second half of 2017, on eastern regions (Raqa, Deir Ez-Zour, and Hasaka governorates) which were held mostly by ISIS, as those areas saw a Russian military escalation, where they only saw previously sporadic attacks that targeted, in many cases, civilian populated areas.

B. Targeting vital civilian facilities

Russian forces haven't only failed to demonstrate any respect for the sacredness of hospitals, schools, markets, and other vital facilities, but also saw to make these facilities their first main target in order to submit communities and undermine the foundations of their endurance and survival. Targeting the same facility confirm that it was deliberately destroyed, as we've recorded that tens of facilities were targeted in more than one Russian attack.

[Recent journalistic investigations](#) have revealed that the UN provided Russian forces with coordinates for a number of hospitals as a mean to avoid targeting these facilities. However, Russian forces stabbed the UN in the back and used the very same coordinates to directly bomb most of these hospitals.

We've recorded no less than 939 attacks on vital civilian facilities at the hands of Russian forces from the start of its intervention until May 20, 2018, including 169 attacks on schools, 167 attacks on medical facilities, 140 attacks on mosques, and 55 attacks on markets.

C. Unlawful attacks and prohibited weapons

Russian forces have used cluster munitions in Syria in a barbarian and widespread manner with an utter lack of regard and remorse. The use of cluster munitions in 2016 and 2017 by Russian forces have been the worst on a global scale. 99% of these attacks targeted civilian populated areas. We've also documented the introduction of new cluster munitions, [as we pointed out in past reports and incidents](#). These attacks were carried out using mis-



siles loaded with hundreds of small bombs that were dropped from warplanes, platforms believed to be located in the Mediterranean Sea, or rocket launchers. We've also monitored a notable escalation in the use of Tochka 9M79 rockets, particularly in Aleppo and Idlib suburbs. We haven't, however, verified that all of the mere loaded had cluster warheads.

SNHR team has recorded no less than 223 attacks using cluster munitions believed to be carried out by Russian forces between September 30, 2015, and May 20, 2018.

Since mid-2016, Russian forces have escalated their use of incendiary ammunitions which were used on civilian populated areas and agricultural lands that are far cry from battle-fronts. We've recorded no less than 122 attacks using incendiary ammunitions carried out by Russian forces from the start of its intervention until May 20, 2018.

We've also recorded a Russian support in three chemical attacks that were carried out by the Syrian regime, either by targeting medical facilities before or after the attack, or targeting the routes taken by paramedics which obstructed the process of aiding the injured. We've also documented how Russian forces hindered the UN investigations which was the case in the chemical attack on Douma on April 7, 2018

D. Forced displacement

The overwhelming, concentrated bombardment and killing carried out by Russia in a number of areas in Syria, particularly Eastern Ghouta most recently where entire cities and towns were wiped off, have forced the residents in these areas to flee to become forcibly displaced. Also, other areas reacted after witnessing the heart-wrecking fate that Eastern Ghouta had to suffer and agreed to flee their homes. Russian forces have supported the forced displacement operations carried out by the Syrian regime, and also enforced a number of agreements that effectively resulted in displacing people from their homes. We have to remember always that some of these areas were de-escalation zones such as Eastern Ghouta, al Qalamoun, and northern suburbs of Homs governorate as per the Astana path which Russia itself was sponsoring and defending. The forced displacement marked the highest levels of escalation, as some of these areas saw a Russian presence on the ground in the aftermath of the displacement in the form of military police squads.



VI. Attachments

Instances of serious violations where Russia supported Syrian regime forces in perpetrating them

[Additional Evidences and Investigations Prove that the Syrian Regime was Probably Implicated in Attacking Douma City Using Chemical Weapons](#)

[Syrian Regime's Chemical Terrorism Hits Syrians for the 211th Time](#)

[After Diminishing the American Red Line, the Syrian Regime Diminishes France's Initiative](#)

[Russian Forces Have, most likely, Supported the Syrian Regime Forces in Khan Sheikhoun Chemical Attack](#)

["We were Gasping for Air"](#)

VII. 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 ceased. Also, the Russian regime has violated, through the crime of willful killing, Article 8 of Rome Statute, which constitutes war crimes.

2- Russian forces have violated the rules of the customary international humanitarian law and the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. In addition, these indiscriminate attacks were carried out in a non-international armed conflict, which constitutes a war crimes as all elements have been fulfilled.

3- The bombardments carried out by Russian forces have resulted in collateral damages that involved loss of lives, injuries, or significant damages to civilian objects. There are strong indicators that compel to believe that the damage was too excessive compared to the anticipated military advantage.

Recommendations

Russian regime

- Immediately compensate the families of the victims who were killed by Russian forces, and those whose homes, shops, and properties were destroyed in Russian bombardments.
- Russia has to pledge to reconstruct all of the facilities and buildings that were destroyed by its instruments of war, and shoulder the complete economic and moral expenses instead of asking some European states to do so.



- Respect the rules of the international humanitarian law and launch wide, impartial investigations into the gross violations Russian forces perpetrated in Syria.
- Stop using veto to protect the Syrian regime who has been involved in perpetrating crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as using chemical weapons.
- Launch investigations into the support provided by Russian forces in Syria to the Syrian regime in its chemical attacks.
- Raise the humanitarian aids to hundreds of thousands of displaced who Russian forces contributed to displacing and degrading them along with Syrian regime forces and Iranian militias

International community

- In light of the Security Council's division and utter inability, action should be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people. This would manifest in protecting the Syrian people from the daily killing and lifting the siege, as well as raising the support with respect to the relief efforts. Additionally, steps should be taken in order to exercise universal jurisdiction on these crimes before national tribunals as part of fair trials for all those who were involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called, as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP), for the implementation of the 'Responsibility to Protect (R2P)' norm in tens of studies and reports after all political initiatives, through the Arab League agreement and then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan and the Cessation of Hostilities and Astana agreements that followed, have been to no avail. Therefore, after all of this, action should be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and the 'Responsibility to Protect' norm, which was established by the UN General Assembly, should 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.
- Works towards achieving justice and accountability in Syria through the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, and use the principle of universal jurisdiction.

Security Council

- The Security Council should take additional action as more than two years has passed since Resolution 2254 was adopted, where the Resolution 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 should be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who were implicated should be held accountable, including the Russian regime whose involvement in war crimes have been proven.
- Instill security and peace in Syria and implement the 'Responsibility to Protect' norm in order to preserve the Syrians' lives, culture, and arts from being destroyed, looted, and ruined.
- Expand sanction to include the Syrian, Russian, and Iranian regimes who have been involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people.

OHCHR

The OHCHR should submit a report to the Human Rights Council and other UN Organs on the violations perpetrated by Russian forces.

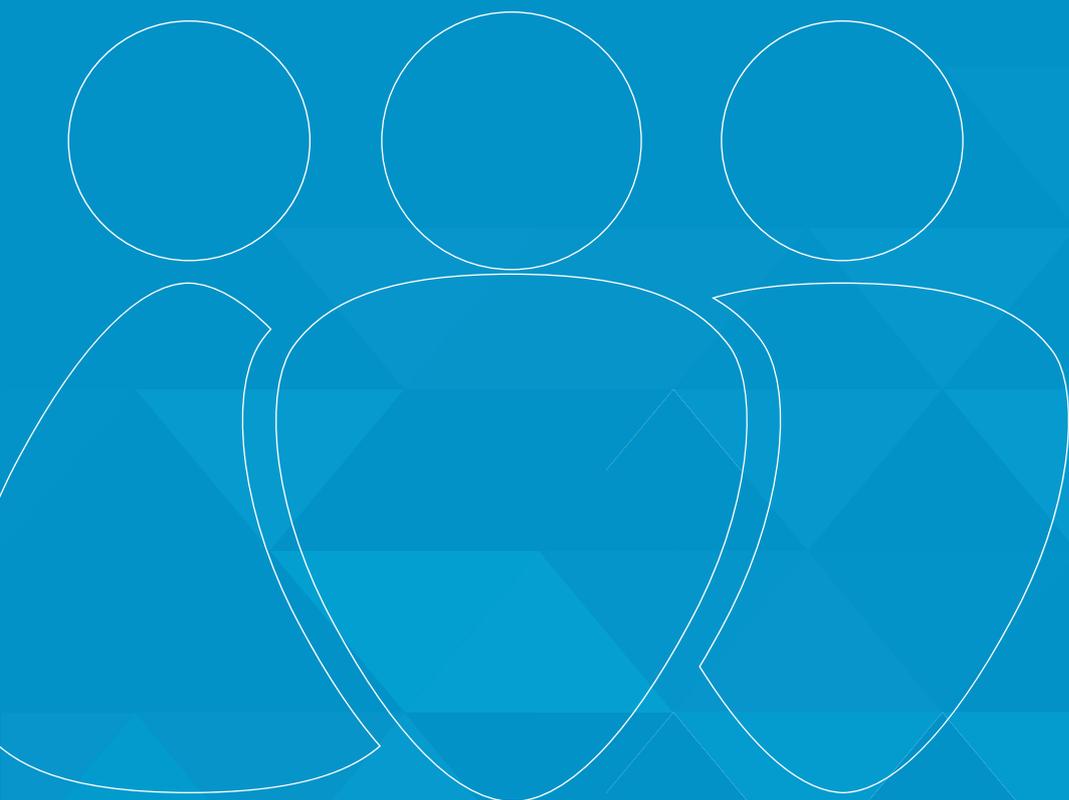
UN special envoy to Syria

- Expand on the UN briefings instead of limiting them to the violations of al Nussra Front and ISIS
- Condemn the perpetrators of crimes and massacres who were the primary reason behind the failure of the de-escalation agreements.

Acknowledgment

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