



Documentation of the massacre in al Refa'ei and Karm al Zaitoun neighborhoods of Homs city (one of the most horrifying massacres in human history)

Incident details:

On the morning of Friday March 9, 2012, Syria army forces along with Shabiha members from neighboring pro-Syrian regime neighborhoods, surrounded the Ash-ira neighborhood in Homs.

As has become a terrible norm in such atrocities, the first phase was heavy bombing which lasted for about 18 hours, killing dozens and leaving an uncountable number of wounded. The bombing also extended to al Refa'ei and al Adawiya neighborhoods, according to a survivor who we spoke with following his long recovery from near-fatal wounds sustained in the bombardment. This survivor, who still lives in Homs city at the time of writing, was one of a number of witnesses who provided us with testimonies of what happened during that time in the weeks following the incident.

Most of the residents, mostly women and children, tried to flee the bombing; however, Syrian regime forces targeted them as they fled, killing 22 women, and 13 children of them as they tried to escape.

On the morning of Sunday 11, after the bombing ended, Syrian Regime army forces launched a ground invasion of the neighborhood with tanks, armored vehicles and every kind of weapon. They were accompanied by hundreds of Shabiha mercenaries. The storming of homes and the mass killings of men, women and children began immediately. Many residents were raped before being slaughtered, often with knives or machetes.

After the frenzy of killing was over, the soldiers and shabiha went through the neighbourhood searching for any survivors, shooting anyone who appeared to be breathing at point-blank range in the head and chest. Many of the bodies were loaded into trucks and taken away.





As though this trauma were not unbearable enough for the victims' surviving families and friends in other areas, activists who entered the neighbourhood after the soldiers and shabiha left were able to document only a fraction of the carnage that had taken place there due to the massive destruction inflicted by the regime's tanks, which had demolished walls as regime forces slaughtered residents and raped women. Many of the bodies remained undetected in their homes until they began to rot and the full scale of the terrible crimes carried out there became apparent.

We, at the Syrian Network for Human Rights, were unable to document what had happened until after a long time had passed, piecing together the terrible events from the harrowing testimonies of survivors or family members.

Um Mohammad, a resident of the Karm al Zaitoun neighborhood, who lost 15 members of her family in the massacre said:

“On the day that al Refa’ei (Karm al Zaitoun) neighborhood massacre happened on March 11, 2012, I was in al Nabk to get the relief support for my family and I returned from there to a village outside Homs where my eldest son lived as I couldn’t get into the city because of the security situation that day. When I reached my son’s home, I heard about the massacre that took away 15 of my sons, their wives and my grandsons. I went crazy. In the morning I went to the military hospital in al Wa’er area, and at the door I met an officer who treated me disrespectfully and didn’t allow me to search for the bodies of the members of my family.

And so, I went with many women who lost their children - there were about 10 of us - to the criminal security [department], and when we got inside the branch they showed us images of the victims of the massacre. I identified my children, my sons, their wives, and my grandsons - all of them, they were nine children and six women. They gave me a paper with their names and I returned to the military hospital and found their bodies except for my daughter Yusra’s body, so I went up to the first floor of the hospital to search for her and there I trampled on a dead child who was about five months old; he was naked and thrown on the ground, and when I stepped on him, unaware, I felt goosebumps all over my body.

And there, my heart that was shattered by what I saw. I prayed to God to take care of my daughter and all the martyrs, and started crying heavily in the Military Hospital which was more like a slaughterhouse.





I saw hundreds of bodies stacked in three truck (trailers) parked under the trees in the back yard of the hospital. Most of the bodies were in plastic bags, some were cut into pieces, others with their insides showing, the scene was horrifying, and the place was foul-smelling. When I began the procedure to get my family members' bodies out, the hospital set a price of 1,000 SP for every body, whether it's a child's or a grown up's body. One of the doctors, Dr. Khaled al Hazouri al Turkmani, wouldn't give me authorization to take the bodies out until he took 40,000 SP. from me; that was given to me by Sheikh S. J. God bless him.

When they entered my family's home, my son's wives were reading the Quran; the Shabiha took the Qurans from them and demanded they bring the gold and money, and before they committed the massacre one of the members working with them, said: 'Shame on you these are women and children, why are you killing them?' So, they killed him right before killing my whole family, who are my daughter Hamida, 21, who was hit in the head from behind, my daughter Yusra, 27, and her four daughters Hanadi aged nine, Amani aged eight, Fardous aged five, and Aisha aged three, along with Nasser, eight months old, and her husband Sheikh Abo Nasser al Mubarak, who was killed in the street after they pulled out his beard with pliers.

Also my son's wife Waed and her two daughters and baby, she was in her last month of pregnancy; when she begged them not to kill her, saying she was pregnant, they said: 'We want to relieve you of your belly', meaning the baby she was carrying. At that moment her two-and-a-half-year-old son ran out of the house terrified; they followed him and slaughtered him after killing his mother who, when I saw her body, was extremely blue and her face unrecognizable, which means she was strangled to death. She was also shot in her knees.

The murderers also slaughtered my granddaughter Hamida who was one year old along with her mother, Yasmin, 18, and her two sons Bahaa and Maria, and my other son's wife Nagham al Hamad, 19, who was found with her face mutilated because they cut her face with a Fara'a, a butcher's knife, and it seemed that she tried to resist them so they smashed her head from the back and her skull exploded, and she fell over on top of her one-and-a-half-year-old son and drowned in her own blood. The son Abdullah, survived the massacre, and he is being treated in Homs today. Another victim of this massacre was my son Ahmad, aged 23, who ran outside the house at the time of the massacre - he was with 20 men of the neighborhood, all shot dead. As for my son "M" we know nothing about his fate yet; when he got to the





house and saw the massacre he went crazy and opened fire in the air instinctively. When he left, members of the Red Crescent asked him to help them carry the bodies filling the streets, and he started carrying the bodies. We learnt then learned that he had carried about 1500 bodies of men, elderly people, and children that were placed in Red Crescent trucks.

Who perpetrated the massacre are the Alawite residents; they are known by name. One of them is Abo Waddah, one of the Shabiha who was known for his huge role in slaughtering Sunnis. He used to work as a fortune teller before becoming one of the Shabiha. Others of the perpetrators are Aziz al Jourani, and Yahya and Yasser al Alawini, those two are brothers; they are Sunni, but their mother is Alawite. Also Barkat, and Tamim and Ali Muhsen who lived next door to us, and the sons of Abo Subhi, and others who I can't remember now.

Before the massacre that happened to my family, many massacres happened in Karm al Zaitoun neighborhood. One of these was the massacre in Abo Thiab's House, the house which sheltered over 50 individuals. The massacre began when the Shabiha entered his home and killed everyone in the house and I saw their bodies stacked on top of each other.

And in front of the Warehouse of Abo Mahrab al Tarkawi, over thirty young men had their hands tied behind their backs with their faces on the ground. Also Shaman al Tarkawi, an activist in the uprising, was burnt with gasoline, and by the same method a woman named Um Hussein was killed along with her seven children, as gasoline was sprayed on the area around her home and they lit it on fire after she refused to open the door for them, in addition to six relatives of mine - Suleiman Ahma, his wife, their daughter, her husband, and two children.

Nora al Sharif, aged 30, and Majed al Mubarak, who is the brother of my daughter's husband the victim Abo Nasser al Mubarak, and Khaled al Thiab who came to save the victims but he ran out of ammunition and was killed and remained lying in the main street for two days. There was also Thalja al Traija, her husband, and three children.





Mohammad al Ngheish and his pregnant wife - they cut open her belly and placed her baby on top of her body. And the wife of Majbal al Eitha, who had gold jewelry on her - they cut off her hands and took the gold; her nine-year-old son was hiding in the attic when the murders walked in, and he survived the massacre.

There is also Hussein al Ghannam and his family of 17 individuals between women and children, all were killed, apart from one young boy a 17-year-old who they thought was killed in the massacre but who survived.

And al Bawabiri family from Latakia - they are Khaldiya al Abbas and her husband and six children and her husband's sister-in-law who was there with her husband and her four children, all killed. When their bodies were found, they were on the sofa with blood all over their faces and bodies.

There is also Abo Musa's family, 18 individuals. When the Shabiha came in, one of them was Tamim, a neighbor of the family, and Um Musa told him: 'Tamim, I breastfed you for four months, don't kill us' and he replied, 'The president's order came to slaughter everyone young and old.'

In all these massacres, the murderers burnt the houses and stole whatever they could carry from them."

[Um Mohammad](#) – Karm al Zaitoun

[The girl Yusra](#) – Karm al Zaitoun

[Suleiman Ahmad](#) – Karm al Zaitoun

[Al Bazzazi family](#) – Karm al Zaitoun

[One of the females](#) that witnessed the massacre:

A testimony of a resident who survived:

They started with bombing the mosque right next to my home.

Before I did anything, I ran to my wife and three children I put mattresses on them to protect them from the roof's weight if it fell because the mosque's minaret could have fallen at any second under the heavy shelling of the mosque.

After that I opened the window and tried to record what's happening on my phone; a few minutes later the bombing stopped and the shooting lit up the sky, and I was afraid and waiting.

I heard voices calling for help, the wailing of women, children crying...





The voices come from everywhere.
The time was 7:00 in the morning
I don't know where the voices were coming from - the earth, the walls, the roof.
From my old mother's home
From the Mosque that my old father took care of.
I wanted to get out.
I left my children, scared and not knowing what might happen.
I opened the door of my house and the gunmen stopped me and people asked for my ID
Unaware, I screamed, 'What've you done to my mother?' One of them said 'She's okay.'
I ran to her; she was crawling between them as her fear had left her unable to walk, crawling on the ground, I took her to her bed, and I returned to my wife and children, and in my head I was imagining them slaughtered and drowned in their blood.
Thankfully, they were alright.
Some of the soldiers were messing with my house furniture and then they left our home.
I hadn't checked on my father.
I rushed to him, I found him aiding a young man wounded by the shooting
We entered together and hundreds of soldiers had gathered the young men of the neighborhood in the mosque.
After that I wasn't aware of what was happening.
My heart was torn between the people and my mother, wife, and children, I went to check on them.
I returned, and then some soldiers told me there were victims in the houses around us.
I found out they were the neighbors, and that the Shabiha has killed them.
The soldiers said: 'Who killed them? Must be the armed gangs. Do want to see them?'
They wanted to get me away from the soldiers' eyes I refused and returned to search for my father. That day the sun went down and the butchers left, then we found 10 men of the neighborhood all slaughtered in the kitchens of their homes.

After more than two months of continuous work by the Syrian Network for Human Rights team in Homs city, we managed through precise and continuous work and field visits to many families to documented [224 names after exceptional efforts](#), including 44 children and 48 women:





Attachments:

First: Videos documenting the names, videos of the victims and the massacre

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jnz1YvBMm04>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPMLtO_VWQI

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEzs4kc1uro>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BW7o6HYO8n4>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJeWQPiA0VQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T71mwvgApLg>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRtBPKOdres>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUNKPOh55GU>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_7hpxev5Hs

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cp5k9QniITU>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acAStRnNzns>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGxVAHXGdMc>

<http://youtu.be/yW0TSx12-IY>

Leaked video from a Shabiha member phone

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg7XOUfuR5c&feature=youtu.be>

Second: videos documenting what then neighborhoods of Ahira, Adawiya, al Re-fa'ei, and Karm al Zaitoun have suffered from bombing to invasions before the massacres:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZNioUwfmJk>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsrSod_x8gw

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqV-zEtEF1o>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOYoRgJmjbY>

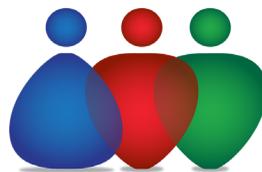
We at the Syrian Network for Human Rights, as representatives of a human rights organization, condemn this horrifying massacre, which is considered a crime against humanity, along with all the massacres and other atrocities the Syrian people have suffered on an almost daily basis since 2011.

We hold the whole Syrian regime and most particularly the commander of the army and armed forces Bashar al Assad fully responsible for the massacre and for all the consequences that followed. We also hold Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah responsible for assisting and enabling in the continuation of these murders, as all these parties continue to supply the regime with money and weapons.





We also request of the United Nations and Security Council that they work as fast as possible to take every precaution to help protect the civilians in Syria, and to shoulder their moral and legal responsibilities and expedite the steps necessary to bring all those involved in these massacres to trial at the International Criminal Court.



Syrian Network For Human Rights
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

