

Children of Syria... A Lost Dream

20 October 2014



Syria Children... A Lost Dream

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The Syrian Regime

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including **518**
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arrest of
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tortured
to death
95
children at least



many **sexual**
violations
against
children



4,700,000
IDP children



2,900,000
children refugees



more than
1,300,000
deprived of
education



3942 school were damaged in Syria
2,000,000 children
out-of-school inside Syria



more than
280,000
wounded children



forcibly recruited
hundreds of
children in
direct and
indirect military
operations



18273 children have lost their fathers
4573 children have lost their
Mothers



ISIS

killed no less
than **137** children



arrested no less **455**



recruiting hundreds of children



the armed opposition groups

killed **304** children



arrested approximately
1000 children



used some children in military
activities



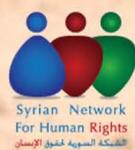
All of this left a horrible psychological impact on the children of Syria because of the ceaseless traumas caused by the loss of families and friends, displacement, deprivation of education, and watching all of this killing, executions, and stoning.



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No one can imagine what will become of the Syrian children in the future. We are losing an entire generation.



Executive Summary

Since the beginning of the popular protests in Syria, children have been victims of various kinds of crimes. We documented the names and pictures of **17268** children who were killed by the Syrian regime including **518** children who were killed by snipers in addition to the arrest of no less than **9500**. Additionally, the Syrian regime tortured to death 95 children at least. Also, many sexual violations against children have been documented. Furthermore, there are more than **280,000** wounded children, 4.7 million IDP children, and **2.9** million children refugees among them were more than **1.3 million** children who were deprived of education. **3942** school were damaged in Syria which resulted in more than **2 million** out-of-school children inside Syria. Moreover, the Syrian regime forcibly recruited hundreds of children in direct and indirect military operations. During the conflict, **18273** children have been orphaned as their fathers were killed while **4573** children suffered the loss of their mothers who were killed.

On the other hand, **ISIS** killed no less than **137** children and arrested **455** others at least in addition to recruiting hundreds of children while the armed opposition groups killed 304 children, arrested approximately **1000** children, and used some children in military activities.

85,000 children have been born in refugee camps many of them don't have any identification papers as the phenomenon of denial of citizenship is alarmingly growing.

All of this left a horrible psychological impact on the children of Syria because of the ceaseless traumas caused by the loss of families and friends, displacement, deprivation of education, and watching all of this killing, executions, and stoning.

Baraa Al-Agha, manager of the reports department at SNHR, says: "No one can even start to imagine what will become of the Syrian children in the future. We are losing an entire generation. The process of rehabilitating the children of Syria must commence now especially orphans and disabled children. Also, they must be protected from recruitment and early labor. The Syrian community will not be able to bear the responsibility alone."





Violations Perpetrated by the Syrian Government

A. Extrajudicial killings

SNHR has documented the names, pictures, videos, and place and date of death of no less than 17268 children victims who were killed by government forces since March 2011. Those children were killed by various kinds of weapons including indiscriminate missile shelling, artillery, and cluster munitions, poison gases, barrel bombs, and sharp weapons in many massacres of a sectarian-cleansing nature in Homs, Banyas, Jadedat Al-Fadel in Damascus countryside, Al-Qalamoun in Damascus countryside, Hama northern countryside, and Aleppo countryside.

Out of the 17268 children who were killed by the Syrian regime, 518 were killed by snipers where the snipers, who done the killing, was fully aware that he is targeting a child as it was documented in the report “Hunting Humans” that was published by SNHR. Furthermore, 95 children were tortured death inside the Syrian regime’s detention centers.

Moreover, the percentage of women victims exceeds 7% which is a high percentage that indicates the deliberate targeting of civilians by the government forces.

On Sunday 12 January, the Syrian regime helicopters dropped three barrel bombs on residential neighborhoods in Aleppo – Al-Bab city which killed seven children.

On Wednesday 16 January, the Syrian regime warplanes conducted an airstrike targeting Mied’a village (Damascus countryside) and targeted a residential home with a missile which killed two children; Moaed Al-Assad (seven-year-old) and Hekmat Al-Assad (five-year-old). SNHR contacted the two kids’ mother, who is the mother of seven children and the wife of a prisoner, to talk about her two sons:



Hekmat Assad Al-Assad



Moaed Assad Al-Assad

“I was at home with my seven sons when we heard the sound of the warplane, which has become familiar. My son Moaed screamed and told everyone to lie down on the ground. Our house was targeted with a missile and was destroyed completely. My little daughter was in my arms when I fell and fainted for a few minutes, I woke up calling my children, but Moaed and Hekmat never answered me. I went out trying to save my children but Moaed and Hekmat were already dead under rubbles. I have never been able to see their dead bodies, they are now only body parts. Are those who are killing us every day from this country??”



On Friday 21 February, 2014, the Syrian government killed five children; four of whom were from the same family where the Syrian regime warplanes targeted a house in Idlib – Um Ar-Riesh village with a missile despite SNHR's investigations that have proven that there weren't any military presence at the time of the shelling which indicates the systematicness of the Syrian regime's shelling.

On Saturday 2 August, 2014, government forces killed 22 children in Damascus countryside – Doma – Jamea' Hasiba neighborhood through aerial shelling.

On Tuesday 16 September, 2014, the Syrian regime warplanes targeted Talbiesa city, located in Homs, and killed 11 children.

The Syrian regime's killing policy has been carried out on systematically on a large scale as it included all the Syrian governorates.

B. Arrests, Enforced Disappearance, and Torture

More than 99% of the arrests conducted by the Syrian regime are being done without a legal memorandum and without informing the family of the detained child of the charges or the place of detention. Also, we documented many cases where the father and the son were arrested together as a way to press on the father where he was forced to watch his son being tortured. The family is not allowed to hire an attorney, the child is usually subjected to brutal torture, and the arbitrary arrest becomes enforced-disappearance in many cases.

Government forces arrest children because they were involved in revolutionary activities, social-networking websites, or the media or relief field in addition to tens of cases where the children were arrested in order to press on the father to give himself in.

SNHR documented that no less than 9500 children experienced imprisonment. Also, SNHR estimates that there are 1600 enforced-disappeared children at least. The Syrian government denies that it detains any children despite the families' testimonies that affirm that it were government forces that raided and arrested their sons. Additionally, some pictures that were aired on the official TV channel showed children and women inside Aleppo Central Prison. Child Alaa Raslan, 14-year-old, from Homs – Baba Amrou neighborhood, he was arrested on Saturday 22 December, 2012 along with his father by the Military Security branch in Homs before he was transferred to the disciplinary branch in Damascus and then Sydnaya where he was sentenced to 15 years. He spent one year and a half in Sydnaya and was then transferred to Adra Central Prison in Damascus.

Hosam Yousuf, 17-year-old, he was arrested by the government forces in Damascus – Al-Jesr Al-Abyad while he was heading home.

On Saturday 9 March 2013, government forces raided the home of the doctor Raniya Al-Abbasi, a Syrian and Arabic chess champion, in Damascus – Dammar neighborhood. She was arrested along with his husband and six children:

Dima Abdurrahman Yassin, female, born in 1999.

Intesar Abdurrahman Yassin, female, born in 2000.

Najah Abdurrahman Yassin, female, born in 2002.

Alaa Abdurrahman Yassin, female, born in 2005.

Ahmad Abdurrahman Yassin, male, born in 2007.

Layan Abdurrahman Yassin, female, born in July 2011.

The fate of the family is still unknown to this day.



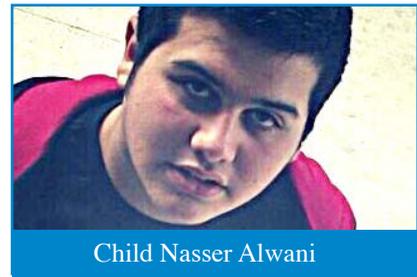


On Thursday 22 May, 2012, government forces arrested four children: Oyes Al-Abbar (five-year-old), Muna Al-Abbar (three-year-old), Fatima Al-Abbar (three-year-old), and Batour Al-Abbar (two-year-old). They were arrested along with their mother Rasha Sharbaji at the passports and immigration department in Damascus. Their fates are unknown to this moment.

Picture of Oyes Al-Abbar

Children in Syria are subjected to almost the same torture methods as adult men. SNHR documented in an extensive report the use of 46 different torture methods at least at the security branches in Syria. The brutal torture caused the death of no less than 95 children most of them died inside the security branches.

Child Nasser Alwani, from Damascus countryside – Jadedat Artouz, 17-year-old, government forces arrested him on 28 December, 2012. His family told us that they learned that he died inside a security branch on 30 September, 2013.



Child Nasser Alwani

Child Uqba Ahmad Al-Jomaa, from Hama countryside – Taybat Al-Imam city, 15-year-old. He was arrested by government forces in 2012. A security branch informed his family that he died under torture on 13 May, 2014.



Child Uqba Ahmad Al-Jomaa

Child Mohammad Feras Ad-Durra, from Damascus countryside – Jayroud, 16-year-old. He was arrested on 20 April, 2014 by the government forces from Al-Qtiefa hospital where he was being treated. His family told us that they learned that he died under torture inside a security branch on 19 May, 2014.



Child Mohammad Ajak

Child Mohammad Ajak, from Damascus – Rukn Ad-Din neighborhood, 16-year-old. Died under torture inside the prisons of the Syrian on 12 June, 2014.





C. Sexual Violence

Since the beginning of the Syrian revolution, the Syrian regime forces have used sexual violence as a weapon of war in various areas and governorates. Many rape crimes have been perpetrated based on sectarian reason in order to stigmatize and dishonor the society and force the families to leave their homes. Sexual violence might be one of the main reasons behind displacement and refuging.

The weapon of sexual violence affected the Syrian society considerably especially children victims of these crimes. Many widespread cases of mental and social breakdown were caused by sexual violence especially in cases of pregnancy and birth.

What even makes it more difficult and worse for the victims of sexual violence is seeing the perpetrators free bragging and publishing photos of their crimes. Furthermore, many criminals are still perpetrating more crimes of this kind to this day which is one of the reasons that evoked some to resort to extremism and might lead to unimaginable reactions.

SNHR met no less than 50 victims of sexual crimes in Amman, border town with Turkey, or in Syria. Nevertheless, what have been documented is only a minor fraction compared to the estimations, indicators, and testimonies that suggest that there is a considerably high number of sexual violence cases.

SNHR estimates that government forces perpetrated sexual crimes against children younger than 18-year-old. SNHR met with some survivors who talked about children who were sexually victimized while they were detained. Many survivors said that interrogators used to threaten them with sexual crimes if they didn't confess."

Mohammad.K, 15-year-old, from Homs – Al-Houla, he is from a family known for affiliating to the Syrian opposition. Mohammad was leaving his city on Tuesday 13 November, 2012 when he was stopped by a Syrian regime checkpoint where he was sexually harassed by two soldiers who afterwards took him to a room and raped him.

Mohammad says: **"I was molested and raped by soldiers affiliated to the Military Security branch. I only feel ashamed and insulted every time I remember the story."**

SNHR documented that 11 women, including girls younger than 18-year-old, were forced to say on the Syrian regime's official TV channel that they slept with opposition fighters per their families' request.



On 11 August, 2013, the Syrian regime's official TV channel broadcasted a movie named "Shariad Ded Ash-Shara'" (A Sharia' Against Islam) which showed a number of girls who said that they practiced Sexual Jihad including, as the movie shows, a 15-year-old girl named Sara Khaled Al-Allou who said that she is the leader of An-Nusra front in Al-Bokamal.

However, through investigation, it was found out that Sara Khaled Al-Alou is a girl from Al-Bokamal who was born in 1994, she was accepted at the College of Sharia in Damascus University. Sara wasn't known for any oppositional activism. She was arrested by the Political Security along with two of her colleagues two month before she appeared on Television.

D. Siege

Government forces have used siege as a weapon of war to submit the opposition-held areas and to press on civilians. Children were affected the most by the policy that caused many cases of malnutrition and drought among the children of Syria not to mention the diseases which spread in light of the environmental pollution as the pile of garbage and the damaged drainage wastes have become alarmingly noticeable in Damascus countryside – Eastern Ghouta.

SNHR has documented since the beginning of the Syrian revolution the death of 33 kids who died due to lack of food and medication in different besieged areas.

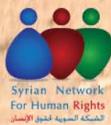
On Sunday 12 January the siege and lack of medication caused the death of the female child [Israa Al-Masri](#) in Damascus – Al-Yarmouk camp. On 25 January, male child Abduljalil Mohammad Khamis also died due to food shortage in Damascus – Al-Yarmouk camp which suffers from a suffocating siege by the Syrian regime.

In a report about cold, SNHR documented that nine children have die from cold in 2013 due to the monopoly of fuel and the Syrian regime's policy of cutting off the power.

On Thursday 12 December, 2012, the seven-month-old [Amina Suliman Bahbouh](#) died from extreme cold in Homs – Ar-Rastan.

On Sunday 15 January the 10-day-old Sham Malek Al-Hariri died from extreme cold due to the absence of any heating methods inside Al-Yarmouk camp (Damascus countryside).





E. Deprivation of Education

The Syrian regime's indiscriminate shelling targeted no less than 3942 more than half of which are now out of commission. SNHR was able to acquire audio recordings of pilots saying to their officers: "There is no clear target" and the officer responded: "Shell any residential gathering". This forced many of the families to stop sending their kids to school out of fear that they might be killed. Furthermore, homelessness rates increased significantly because of displacement and the destruction of many residential buildings and also because of extreme poverty as many shops and workplaces were destroyed or because the absence of the house provider who wither was killed or arrested which forced many children to work to provide for their families. Estimations suggest that there are more than 2 million out-of-school children in Syria.

For instance, more than 60% of the children in the besieged Eastern Ghouta are agricultural workers or street vendors.

Umran, 15-year-old child in Damascus countryside – Eastern Ghouta tells us about how he was forced to leave school in light of the siege in Eastern Ghouta:

"I don't have any time to go to school because I have to work every day for more than 12 hours at a sweets shop so I can help my father to provide for our family. After that I go to work at an agricultural land. My whole salary can't suffice my family for more than three days."



Hiba, an elementary school teacher in Damascus countryside – Eastern Ghouta talks to SNHR about the status of education in the area:

"Teaching opportunities are decreasing steadily. With the suffocating siege, most of the children are providing for their families and are forced to drop out of school or to work after school which negatively affects their education. In light of such conditions, education is a necessity, it is unattainable luxury"



On Wednesday 30 April, 2014 government forces killed more than 17 children in Ain Jalout School in Aleppo – Al-Anssari neighborhood as a Sukhoi war-plane targeted a gathering of more than 400 students. Picutre of one of the students who were killed by the targeting of Ain Jalou School

On Wednesday 5 November, 2014, government forces, which is stationed at Qasyoun Mountains in Damascus, targeted Al-Hayat School in Damascus – Al-Qaboun neighborhood with two missiles to kill more than 15 children.

Dr. Abu-Hassan, a doctor who works at the field-hospital in Al-Qaboun neighborhood: “More than 25 arrived at the hospital, we were able to transfer ten children to hospitals in Damascus with the help of the Red Crescent. However, the Syrian regime military checkpoint hindered the medical teams and because of that they arrived late. The missiles shelling caused severe injuries including amputation cases, critical eye injuries, and burns.”



F. Recruitment

The Syrian government armed its Shiite militias which is fighting with the government forces. This was primarily in Latakia, Tartus, Hama northern countryside, and Homs countryside. Even though, most of the recruited children operate at checkpoints, evidences have shown that they are being used also in surveillance operations.

Through monitoring the Syrian militias’ websites, where they mourn some of the dead fighters, we noticed over the last year that increasing numbers of killed and wounded children which proves that the Syrian regime is increasingly using children.

Child Ibrahim [Mohammad Shawiesh](#), from Tartus – Al-Qadmous city – Ram Tarza, was killed while he was fighting in the clashes with the opposition forces in Al-Mlieha battles in Damascus countryside on 18 August, 2014.



Child [Alaa Ad-Din Nasser Assad](#), from Tartus – Ad-Darkiesh – Al-Qasibiya village was killed during clashes with opposition forces in Salma battle which took place in Latakia on 16 July, 2014.

Child [Ahmad Mahmoud Yousuf](#), from Tartus – Al-Hamidiya village, was killed during clashes with opposition forces in Aleppo city on 4 May, 2014.

[Zain Hassaan Abbas](#), 17-year-old, from Latakia – Bait Yashout, Ain Salem village, the only son of his parents. He was killed during clashes in Homs – Ash-Sha'er oil field. His corpse was transferred from the military hospital in Latakia on 17 July, 2014.

The Syrian regime's Shiite militias recruit children and teenagers extensively in Syria.

The Iraqi kid [Majd Kayyara Al-Iraqi](#) fought for Abulfadl Al-Abbas battalion before he was injured critically on 25 April, 2014 during Al-Mlieha battles between government forces and armed opposition groups.

The Iraqi kid [Mahmoud Al-Mosoui](#), fights for the Iraqi "Hezbollah An-Nujabaa" militias during Aleppo battles. The Shiite militias participated in shelling, killing, besieging, and torturing. Furthermore, it perpetrated many sectarian-cleansing massacres in which many children were killed. SNHR was able to document a limited portion of these massacres because of the considerable difficulty to talk to eyewitnesses or survivors as many of them either fled or were killed.

On Friday 21 June, 2013, government forces, reinforced by Shiite militias, raided Rasm An-Nafl village in Aleppo and systematically killed and field-executed entire families including 27 children.

From Wednesday 20 November, 2013 to Friday 27 December, 2013, government forces, with the support of Shiite militias, killed no less than 98 in Damascus countryside – An-Nabak city according to a previous study published by SNHR.

Government forces and its loyal militias perpetrated crimes that can be openly classified as crimes against humanity including extrajudicial killing, torture, enforced-disappearance, and sexual violence. Also, it perpetrated war crimes including recruitment and siege. All of these crimes explicitly and blatantly violates the international humanitarian law.

Violations Perpetrated by Kurdish Groups

Early in 2012, government forces started withdrawing from Kurdish areas in northern and northeastern Syria with only staying in vital centers. PKK (Turkey)'s PYD (Syria) took over Ifreen, Ain Al-Arab (Koubani), and Al-Jazira. Al-Ashayes forces represent the internal security forces (Police) while the People Protection Units (Al-Aboujiya) are the army.

SNHR documented many violation perpetrated in Kurds-held areas including extrajudicial killing and enforced recruitment.

A. Extrajudicial killing

SNHR documented the killing of no less than 14 children at the hands of the PYD forces.

On Friday 4 October, 2013, SNHR documented the killing of three children from Al-Hassaka – Al-Kahtaniya by a PYD's shelling that targeted Thyab village in Al-Hassaka countryside.

On Friday 27 June, 2013, PYD's People Protection Units killed two children in Al-Hassaka – Amouda while they were opening fire against a demonstration.

Picture of [Saad Abdulbaqi Syda](#), 15-year-old, one of Amouda massacre victims



B. Recruitment

PYD recruits children extensively and not only male children but also female children. A number of the area residents told SNHR that children participate in direct killings and also operates at military checkpoints. Since 2012, the Kurdish groups have been training children extensively.

Mr Wesam Allou, a resident from Ifreen told SNHR:

“I was heading, along with other people, to Afreen, which is located in Aleppo northwestern countryside and under the control of Kurdish forces. We stopped at one of their military checkpoints. A little girl, looked no older than 15-year-old, was carrying a small rifle and came and talked to us in the Kurdish language. She asked us to show our identifications and asked the driver to open the car trunk before she let us pass.”

On Monday 17 November, 2014, PYD forces arrested two brothers Zwyah Mahmoud Mahmoud and Afien Mahmoud Mahmoud from their school in Al-Hassaka city.

PYD forces perpetrated crimes that can be openly classified as war crimes such as indiscriminate shelling and enforced-recruitment. All of these crimes violate the international humanitarian law explicitly. The party, as an authority, must respect the international humanitarian law standards.

Violations Perpetrated by Qaeda-affiliated Factions

A. Extrajudicial Killing

ISIS (Da'ish) has conducted many attacks at the beginning of 2014 in Ar-Raqqah, Der Ezzor, Al-Hassaka, and Aleppo countryside. The faction managed to take over wide areas and also shelled some of the government forces areas.

The indiscriminate shelling and clashes, in which ISIS was involved, resulted in the killing of no less than 137 children as they are documented by name, picture, place and time of death.

On Friday 14 February, 2014, we documented the killing of the two children Othman Sha'ban and Walid Abdurrazzaq by an ISIS's shelling that targeted Akhtarien city in Aleppo.

On Tuesday 11 March, 2014, ISIS executed the two children Jasim Khalil Jasim, 14-year-old, and Mustafa Jasim, 16-year-old, in Aleppo – Ash-Shyoukh Al-Fouqani.

On Friday 2 May, 2014, ISIS killed no less than nine children in a car bombing in Hama – Jidrean village.

On Thursday 15 May, 2014, ISIS detonated a bomb car in Sajjou Garages at Bab As-Salama crossing near the Turkish borders. The bombing caused the death of four children.



B. Arrest and Enforced-disappearance

ISIS arrested in its areas no less than 455 children, most of whom were from families that opposed the faction's policies. We don't have much information about them.

On Tuesday 8 October, 2013, ISIS arrested five children in Aleppo – Izaz city as it was oppressing some residents who were protesting against the faction. The fates of those children are still unknown.

On Thursday 29 May, 2014, ISIS arrested 146 13-14-year-old Kurdish children in Ain Arab by holding a school bus in Menbej village (Aleppo).

On Tuesday 30 September, 2014, ISIS arrested three 14-15-year-old children in Aleppo – Minbij as it was conducting military operations in the city.

From Friday 21 May to 24 September, ISIS carried out wide arresting campaigns where 33 children in various villages in Aleppo northern countryside including Nu'man village, Qbasien village, Susnbat village, Shawi village, Ar-Ra'ie village. We don't have any information about them.

On Wednesday 4 June, 2014, ISIS arrested 15 children in Aleppo – Al-Bab city as a part of an arresting campaign that targeted residents who opposed the faction in the city.

C. Sexual Violence

ISIS published an article, in its magazine "Dabeq", titled: "Reviving Slavery before Judgment Day" to religiously justify its opinions about reestablishing slavery and, therefore, apprehending and selling Yazidi women and children in slavery markets. In the same article, a [document](#) show the prices of women and children who were kidnapped from Yazidi-Iraqi areas in August 2014 and then were taken to Ar-Raqqa city. According to the document, a Yazidi-Christian woman who is 10-20-year-old is priced at 150,000 Dinar while children between 1-9-year-old are priced at 200,000 Dinar.

ISIS takes female children away from their families and force them to marry ISIS fighters. We haven't been able to meet any women survivors although some of the local residents smuggle some detained women in exchange for cash. Our methodology doesn't include paying money for testimonies or interviews.

We talked to members of the Yazidi groups and they strictly refused to talk about any sexual violations. Therefore, we don't have any estimations about the enslaved children of the Yazidi sect.



D. Recruitment

ISIS fighters used children in some direct and indirect military operations such as guarding, cooking, cleaning weapons etc... The faction promoted the culture of carrying weapons among children through conducting training courses to train them. The faction opened a number of camps to train children on how to carry weapons and other hostilities. ISIS called these camps “Al-Ashbal camps”. Such camps can be found in Ar-Raqqa and Al-Bab city in Aleppo. Furthermore, many schools were turned into centers and camps for training.

ISIS exploited the poor living conditions where it attracted hundreds of children through paying them low amounts of money. This one of the main reasons why children join the faction.

SNHR met with Abdullah Na’san, resident from Aleppo eastern countryside – Al-Bab city, to talk about the phenomenon of recruiting children in the city:

“After it took over Al-Bab city in February, ISIS founded a number of camps to recruit young children between 12-18-year-olds. Most of these camps are established in the schools”

“At these camps, Children are taught the Jihadist principles of the faction before they are taken to farms in Bza’a town, located in Aleppo eastern countryside, where they are trained physically. Also, they learn how to use some of the basic weapons. Afterwards, they are divided into groups where some of them go to operate at checkpoints while others are assigned to guard the faction centers”

“ISIS clerks chose boys from educational courses that are conducted at mosques. They offer them money exploiting the poor economic conditions, high unemployment rates, and the death of many families’ providers. All of this evoke some of the families to send their kids to these camps as an attempt to obtain additional income.”

“While I was residing in Aleppo eastern countryside, I saw tens of children, who were no older than 15-year-old, at ISIS checkpoints or guarding ISIS centers and institution especially in Al-Bab and Menbej cities.”

Mr. Muрад Al-Azizi, from Aleppo – Izaz, tells SNHR about the child Murad Ahmad Al-Hallaq, 16-year-old, who was recruited by ISIS:

“Abdulqaqa’ was the name he choose for himself when he joined ISIS as a security officer in Izaz when it was raided by the faction at the end of September. Murad was working in secret with ISIS before the raid as a spy on FSA”



ISIS used children to beat and torture prisoners. One of the released prisoners, a close friend of Murad Al-Azizi, told us about the same child Murad Ahmad who was one of his torturers:

“Abdulqaqa’ supervised the torture and participated in beating us. He would transfer us, prisoners from FSA, civilians, and media activists between ISIS centers in ambulances to not draw attention to himself. While we were being transferred outside Izaz, he stepped on the head of a media activist whom I know well. He said to him sarcastically: I will lift my leg if you told me how many Ruk’at (rounds) there is in Al-Fajr prayer.”



SNHR talked to a guy whose younger brother was a fighter for An-Nusra front and now is kidnapped by ISIS in Der Ezzor countryside:

“My younger brother joined An-Nusra front behind our back about a year and a half ago in Der Ezzor countryside. He was 14-year-old at that time. He wasn’t going to school since some of the schools were closed while others were destroyed by the shelling of the Syrian regime. The shelling killed many of the village residents including some of my brother’s friends and also some relatives. All of this made my brother really sad and enraged and he wanted revenge. One day he asked my parents if he can join An-Nusra front but they refused to let him. Afterwards, he was regularly leaving the house under the pretext that he is going to the mosque to study Quran.”

“After a while, he confessed in front of us that he pledged allegiance to An-Nusra front and he underwent a 40-day course at one of its institutes at which he learned a lot of Feqh and Aqida.”

“He then told us that he is going to participate in a camp for material arts and physical training and that he will learn to use a weapon. After he came back, he told us that he was trained on how to use the AK and PKC and also he was physically trained.”

“After finishing the camp, he started participating with An-Nusra front in battles against the Syrian regime forces. At the battle, he was mostly an assistant to the person who is on the RPG. He participated in battles in Al-Hweyqa and Ar-Rasdhiya neighborhoods in Der Ezzor. He never listened to my parents who always tried to convince him to stop what he is doing.”

“After Der Ezzor was taken over by ISIS recently, part of An-Nusra front forces withdrawn to Daraa. My brother was among those who withdrawn. About a month ago, he came back to visit us. We were shocked as he was kidnapped by ISIS. Two cars, affiliated to ISIS, came and fighters, who likely are from Chechnya as they didn’t talk Arabic, surrounded the house and took my brother as he was accused of apostasy. We learned later that he was detained at an ISIS prison in one of Der Ezzor towns.”



Child [Munir Ilyas Mahl Al-Hajr Ad-Dahham](#), 13-year-old, from a western village in Der Ezzor western countryside, fighter for An-Nusra front who was killed at the battle of the liberation of Al-Hweyqa neighborhood in Der Ezzor by government forces on 10 August, 2013. We learned that Munir was assistant to the person who is on the RPG.

Child [Abdullah Yousuf Hamid Al-Hajr](#), 12-year-old, from Der Ezzor eastern countryside – Ash-Shahil town, fighter for An-Nusra front who was killed in the battles between ISIS and An-Nusra front which was supported by some armed opposition groups in Al-Hassaka southern countryside – Markda city on 1 April, 2014.

Child [Ibrahim Eissa Al-Ahmad Al-Hajr](#), 14-year-old, from Der Ezzor eastern countryside – Ash-Shahil town, a fighter for An-Nusra front. He carried out a suicidal mission at an ISIS center in Der Ezzor northern countryside – Gharbiya village as he was driving a truck filled with explosives to target a gathering for ISIS on 23 April, 2014.



E. Deprivation of Education

The status of education deteriorated after it was taken over by ISIS mainly because the faction turned some of the schools into center and training locations and also because of the deteriorated security situation in light of the ongoing clashes. The faction imposed restriction on the curriculum where he ruled out some of the subjects and add others in addition to separating boys from girls.

Marwan Hamshou, a teacher from Aleppo – Minbij, talked to SNHR about the status of education in light of ISIS’s control:

“The education in Aleppo southern countryside started deteriorating after the area was taken by ISIS. The restrictions imposed by ISIS led to many schools closing. Also, female students were deprived of continuing their education because of the rareness of female teachers which was a law imposed by ISIS.”

“On the other hand, teachers had to take religious courses coordinated by the faction in Al-Bab and Menbej cities. About 300 teachers took these courses in Menbej alone. However, those teachers are not capable of cover the educational needs of Menbej city which is populated by more than 600,000”

“The number of schools in Menbej and Al-Bab cities are really low as well as in Maskna and Der Hafer. The schools in the countryside are completely out of commission. ISIS doesn’t pay enough attention to the educational process.”

ISIS has perpetrated war crimes through indiscriminate shelling, killing, torture, sexual violence, forced recruitment, and turning schools into points and training centers. All these crimes violate explicitly the international humanitarian law. Also, ISIS fought education and imposed unfair restriction on female children’s clothes and movements.

Violations Perpetrated by Armed Opposition Groups

A. Extrajudicial Killing

SNHR documented the killing of 304 children at the hands of different armed opposition groups. Most of those children were killed by the opposition forces’ indiscriminate shelling that targeted some of the Syrian regime areas especially using mortar shells.

On Thursday 3 April, 2014, armed opposition groups killed seven children by targeting An-Najjarien neighborhood in Damascus with mortar shells.



Pictures show the children who were killed by the shelling on An-Najjarien neighborhood



On Wednesday 23 April, 2014 we documented the killing of four children at the hands of the armed opposition that targeted the surroundings of Al-Baladiya and Ar-Rawda neighborhoods in Damascus countryside – Jermana.



On Sunday 4 May, armed opposition groups killed four children in Al-Ashrafiya neighborhood in Aleppo by targeting Al-Mall Street with mortar shells.

On Sunday 15 June, SNHR documented the killing of seven children in Idlib – Jesr Ash-Shoghour by armed opposition groups that targeted Karm Rahhal neighborhood.



B. Arrests and Kidnapping

Armed opposition groups arrested no less than 1000 children in Syrian regime areas and rebel-held areas.

On Sunday 4 August, 2013, armed opposition groups kidnapped 21 children in Latakia northern countryside – Al-Hanboushiya village after it raided the village and arrested whole families including women and children.

On Thursday 19 December, 2013. “Jaish Al-Islam” fighters raided Adra Al-Ummaliya area in Damascus countryside and arrested whole families. Among the arrested were 164 children. Jaish Al-Islam stated that all the people it arrested are war prisoners in order to reach an exchange deal with government forces.

On Friday 10 April, 2014, “Thwwar Syria” Front arrested three children in Idlib – Al-Bara village.

On Sunday 2 November, 2014, “Thwwar Syria” Front arrested three children who were fleeing from Hama city. The arresting took place in Aleppo – Madaya village.

On Saturday 15 February, 2013, “Ahrar Syria” battaliopn arrested a child in Aleppo – Ash-Sha’ar neighborhood.

C. Sexual Violence

We didn’t document any crimes of sexual violence by the armed opposition.



D. Recruitment

As tens of thousands of shops and factories were destroyed, poverty overwhelmed many areas of Syria. Also, as many children lost their fathers, providers, and friends, they were suffering from difficult psychological conditions, depression, and what appears to be a grim future. All of these factors drove hundreds of children to join the armed brigades.

A number of armed faction leaders told us that they accept children and let them participate in a variety of tasks within the brigade. They said that it was better than letting them fall to homelessness, the underworld, and exploitation at work.

Although the armed groups are not an international party and, thus, it is not bound by the optional protocol which establish that the minimum age for direct recruitment is 18-year-old, it is bound by the international humanitarian law which sees that the minimum age is 15-year-old. Certainly, there are hundreds of children younger than 15-year-old working with armed groups which is a war crime.

Aboud, 12-year-old, joined along with his brother Dieb, 14-year-old, an armed faction on Ash-Shaikh Saeed battlefront in Aleppo after two of their brothers and one of their uncles were killed.

Child Ali Al-Fayyad, 14-year-old from Der Ezzor northern countryside – An-Namliya village, was a fighter for Jaish Al-Islam-affiliated “Al-Haq Brigades Assembly”. He was killed in Der Ezzor – Ar-Rasafa neighborhood during the clashes with government forces on 16 August, 2013. Some of his colleagues told us that he had an AK.

Child Muath Al-Khalaf, 13-year-old, from Der Ezzor eastern countryside – Al-Bo’amrou village. He was a fighter for “Al-Fatihoun Men Ard Ash-Sham” faction. He was killed in Der Ezzor – Ar-Rashdiya neighborhood during the clashes with government forces on 24 September, 2013. Muath had an AK.

Child Ahmad Mustafa Al-Bakri, 16-year-old, from Aleppo, known as Abulzahraa, He was fighting with the armed opposition. He was killed during clashes with ISIS in the surroundings of Akhtarien town on 13 August, 2013.



Factions of the armed opposition have perpetrated war crimes through indiscriminate shelling, killing, torture, and forced recruitment. All of these crimes violate explicitly the international humanitarian law.





The Syrian Children in Refugee Camps

There are about 2.9 million Syrian children refugees. We met many of them inside and outside the camps. The most notable difficulties from which the Syrian child suffers in refugee camps are:

1. Many children refugees are without their fathers who were either killed or choose to have their families leave the country out of fear for their lives.
2. Even though many children at refugee camps in Jordan and Turkey can go out every day, the situation is different in Lebanon where the child can't even leave his tent for a whole month. Also, more than one families live in one house.
3. Most of the children refugees are deprived of education, the percentage of out-of-school children differ from one country to another. However, the average is that 45% of children refugees are out-of-school children.
4. The Syrian child in refugee camps is denied of a citizenship. More than 85,000 children were born in refugee camps. Many of them were denied their rightful nationality because the child carries his father's nationality and even if the father is present, he must have a marriage license according to the Syrian law. It should be taken into consideration that many fathers are either missing or forcibly-disappeared any a large portion of them don't have any documents.
5. Severe mental disorders as a result of the broken families, lack of security, displacement, the pictures of blood and destruction that those children witnessed for about four years, loss of families, loss of hope, and social difficulties where many of them were forced to work.
6. Blackmailing and trafficking.
7. Many of the Syrian children in refugee camps are injured and wounded.



SNHR talked to Mr. Abdussalam Ziad who told us about the difficulties he had to face to secure identification papers for his newly-born daughter:

“I was forced to flee to Turkey as I was wanted by the Syrian regime, I was blessed with a new daughter in October. Since then, I am still working to get my new daughter a nationalities. I can’t go to the Syrian authorities, and the Turkish state only grants us a birth certificate at the hospital. However, this certificate is not enough for a passport. My daughter is without a nationality and of the war went on for other couple of years, she won’t be able to go to school.”

Mohammad, 14-year-old, fled to Turkey with his family. Mohammad works now as a street vendor selling tissues in the streets of Turkey – Gaziantep:

“My dad’s income is not enough for my seven-member family. I started working with my little sister selling tissues. What I am afraid of the most is the police coming and confiscating the money and goods I am selling. I haven’t been to school since when we were in Aleppo because of the intense shelling. When we came here, all I ever wanted is to help my dad providing for my family.”



SNHR met with Dr. Shafiq Amer, specialized in children’s mental and psychological disorders, Dr. Shafiq manages a center for treating some of the Syrian children in Jordan.

“Most of the children here have experienced shelling and killing and are suffering from mental disorders that prevent them from going to school. At this center, we are trying psychologically rehabilitate the child so he can fit in the new environment. We try to provide the children with tools to play with as an attempt to pull him out from the state of fear and instability that he suffer from.”

“Most of the children fear heavy machine guns and the sounds of the warplanes. A kid told me once:”I am afraid of the tanks that shelled our house and made very strong sounds that shook our home.””

SNHR met the female child Yumna, five-year-old, and the child Eid, seven-year-old, who are from Al-Yadouda tiwn in Daraa. Their house was destroyed by a barrel bomb which also killed their mother. The two kids’ aunt tells us about their injuries and suffering on their way to Jordan

“The shelling caused severe injuries for the kids. Yumna’s right leg was amputated while Eid lost both of his legs. We stayed at Aqla hospital in Amman for three days as the doctors were trying to provide medical care. We went to Ath-Thalil hospital in Az-Zaraa’ where doctors found out that Eid’s right leg is starting to day. Yumna underwent three surgeries while Eid underwent ten surgeries. They are waiting now for a hospital to agree to implant new artificial limbs for them.”



Child Yumna talks to us



Recommendations

The international community and the United Nations

SNHR publishes many studies and reports on the various kinds of violations that are being perpetrated in Syria. We believe that the children crisis in Syria is a part of the main crisis. Without a solution to the Syrian crisis, the childhood crisis will continue complicating radically and its effects will last for the years to come.

The Syrian crisis is mainly a humanitarian crisis caused by human rights violations even though it is described as a geopolitical crisis which is only an attempt to escape the confrontation of the reality of the Syrian crisis.

The international community is certainly able to ease the impact of the crisis by executing the Security Council resolutions even though they were adopted after it was too late. No one is talking anymore about resolution 2139 and putting an end to the indiscriminate attacks that has been carried out since 22 February. These attacks killed no less than 1483 documented children by name, picture, and video. Furthermore, eight children were killed by poison gases because the Security Council failed to implement resolution 2118.

Even in regard with resolution 2139 and 2165, which were on delivering humanitarian aids, we are still seeing children in besieged areas (Eastern Ghouta and Dariyya in Damascus countryside and Al-Wa'r neighborhood in Homs) dying from hunger and cold and a new winter is nearing.

UNHCHR should publish extensive reports on the violations against children in Syria. Also, it should focus more on the crimes of enforced-disappearance, torture, arresting and killing children. We are willing to cooperate about any of the cases that this report included.

Moreover, we urge the International Investigation Commission to pay greater attention the reports of SNHR and to coordinate in order to follow the investigations regarding the crimes this report included.

All the states that are helping and supplying the Syrian government with money, weapons, and militias are undoubtedly considered as partner in its crimes and also the states that are supporting armed groups who are involved in war crimes.

The international community must work to reach a political solution in order to stop the daily bloodbath and hold the individuals who are responsible for all the violations accountable.

Many of these violation can be classified as war crimes and crimes against humanity. SNHR urges all the relevant organizations and agencies to work to refer the Syrian case to the I.C.C. Since China and Russia are insisting on supporting the impunity of the criminals, the U.N. should form a special court for Syria as soon as possible.

The neighboring countries

To insure the right of the Syrian refugees to a safe shelter and respect their rights including prohibiting forcible return. Furthermore, the EU countries should help the neighboring countries by housing more Syrian refugees. Additionally, the donor countries must increase its aids to the UNHCR and the local civil-society organization in the states that have Syrian refugees.

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