

The Military Campaign against Al-Thyabeya Town in Damascus Countryside Has a Sectarian Cleansing's Nature

Documented by [SNHR](#)

The methodology of this report depends on the investigations conducted by SNHR team in Damascus countryside governorate with some of the residents and activists. This report includes two eyewitnesses' testimonies in addition to the news and photos that the network received from cooperating activists from inside the city.

The military campaign against Al-Thyabeya began on 8 October, 2013 with the raiding by Abo Al-Fadl Al-Abbas brigade supported by Ahmad Jabril's Palestinian committees. The residents identified them easily from their clothes, look, and accent. The forces raided the town from four sides: As-Sayeda Zainab from the main St. of Al-Thyabeya, Al-Shamalneh neighborhood leading to Al-Thyabeya gardens, Al-Hosayeneyah side, and Al-Sheikh Omar side.

The raiding was preceded by intensive shelling with tanks and heavy guns, air shelling by MiG war-planes, and by Brigade 58 which is affiliated to the Syrian regime and located in Sohayba mounts. Some of the residents tried to escape via the farms which were being shelled by heavy machine guns. Many of them were killed and injured while the civilians who stayed in town were slaughtered and executed. Additionally the fate of many families remains unknown.

Abdulgaffar Al-Joolani, an eyewitness has talked to SNHR.

Abdulhaffar Al-Joulani can be found on Skype: Abdul.gaffar45

"Abu Al-Fadl Al-Abbas militias and Iranian groups had raided the town. Some of them were talking in Iraqi accent and raising Hezbollah flags and flags with Abo Al-Fadl Al-Abbas written on it. They've raided the town from four sides. The raiding was accompanied by Assad regime's shelling. Some people tried to escape through the gardens but the regime was using flashing bombs to search the place so many of them were injured or killed in addition to a lot of people who are missing. Some of the residents stayed in the town, I saw some of them being slaughtered or field-executed. When the militias were killing they were shouting: "For you Zaynab" and "For you Hussain". The Shiite militias have burnt many of dead bodies after killing them."

Abo Bahr Al-Joolani, and survivor and eyewitness, has talked to SNHR

Abu-Bahr Al-Joulani can be found on Skype: Free.aljolan

"The town was raided by Abo Al-Fada Al-Abbas militias and Hezbollah We've distinguished them by their flags and accents. They came from brigade 58 to Sheikh Omar area, then they've besieged the city and blocked anyone from entering or exiting the city before they've attacked from the side of Al-Khomaynee hospital and Al-Theyabeya residences. Many FSA members fought to stop the raiding and many among them fell martyrs and injured."

These militias have arrested near Abo Adnan Swimming Pool a number of families while they were trying to flee from the town and executed some of them immediately including women and children. There are a lot of families with unknown fate.”

When they’ve raided the town they were shouting: “For you Zaynab” and they were raising the flags of Hezbollah. One of the brigade leaders is known as: Abu Ajeeb, who was a known Shiite fruit seller among the residents before the revolution.”

Although SNHR team couldn’t visit the town because of the imposed siege, we were able to [document](#) 13 families who were either killed or missing.

Conclusions:

1-SNHR affirms that the shelling against Ath-Thyabiya town is an act of indiscriminate shelling that targeted armless civilians, thus the government forces and its militias have violated the articles of the International Law for Human Rights which guarantee the right to live. Furthermore, these violation were perpetrated during a non-international armed conflict which can be classified openly as war crimes.

2- SNHR believes that this indiscriminate shelling that killed people in Ad-Dmier city is a crime against humanity where Shiite militias were involved.

3- The random attacks committed by Shiite militias are considered violations of the customary international law considering the fact that they have attacked residential areas rather than a specific military target.

4- The magnitude of this wide systematic frequent shelling, the level of its excessive strength, its military nature, and the coordinated approach of these attacks must be based on high orders, and a state policy.

Reccomendations :

The Security Council and the United Nations

1. Transferring the Syrian case to the International Criminal Court and stopping the disrupting of the decisions that must be adopted by the Security Council against the Syrian government. This disruption is a wrong message to all the dictatorships around the world and an enhancement to the culture of crime.

2. Posing urgent punishment on those who are involved in the violations of human rights.

3. Obliging the Syrian government to allow all relief and human rights organizations to enter Syria, in addition to the International Investigation Committee and allowing them to work freely.

4. Insuring the ceasing of importing all sorts of weapons to Syrian government because it is using in comprehensive attacks against civilians.

5. Security Council must shoulder responsibility in preserving security and civil peace in Syria because the violations of the Syrian government are considered gross threat to international peace and security.

6. Listing the militias that are fighting with the Syrian government which committed massacres, like Hezbollah and the other Shiite brigades, National defense Army and Shabiha militia on the international list of terrorist organizations. Among these militias is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria which committed lots of crimes in the areas that are not controlled by the Syrian government.
7. Applying the principle of “protecting civilians” that was adopted by the General Assembly in Syria now, as the situation there is direly requiring such a principle now.
8. Considering the crimes against humanity committed by the Syrian government, this government can't be dealt with as an “official side”. Furthermore, stopping supplying the Syrian government with the greatest amounts of financial and humanitarian aid as it don't reach those who need them in most cases but go instead to the supporters of the Syrian government.

Human Rights Council :

1. Demanding the Security Council and the involved international institutions to shoulder responsibility concerning the sufferings of the Syrian people which include killing, arrest, rape and displacement.
2. Applying pressure on the Syrian government in order to stop the acts of killing and torture.
3. Holding the allies and supporters of the Syrian government - Russia, Iran and China –as materially and morally responsible for the killing that is happening in Syria.
4. Human Rights Council must pay more attention and consideration to the catastrophic situation of the children, families and relatives of the victims in Syria.

The Arab League :

1. Punishing all those who are involved in committing crimes in Syria and urging all the countries of the world to do the same thing.
2. Increasing humanitarian aid, especially on the levels of education and health care and taking care of the Syrian refugees in the Arab countries.
3. Requesting the Security Council to execute the above recommendations.
4. Asking the Human Rights Council and the United Nations to pay more interest to the case of daily killing in Syria.
5. Taking the Syrian issue very seriously and considering it as a priority, and trying to take care of the families of the victims psychologically, materially and educationally.
6. Applying political and diplomatic pressure on the main allies of the Syrian government; Russia, Iran and China in order to prevent them from continuing to provide international and political backing and protection for the crimes committed against the Syrian people, and holding them materially and morally responsible for all the violations of the Syrian government.

The Syrian Government :

1. Instantly stopping all kinds of human rights violations.
2. Respecting its international commitment to protect civilians in the time of war and respecting the articles of the International Human Law as it is one of the sides that endorsed Rome Convention, in addition to respecting the International Law for Human Rights.
3. Allowing instant access to the International Investigation Committee and facilitating its work and cooperating with the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights and national human rights organizations.

The International Investigation Committee :

The International Investigation Committee must stop depicting the struggle in Syria as a struggle between two sides equal in crimes, power and the centralization of decisions. It must describe the crimes the same way they happen without belittling their extent for political reasons. The committee must also increase the number of its staff who work on the Syrian issue due to the amount of the crimes committed daily in Syria so that it conduct a more comprehensive documentation. We would like to thank the victims’ families, eyewitnesses, media activists who contributed in making this report.

