

There is no safe place... Hospitals are being targeted and destroyed in Syria

More than 85% of Ar-Raqqa hospitals are completely out of service

Scope of the Report:

documenting the airstrikes against The National Hospital on 11 February, 2014

Introduction

Ar-Raqqa is located in Northern Syria, it was liberated on 4 March, 2013. Since then the Syrian regime has been targeting it with an indiscriminate and heavy shelling despite that it was liberated and there are no more clashes in it.

The Following URL shows the location of Ar-Raqqa governorate

This report's methodology is based on the investigations conducted by [SNHR](#) with activists and eyewitnesses from Ar-Raqqa. This report contains eyewitnesses' accounts in addition to the pictures and videos that we verified after we had received it from coop-

erating activists in the city. We weren't able to visit the incident location. The witnesses' names were changed according to their will.

Please visit the following URL to learn more about [*SNHR's methodology in documenting victims*](#)

SNHR has published on 2 September, 2013 a report about the destruction of hospitals across Syria; according to the report, 85% of Ar-Raqqa hospitals are either non-functioning or out of service. Der Ezzor, Damascus countryside, and Homs come second as 75% of the hospitals in these governorates are out of service. Government forces are still targeting, deliberately in most cases, the hospitals to deepen the suffering of the residents in the areas that have gotten out of the Syrian regime control.

Details

The warplanes of the Syrian regime, which is the only party in Syria that possess aerial arsenal, have targeted the department of nephrology at The National Hospital in Ar-Raqqa. Warplanes shelled, without any prior warning or declared purpose, the hospital with two missiles which destroyed the hospital heavily and killed one victim and wounded 22 people.

SNHR has documented, in a previous incident, the targeting of the very same hospital by the Syrian regime, particularly the department of pediatrics on 20 June, 2013.

SNHR contacted Fawwaz Al-Brad'ie who witnessed the incident and provided us with his testimony:

“Around 12:00 AM on Tuesday, I was on the first floor at The National Hospital in Ar-Raqqa city to visit a relative of mine who was staying there. Suddenly a large explosion occurred, the whole building was shocked, parts of the glass and the windows scattered all over the place, also a portion of the first floor ceiling collapsed, no one was hurt in the hallway where I was. In less than three minutes, another larger explosion occurred, there was a lot of dust and dirt. Plastic, glass, and wood pieces were everywhere. There were two wounded in front of the doctors' residence, I helped one of them to get out. Everyone was panicked in the outer yard. An ambulance was trying to take the wounded outside of the hospital. I saw three wounded; one of them was in critical condition.”

Eyad, a media activist, told us about the incident:

“At 12:00 on Tuesday, I heard about the airstrike that targeted The National Hospital. The wounded were taken to the intact sections of the hospital. I went to the location to see the remains of the missiles; the first missile targeted the department of nephrology and destroyed completely half of the dialysis section –machines, furniture, and structure- in addition to partly destroying more than half of the right parts of the dialysis section. The second missile targeted the diabetes clinics and destroyed it completely- structure, machines, and furniture- and destroyed partly the doctors’ residence that was in the same hallway of the diabetes clinics. I learned on the next day that Ali Ismail As-Saaed –Abu-Hassan- has died of his wounds that he sustained during the shelling”.

Attachments

[SNHR](#) was able to document the killing of Ismail As-Saeed. Also 22 were wounded

Videos of the incident:

[*Video footage shows the wounded being aided after the shelling of the hospital*](#)

[*Video footage shows the wounded being taken outside of the hospital*](#)

[*Video footage shows the aftermath / impact of the shelling*](#)

Conclusions

The International Humanitarian Law provides that:” The personnel charged exclusively with the removal, transportation, and treatment of the sick and wounded, as well as with the administration of sanitary formations and establishments ... shall be respected and protected under all circumstances”

Government forces haven’t distinguished between civil premises and military targets, and conducted indiscriminate strikes which violates the customary humanitarian law.

Additionally, this is an explicit violation of the Customary International Humanitarian Law that states:” places or areas designated for the sole protection of civilians, such as hospital zones or similar refuges, should not be the object of military operations”.

Hospitals are protected premises, and shelling it in that manner is considered a war crime

Reccomendations

The United Nations and the Security Council

1. Transferring the Syrian issue 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 dictatorships in 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. Banning the Syrian government all weapons because they are used 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 fight with the Syrian government and which committed massacres, like Hezbollah and the other Shiite brigades, National defense Army and Shabiah 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. Implementing the principle of “protecting civilians” adopted by the General Assembly in Syria now, as the situation there is direly requiring such a principle now.
8. After the crimes against humanity committed by the Syrian government, stopping dealing with this government as an “official side” concerning the relief issues, and stopping supplying the Syrian government with the greatest amounts of financial and humanitarian aid that don’t reach those who need them in most cases and go instead to those loyal to 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 includes 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 be more interested and serious concerning 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.

