

# 3,037 Civilians, including 924 Children, killed by Coalition Forces Since Their Intervention Began in Syria Five Years Ago

International Coalition Against ISIS Must Immediately Begin Compensating Victims and Preparing for Local Elections in Northeastern Syria

# SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Monday, September 23, 2019

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.

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## I. Introduction

Five years have passed since the [International Coalition forces](#) began their intervention in Syria; the International Coalition, which included nearly 81 countries led by the United States, declared at the time that its goal is to eliminate the ISIS terrorist organization in both Syria and Iraq, with military operations beginning in Syria on September 23, 2014.

Whilst there is no doubt that the intent of the International Coalition is a noble purpose to help the Syrians and the world get rid of barbaric organizations hostile to humanity and civilization, it is essential that International Coalition forces respect the rules of customary international law in the course of their duties. Since the beginning of Coalition operations on Syrian territory, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has accurately followed the most notable human rights violations the Coalition committed, and documented the incidents of bombardment that constituted violations of the rules of customary international law. In addition, we have created a special database for this purpose that includes all the incidents that we have been able to document, including details such as the place and time of the incident, the names, photos and videos of any casualties, and testimonies from survivors of bombings, or eyewitnesses, along with photos of the destruction inflicted, and other data and analysis related to all of the above, as part of our team's ongoing monitoring and documentation. The following link includes all the reports, which document the most notable attacks by the International Coalition forces since the start of their intervention in Syria in September 2014 and the subsequent violations of killings and forced displacement, with these reports containing a large amount of data on incidents, which the SNHR has been able to document:

<http://bit.ly/2kN3Dhq>





## The Eighteenth Report Documenting Violations by International Coalition Forces in Syria

March 20, 2019



### Brief Report: Human Rights Implications of the Withdrawal of US Forces from Syria

scale of destruction of Raqqa city, between 2014-2017



### Urgent Action Must Be Taken to Save Nearly 6,000 Civilians in Hajin District



### On the 4th Anniversary of the International Coalition Forces Intervention in Syria, SNHR Showcases a Database for the Incidents Constituting Violations of the International...



### Ridding Raqqa of ISIS Costed Extraordinarily Too Much in Lives and Resources



### Three Years since International Coalition Forces Intervention Started in Syria --...

September 24, 2017  
No less than 2,286 Civilians Killed, Including 674 Children and 504 Women SNHR has released its 13th report, entitled "The Bloody Price" on the third...



### Most Notable Violations from November 2016 until the End of June...

July 22, 2017  
"The Yellow Assault" SNHR has released a report entitled: "The Yellow Assault" which tackles the most notable violations in Raqqa governorate between November 6, 2016...



### 1000 Days Have Passed Since the International Coalition's Operations Started in...

May 5, 2017  
1256 Civilians Have Been Killed Including 383 Children Since the intervention of the US-led international coalition forces started on September 23, 2014, SNHR has been...



### The International Alliance Airstrikes Kill More Civilians and Target Ahrar Ash-Sham...

November 9, 2014  
Executive Summary On 6 November, 2014 the international alliance warplanes carried out a number of airstrikes targeting cities located near the Syrian-Turkish Borders. The airstrikes...



### For the first time International Coalition forces kill more civilians than Russian forces...

February 6, 2017  
View Full Report  
english/International\_Coalition\_forces\_kill\_more\_civilians\_than\_Russian\_forces



### 649 individuals Killed at the Hands of the International Coalition Forces...

October 21, 2016  
The only Way to Defeat ISIS is to Ally with the whole Syrian People SNHR has released their report on the way to Defeat ISIS...



### New Attacks by the International Coalition Forces Result in Losses and...

February 13, 2016  
The killing of 267 Civilians at the hands of The International Coalition I-Introduction Since the US-led international coalition commenced its military intervention on Syria...



### Civilians Death Toll of the First Day of Coalition Forces Airstrikes

September 24, 2014  
The Syrian Regime The Syrian regime and its militias killed no less than 28 civilian, including four children, 2 women, and eight under torture National Coalition...



### International Coalition Forces Targets Armed Opposition Groups for the Third Time

September 10, 2015  
246 individuals were killed as a result including 243 civilians I- Introduction: SNHR previously issued eight reports that documented civilian's death by the international coalition...



### Civilian's Death Toll due to the International Coalition Airstrikes

August 11, 2015  
International Coalition Aviation Killed 225 Civilians, including 65 Children and 37 Women I- Introduction Since 23 September 2014, International Coalition forces joined the four major conflict...



### More Evidences Proving the International Coalition's Involvement in the Massacre of...

May 20, 2015  
First: The International Coalition Warplanes were Probably Behind the Bombing Usually, the international coalition warplanes' airstrikes are accurate and focused. The international coalition targeted six...



### The International Alliance's Airstrikes Killed 24 Civilians and Destroyed a Number...

October 26, 2014  
In the same period of time, the Syrian regime killed 1447 civilians The international alliance started a military campaign against ISIS on 23 September, 2014...



### 169 Civilians including 42 Children and 30 Women have been Killed...

May 6, 2015  
Documenting the targeting of Ber Mahli village in Aleppo suburbs where 64 civilians were killed First: Geographic Location and Military Control Ber Mahli village is located...



### The International Alliance Responsible for the Deaths of 103 Civilians, Including...

March 10, 2015  
The International Alliance Victims Toll Introduction: The International Alliance forces continue the air strikes that started in September 23rd, 2014 against ISIS, on the locations, centers,...



### Alliance Forces' Shelling Kills Civilians in Der Ezzor

December 14, 2014  
Government Forces Have Killed Civilians 80 Times More in the Same Period of Time Introduction The alliance forces' military campaign against Daesh begun on 23 September,...



### Coalition Forces Airstrikes Killed Civilians in Idlib

September 24, 2014  
Incident Details: A warplane affiliated to the coalition forces made an airstrike on the east of Kafar-Daryan village in the northern countryside of Idlib at...



## II. Hundreds of violations committed by Coalition forces still need to be investigated, with perpetrators held accountable, and compensation provided for victims and those affected

The International Coalition Command announced on August 29, 2019 that it had conducted nearly 34,000 strikes as part of its operations to eliminate ISIS in Syria and Iraq and that its operations had helped liberating nearly 110,000 square kilometers from ISIS control and freeing 7.7 million people oppressed by the organization.

Whilst no-one can deny the Coalition's contribution to defeating ISIS and undermining its grip on large swathes of Syria, which is greatly appreciated, in many of the attacks, the International Coalition forces have failed to comply with the rules of customary humanitarian law, with these violations being perpetrated repeatedly, increasing the human and material cost. In addition, none of the victims and other innocents who had already suffered under ISIS and were then further harmed in these operations against the terror group have been compensated to date.

In terms of destruction, for example, we estimate the percentage [of total or partial destruction in Raqqqa city](#) to be around 80 percent, and the area between Hajin city and al Baghouz town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour was subjected to partial or total destruction by around 70 percent.

In terms of the forcibly displaced persons: Approximately half a million Syrians have been forcibly displaced by [International Coalition](#) and Syrian Democratic Forces' operations, with many of these people still unable to return to their homes because of the practices of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which practices arrests and forced conscription. In addition to this, the SDF have made no tangible efforts in terms of achieving democratic local elections, or providing basic services and infrastructure restoration, although the SDF has been receiving full oil and gas revenues in northeastern Syria.

The SNHR team has reviewed all the reports issued by the International Coalition forces, which totaled 30 reports to date. We compared the incidents of violations reported in these, and cross-checked them with the SNHR's database. The review processes concluded that the International Coalition forces have admitted to the killing of 1,313 civilians in both Syria and Iraq, but the death toll acknowledged by the Coalition in Syria and Iraq is only 43 percent of what the SNHR has documented in Syria alone; we always emphasize that we have documented the bare minimum of casualties, given the difficulties and challenges in accessing the areas affected and have a special and rigorous methodology and standards in confirming incidents. Please see the methodology adopted by the SNHR in [documenting victims here](#). It should be noted in this context that the Joint Command of the Coalition Forces has declared that at least 97 open reports are under investigation and that most of these indicate civilian casualties.



Whilst we highly value the coalition's investigations and review of evidence, and its coordination with the SNHR, we urge greater transparency and cooperation in order to obtain the best possible results and to compensate as many innocent victims as possible.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights has repeatedly called on the other states participating in the International Coalition to issue reports and investigations into incidents of violations in which civilians were killed, in the same way as the United States has done. This is the basis for knowing which country carried out the attacks that resulted in casualties; we have great difficulty in identifying which country's warplanes carried out the bombing.

In March 2019, [the British Ministry of Defense](#) announced that the Royal Air Force, which participated in International Coalition operations in Syria and Iraq, had killed 4,013 ISIS fighters and that these operations resulted in the death of only one civilian. Unfortunately, this acknowledgement of the loss of only one civilian in such intensive operations does not suggest significant credibility from our viewpoint; based on our assessment and experience of monitoring events in Syria, intensive attacks by any forces on densely populated cities and neighborhoods cannot cause near-zero losses.

### **III. The strategy followed by International Coalition forces in the fifth year**

The International Coalition's airstrikes between September 2018 and March 2019 were concentrated on the Hajin area; thanks to these strikes, the ground forces, namely the SDF, were able to establish control over most of the Hajin district, and ISIS was left in control of an area of only a few square kilometers in size around al Baghouz town. Intensive airstrikes carried out by the International Coalition forces forced hundreds of ISIS members to surrender with their families and give themselves up to SDF forces who held them in al Hawl Camp in the suburbs of Hasaka. During that period, we monitored the use of heavy artillery and missile launchers by International Coalition forces deployed on the ground, and recorded a number of ground attacks, apparently launched from missile launchers stationed inside the al Omar oil field in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, in addition to artillery installed in the Badiya [surrounding area] around Hajin in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour.

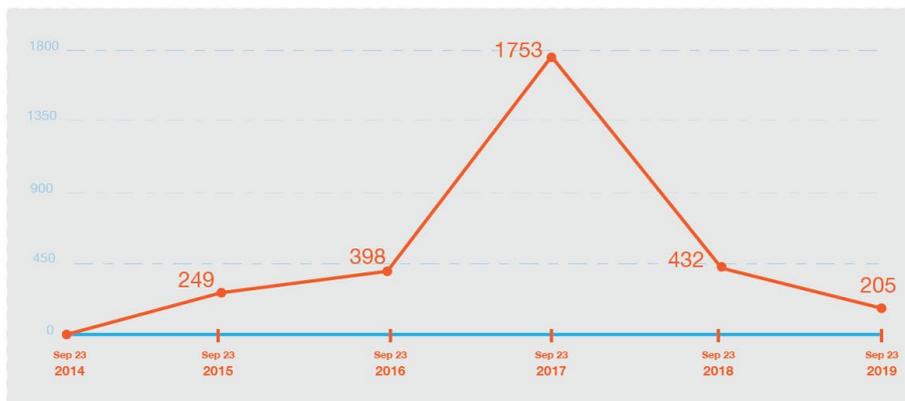
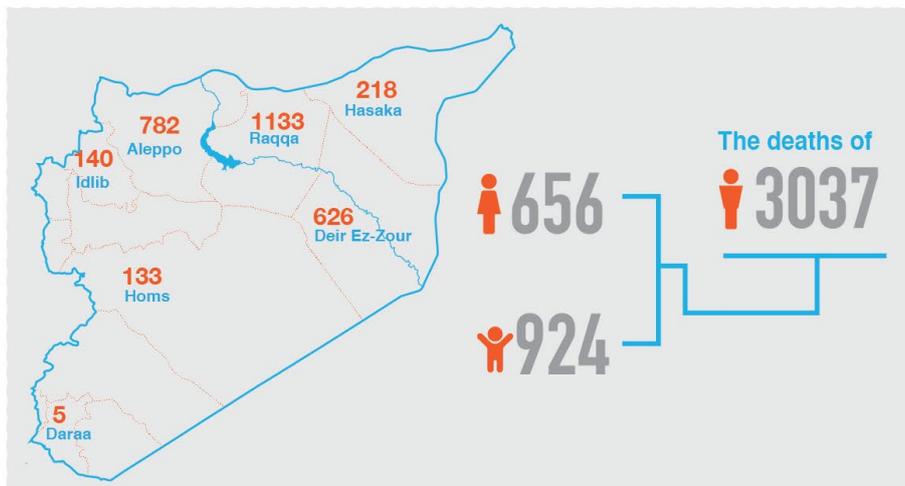
On March 23, 2019, the SDF announced in [a press release](#) issued from the al Omar oil field in Deir Ez-Zour that ISIS had been eliminated in al Baghouz town, the last stronghold of ISIS, after which we observed a significant decrease in the frequency of air strikes. Thereafter, the type of military operations in the area changed to joint patrols between the International Coalition forces and the SDF to target the remaining ISIS cells. Despite supposedly being carefully planned and carried out to ensure high levels of accuracy, these operations have led to civilian casualties, as we documented from one such attack on al Sh-heil city on May 9, 2019 and in another on al Keshkiya town on January 3, 2019.



## IV. The record of the most notable violations by the Coalition forces according to the SNHR's database

Infographic showing the most notable human rights violations by International Coalition forces since their intervention in Syria

**SNHR** SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان  
**The Most Notable Violations by International Coalition Forces Since Their Intervention in Syria on September 23, 2014, Up Until September 23, 2019**



**Military attacks by International Coalition forces caused the forced displacement of approximately 560,000 people, mostly from the governorates of Raqqa, Hasaka and Deir Ez-Zour**



## **A. Victims:**

The SNHR documented the deaths of 3,037 civilians, including 924 children and 656 women (adult female), at the hands of International Coalition forces between September 23, 2014, and September 23, 2019, distributed across the Syrian governorates as follows:

- Raqqa: 1,133
- Aleppo: 782
- Deir Ez-Zour: 626
- Hasaka: 218
- Idlib: 140
- Homs: 133
- Daraa: 5

## **The toll of civilian victims killed at the hands of International Coalition forces was distributed as follows:**

- From September 23, 2014, to September 23, 2015: 249 civilians, including 12 children and 62 women.
- From September 23, 2015, to September 23, 2016: 398 civilians, including 168 children and 113 women.
- From September 23, 2016, to September 23, 2017: 1,753 civilians, including 578 children and 311 women.
- From September 23, 2017, to September 23, 2018: 432 civilians, including 103 children and 131 women.
- From September 23, 2018, to September 23, 2019: 205 civilians, including 63 children and 39 women.

## **B. Record of massacres (the deaths of five or more persons in the same incident):**

The SNHR documented at least 172 massacres committed by International Coalition forces since their military intervention in Syria up until September 23, 2019.

## **C. Record of incidents of attacks on vital civilian facilities:**

The SNHR documented at least 181 incidents of attacks on vital civilian facilities, 16 of which were on medical facilities, 25 on schools, and four on markets, all of which were inflicted by International Coalition forces, since the start of their military intervention in Syria up until September 23, 2019.



#### **D. Record of the use of incendiary munitions:**

The SNHR documented at least five incendiary munitions attacks carried out by International Coalition forces since the start of their military intervention in Syria up until September 23, 2019.

#### **E. Enforced displacement:**

Intense aerial attacks carried out by International Coalition forces in the past five years, which often failed to distinguish between civilian and military targets, caused widespread panic among the population, reinforced by the widespread use of artillery shelling, forcing tens of thousands of civilians to flee and be displaced. Military operations in the governorates of Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zour and Hasaka caused the displacement of at least 560,000 people. The International Coalition forces and the SDF bear responsibility for their displacement, along with the ISIS terrorist organization, which took them as human shields, and there was no provision of housing or tents in the locations where they were expected to be displaced to, as the attacking forces did not provide the urgently required essential basic assistance needed after the displacement of such a massive wave of population.

We have documented the SDF's detention of thousands of displaced civilians in SDF-controlled camps such as Ein Eisa Camp north of Raqqa, Badiya of Hajin Camp in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, and al Hawl Camp in the suburbs of Hasaka. Despite the end of military operations on the ground and the low frequency of Coalition strikes, the SDF is still pursuing policies which prevent the return of some displaced people from the towns of al Baghouz, al Sh'afa and Boubadran, under the pretext of instability proliferation of mines and remnants of other dangerous munitions.

In addition, the bombing carried out by the International Coalition forces caused widespread destruction that turned entire neighborhoods of cities and villages into rubble and left the remaining homes uninhabitable. These areas have not yet seen even the removal of rubble or the restoration of the significant vital facilities such as hospitals, schools and markets. Given this political and economic failure, most of the residents have not returned to their homes and remain displaced in tents or in countries of asylum.



## V. Recommendations

### The Joint Command of the International Coalition Forces:

- Ensure political and economic stability in areas freed from ISIS control and make greater efforts to achieve democratically elected local governance and thereafter to support this economically and politically elected local body, thereby achieving political and social security and stability in those areas.
- Instigate reconstruction and development so that thousands of displaced people can return to their areas.
- Open investigations into violations and abuses by the SDF and hold its leaders responsible for oil and gas smuggling operations to areas controlled by the Syrian regime, which has been subjected to economic sanctions by the US administration in particular, which is a key supporter of the SDF; in this context, [we have issued an extensive report on oil and gas smuggling operations.](#)
- Establish a mechanism to monitor financial revenues from the sale of oil and gas to ensure greater transparency to prevent a large proportion of that money from being transferred to the PKK, which is classified as a terrorist organization, with such actions implicating the SDF in supporting and financing global terrorism.
- Request that the leadership of the SDF disclose all the money it has received from oil and gas since 2012 to date and provide a financial statement on where and how the money was spent, noting that it may have been stolen for private accounts or for use in financing and supporting terrorism.
- Stop supporting the SDF and the PYD fully and immediately if they are proven to be transferring funds from Syria's oil and gas revenues to the terrorist PKK.
- Support the coalition team working on investigating and following up on incidents with more manpower, and increase the current level of efforts and capabilities in this regard in order to dedicate greater attention to this issue, as well as creating a data map showing the areas worst affected by aerial attacks, and making greater efforts towards starting to address the economic and moral ramifications resulting from those attacks.
- Work seriously to provide the means for making a decent life for the forcibly displaced in displacement camps.
- Provide appropriate medical care for those injured and wounded as a result of bombardment by International Coalition forces or the SDF, and work to establish several medical centers in the most affected areas.
- Publicly hold perpetrators of crimes to account and remove all those proven by investigations to have been involved in attacks that caused massacres against civilians.



- International Coalition forces must respect international humanitarian law and customary international law. Consequently, the states of the International Coalition are deemed responsible for the violations that they have been involved in since the beginning of the attacks. Those states should bear all the consequences ensuing from these violations, and make every possible effort to avoid any recurrence.
- Assist the Syrian community in eliminating terrorist groups akin to ISIS, such as those terrorist groups supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran which have already begun to establish bases in Aleppo and Damascus Suburbs.
- Provide more logistical and material support to help in the exhumation process from mass graves in areas which ISIS withdrew from, and put pressure on Syrian Democratic Forces to allocate a larger proportion of material resources in this regard, so that this process is not later deemed to be mismanagement of the remains and forensic mishandling, in which the Syrian Democratic Forces may be part of the same violations. It is therefore necessary to establish an independent body under the auspices of the International Coalition to carry out this task in cooperation and coordination with the local initial response team to carry out this complex and delicate process.
- Put pressure on Syrian Democratic Forces not to limit their efforts and resources to arming and stockpiling ammunition, and to make greater efforts in civilian operations and provide assistance to the local community.
- Take all possible measures to protect bodies and make every effort to identify the dead and provide appropriate burial in clearly marked graves.
- Contribute to accelerating the demining process, which has a significant impact on the return of civilians to Raqqa city and the exhumation process.

## **OHCHR**

- Follow up on the issue of the forcibly displaced persons living in SDF-held areas and issue a report on the violations they are experiencing.
- Issue a report addressing the repercussions of the illegal attacks of International Coalition forces in Syria, addressing several areas and towns in the report.

## **Syrian Democratic Forces**

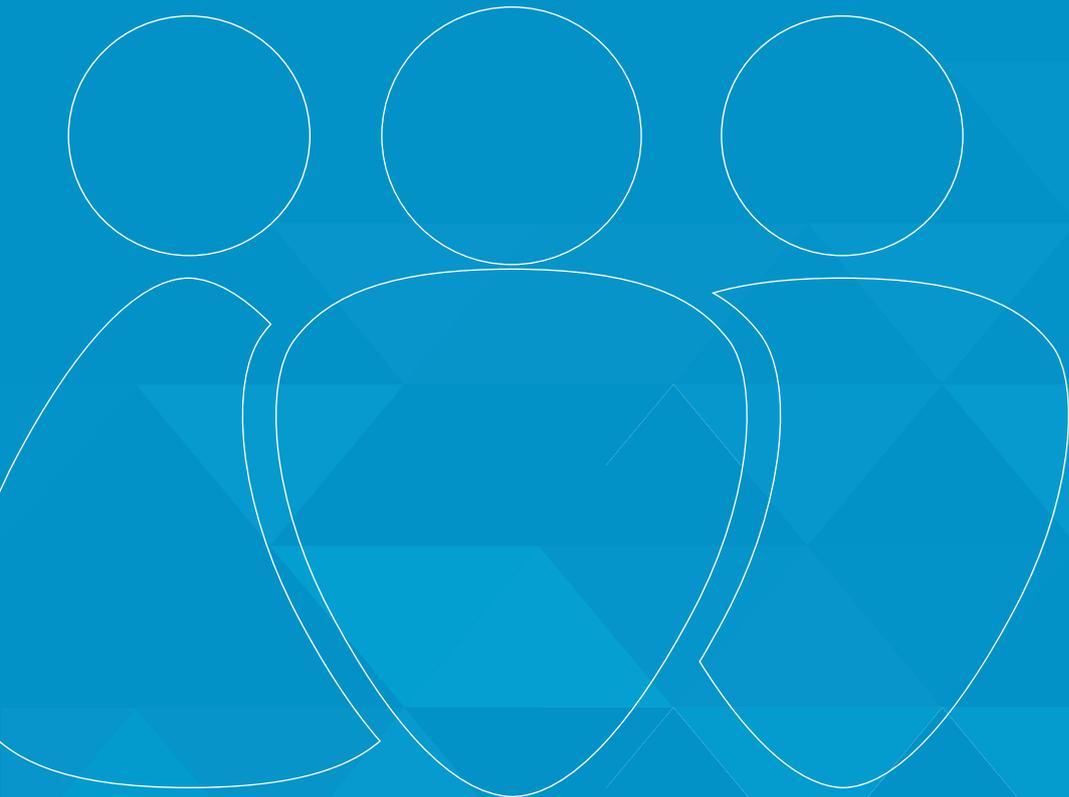
- Prepare for local civil elections and for the transfer from military authority to democratically elected civilian leadership.
- Refrain from any form of association or coordination with the PKK, which is classified as a terrorist organization, and completely prohibit the publication of pictures of the PKK leader.
- Prepare a financial statement on oil and gas revenues and expenses.



## Thanks and consolation

We wish to extend our sincere condolences to all the families of the victims and those affected whose names we have been able to identify and document, and our thanks to the families, local activists and victims' families, without whose contribution we would not have been able to build such an extensive database and issue this report.





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