

6,019 Civilians, including 1,708 Children, Killed at the hands of Russian Forces in Syria

A Strategy of Murder and Hubris

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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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.



Nearly 29 months have passed since the Russian military intervention started in Syria in September 2015. Russian forces have perpetrated thousands of violations, many of which constitute war crimes, as Russian air forces carried out thousands of airstrikes on civilian areas and residential neighborhoods, using directed missiles to bomb vital civilian facilities, including medical facilities, schools, and markets. In addition, Russian forces have used cluster munitions to a larger extent than the Syrian regime, in addition to incendiary weapons and bunker-buster missiles in populated areas. As for chemical weapons, Russia has plainly failed to uphold its pledges to end chemical weapons' use following the Syrian regime's attacks in Eastern and Western Ghouta in August 2013, even after the direct Russian military intervention started, where we have, as of today, documented 48 attacks using chemical weapons since September 30, 2015. Russian forces, even, directly assisted the Syrian regime in two of these attacks at least by targeting major medical facilities in the targeted area and the roads leading to the area in order to hinder the aiding of the wounded.

The escalated violence by Russian forces has had the most impact with respect to forced displacement, where the residents of eastern Aleppo's neighborhoods fled under Russian attacks in December 2016, while Russia sponsored an agreement that would see the evacuation of no less than 45,000 civilians from these neighborhoods towards the areas of the western suburbs of Aleppo, which was followed by another agreement in al Wa'er neighborhood in Homs city on March 13, 2017 that resulted in the evacuation of no less than 20,000 residents. Additionally, approximately 420,000 people have been forced to flee due to Russian airstrikes in eastern suburbs of Hama, eastern and southern suburbs of Idlib, and southern suburbs of Aleppo since September 2017, in addition to approximately 580,000 people who fled different areas in Deir Ez-Zour and Raqqa governorates.

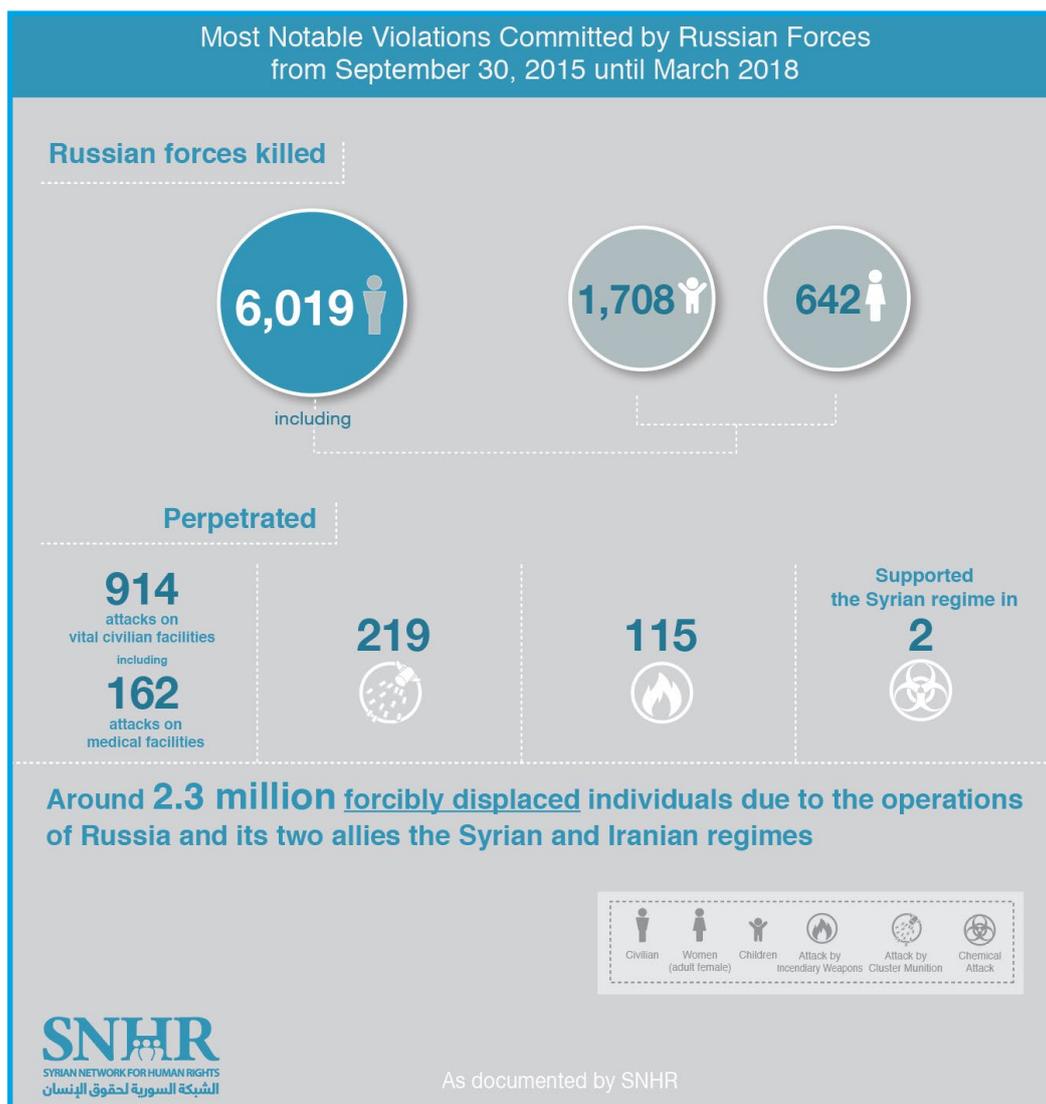
In parallel with all of this, Russian forces provided an immoral cover to protect the crimes of the Syrian regime at the Security Council, and obstructed any resolution that would hold it accountable, where Russia used veto 11 times, including five times on the case of chemical weapons. Russia, also, has failed to commit to any bilateral and direct agreements they signed with factions from the armed opposition, and failed to sustain de-escalation agree-



ments that were the results of Astana talks, as Russia never ceased its military offensives even in the areas included in the agreement as was seen in [Idlib governorate in the last-third of 2017](#) and what is happening [today](#) in [Eastern Ghouta](#). The Russian crimes never stopped even during Sochi conference in January 2018, which stripped Russia of whatever credibility it had left in the eyes of the Syrian people, as large portions consider Russia a direct enemy.

The following is the most notable violations by Russian forces we have documented with details between September 30, 2015 and March 2018

- Killed no less than 6,019 civilians, including 1,708 children and 642 women (adult female)
- Carried out approximately 914 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including 162 attacks on medical facilities.
- About 219 attacks using cluster munitions.
- About 115 attacks using incendiary ammunitions.
- Approximately 2.3 million forcibly displaced people as a result of the Russian operations with its allies, the Syrian and Iranian regimes.



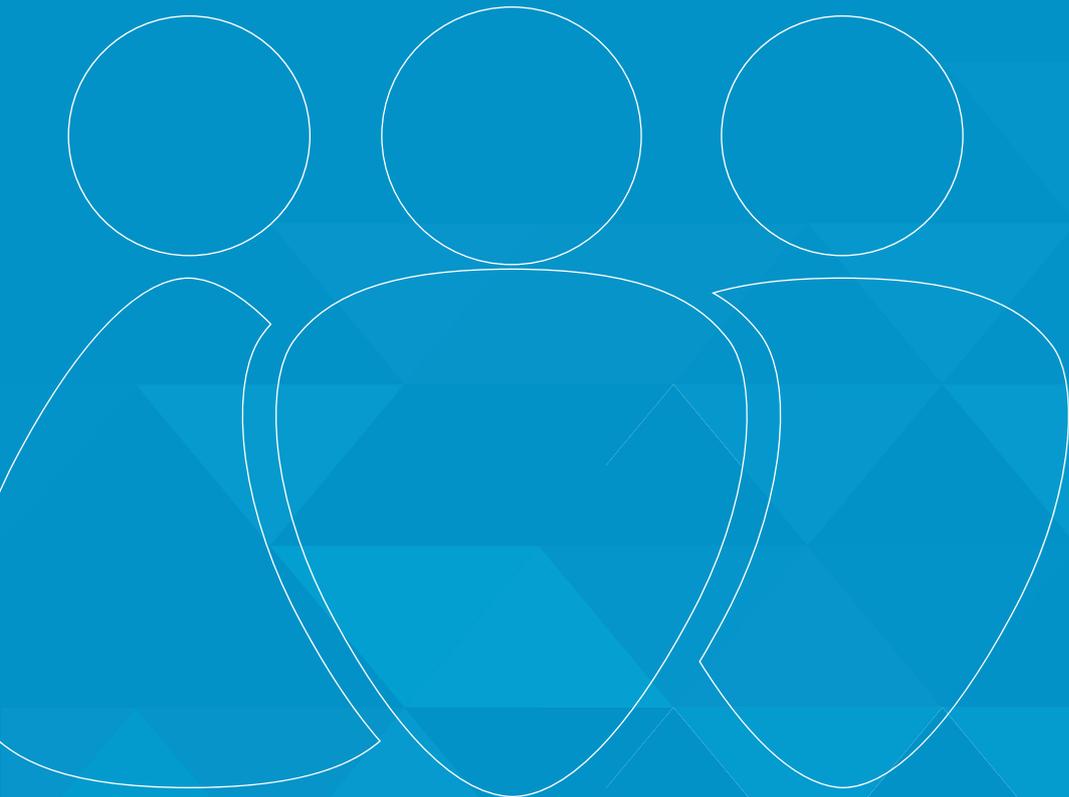
All of these operations aim mainly to undermine the structure of opposition areas and demolish the aspects of the popular resistance by a heavy, continued targeting of every aspect of society. However, there haven't been parallel efforts in the context of establishing a serious political phase after Russian forces had achieved all of that, and it is difficult to understand what the Russian strategy in Syria is, as Astana path has completely failed, and it might have been merely a phase to further achieve a complete military victory and was followed by another failure in the form of Sochi conference. This highlights the Russian administration's utter inability to accomplish any achievement, settlement, or end the conflict, but rather it chooses to continue its destructive military approach through primal, barbarian bombardment methods as what we can see in Eastern Ghouta today. All of this suggests the inexistence of a Russian strategy in Syria which has become, instead, a space for Russian to express its existence, which reflects how mentally muddled the Russian administration is, and is further confirmed by the absurd interpretation of the Security Council resolution and the scale and types of weapon Russia has experimented in Syria.

Russian forces have to immediately cease the killing and bombing of civilians, and the targeting of their vital facilities and homes. Also, Russian has to increase its humanitarian aids to hundreds of thousands of displaced people that Russia, itself, along with the Syrian regime and Iranian militias had displaced, especially the residents of Aleppo's eastern neighborhoods, the areas of northeastern suburbs of Hama, and southern and eastern suburbs of Idlib.

The Russian regime has to adhere to security council resolution 2401 which it agreed to, before going around the rest of the members of the Security Council, continuing its barbarian bombardment on the region of Eastern Ghouta. The Russian regime, instead, should play its role in applying pressure on its allies, the Syrian and Iranian regimes, to lift the siege and pass aids.

Lastly, the Russian regime should end its support for the Syrian regime at the Security Council and stop using veto to prevent the passage of any international resolution that punishes the Syrian regime.





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