

# 772 Civilians Killed in August 2017

International Coalition Forces Kill  
More Civilians than any other Party

# SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Monday, September 4, 2017

The Syrian Network for Human Rights, founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, non-profit independent organization that is a primary source for the United Nations on all death toll-related statistics in Syria



## Contents

- I. Introduction and Methodology
- II. Details
- III. Conclusions and Recommendations
- Acknowledgment

## I. Introduction and Methodology

The report includes only the death toll of civilians that were killed by the main seven influential parties in Syria:

- Syrian regime forces (army, Security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)
- Russian forces
- Self-management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party forces, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)
- Extremist Islamic groups
- Armed opposition factions
- International coalition forces
- Other parties

The fourth round of negotiations was held in Astana city, Kazakhstan's capital, on 3 and 4 of May 2017. Russian, Turkish, and Iranian representatives attended as the sponsoring states of Ankara Ceasefire Agreement. The three states agreed on establishing four de-escalation zones, wherein the agreement is to commence on May 6, 2017. The agreement outlined four major areas for the de-escalation – Idlib governorate and the surrounding areas (parts of Aleppo, Hama, and Latakia governorates), northern Homs governorate, Eastern Ghouta, and parts of Daraa and al Quneitra governorates in the southern parts of Syria. It was provided that an expert committee would accurately assign the borders of said zones at a later date. The agreement provided for a cessation of combat operations, passage of humanitarian aids, and for IDPs to go back to their areas. Since the agreement went into effect, these areas saw a relatively noticeable and good decrease in killing rates compared with the previous months since March 2011.



Following an extensive round of talks between Russia, USA, and Jordan that commenced in May 2017 in Amman, Jordan's capital, the American and Russian presidents announced, on the sidelines of the 2017 G20 summit in Hamburg, that a ceasefire agreement has been reached in southwestern Syria – Daraa, Quneitra, and Suwayda governorates. The agreement went into force at 12:00 on Sunday July 9, 2017, and provided for the passage of humanitarian aids in addition to a ceasefire between the conflicting parties (Syrian regime forces and their allies on one side, and armed opposition factions on the other side). Also, the agreement specifies that maintaining security in this region is the Russian forces' responsibility in coordination with the Americans and Jordanians.

In addition, there have been a number of other local agreements, such as Eastern Ghouta agreement between armed opposition factions, on one side, and officials from the Russian side, while a similar agreement was struck with the opposition in northern suburbs of Homs. However, the texts of these agreements haven't been made public on Russian government's websites, and the same for armed opposition factions who didn't publicize these agreements, except for Failaq al Rahman who published the [text of the agreement](#) on their official website. At the end of the agreement, according to the copy on Failaq al Rahman's website, a signature by a Russian sponsor was shown but without an explicit name, which is a great flaw, as apparently all of this helps the sponsoring Russian side to easily dissolve from these agreements with no subsequent political or legal obligations and repercussions. On Saturday, July 22, 2017, Russian Ministry of Defense announced that a de-escalation agreement has been signed in Eastern Ghouta following a round of talks between Russian military officials, on one side, and Jaish al Islam faction, on the other side, in Egypt's capital Cairo. The agreement was to come into effect at 12:00 of the same day. On Wednesday, August 16, 2017, a Failaq al Rahman representative and a Russian representative have signed an agreement in Geneva city that established Failaq al Rahman's inclusion in the de-escalation zone in Eastern Ghouta. The agreement was to come into effect at 21:00 of Friday, August 18, 2017.

On Monday, July 31, 2017, another de-escalation agreement was signed in Egypt's capital Cairo for northern Homs suburbs and southern Hama suburbs following a round of talks between armed opposition factions in the area and the Syrian regime represented by the Russian government as a sponsoring party, as the agreement was to commence at 12:00 on Thursday, August 3, 2017. Following the agreement's commencement, two meetings were held between a committee representing the military and civilian activities in northern suburbs of Homs and southern suburbs of Hama, on one side, and a Russian delegate, on the other side, in a tent that was built for the meeting in a neutral area - near the Great House in



al Dar al Kabira (The Great House) village in northern suburbs of Homs governorate. The meeting was held to further discuss the provisions of Cairo's de-escalation agreement, as some armed opposition factions weren't fully in agreement with the de-escalation.

Most notably, the two most recent agreements provided for a full cessation of hostilities between the conflicting parties in the relevant areas -with the exclusion of the areas in which ISIS and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham are present- and for humanitarian aids to enter these areas and for detainees to be released as per the demands of each party as to which detainees are to be released.

We noticed that these agreements reflected on the living aspects of the civilians in most of the areas that were included in the agreements, as patients were able to go to hospitals and medical points, and many children went back to school after their families prevented them out of fear for their lives in light of the repeated bombing that targeted schools, as well as hospitals. Markets became more active, and many infrastructure services were restored thanks to a number of maintenance campaigns. Nonetheless, breaches didn't stop, mainly by the Syrian regime, who is seemingly the party that would be most affected should the ceasefire go on, and in particular extrajudicial killing crimes and, more horrendously, deaths due to torture. This strongly asserts that there is a ceasefire of some sort on the table, but the crimes that the international community -especially the sponsoring parties- won't see are still going on as nothing had happened.

We haven't seen a significant drop in civilian death numbers compared with last July, as the toll of civilian victims killed by Syrian regime forces imply a failure to comply with the agreement on the Syrian regime's part, given that they continue to kill civilians in most of the Syrian governorates, whereas international coalition forces have topped all other parties in terms of killing civilians, as they were responsible for the killing of 37% of all civilians who were killed. Out of the victims killed by international coalition forces, 55% were children and women. On the other hand, we recorded an unprecedented drop in number of civilian killings by Russian forces since the Russian intervention began in Syria on September 30, 2015. The Russian sponsor has to apply serious pressure on its ally the Syrian regime and the Iranian regime to end all forms of killing, bombardment, and torture to death at detention centers, and start releasing detainees, as this file hasn't seen any significant progress.



We, at SNHR, hope that the de-escalation zones agreements see a good commitment, so it becomes a stronger foundation on which a political process would be built that would fulfil justice for the victims, and hold all the perpetrators accountable for their violations; most pressing the party that was primarily responsible for the dire situation that Syria have come into: the current ruling regime who has perpetrated roughly 90% of all violations against the Syrian people.

## **Methodology**

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) is an independent human rights organization that is not affiliate of any political or partisan side. SNHR works on documenting human rights violations by the seven main parties in Syria.

We have been able to document the civilian victims who are being killed by the parties to the conflict to a great extent, whereas armed victims are divided into two categories:

Victims from the armed opposition: We face additional difficulties as many of those victims are killed on battlefronts and not inside cities. Also, we aren't able to obtain details such as names, pictures and other important details on account of the armed opposition forces' unwillingness to reveal such information for security concerns among other reasons. Therefore, the actual number of victims is much greater than what is being recorded.

Victims from Syrian regime forces and ISIS: It is almost impossible to access information about this kind of victims and the margin of error is considerably higher due to the lack of any applicable methodology in this type of documentation. The Syrian government and ISIS don't publish, reveal, or record their victims. From our perspective, the statistics published by some groups on this category of victims are fictitious and are not based on any actual data.

Therefore, we are only going to include civilian victims who were killed by all parties and compare them

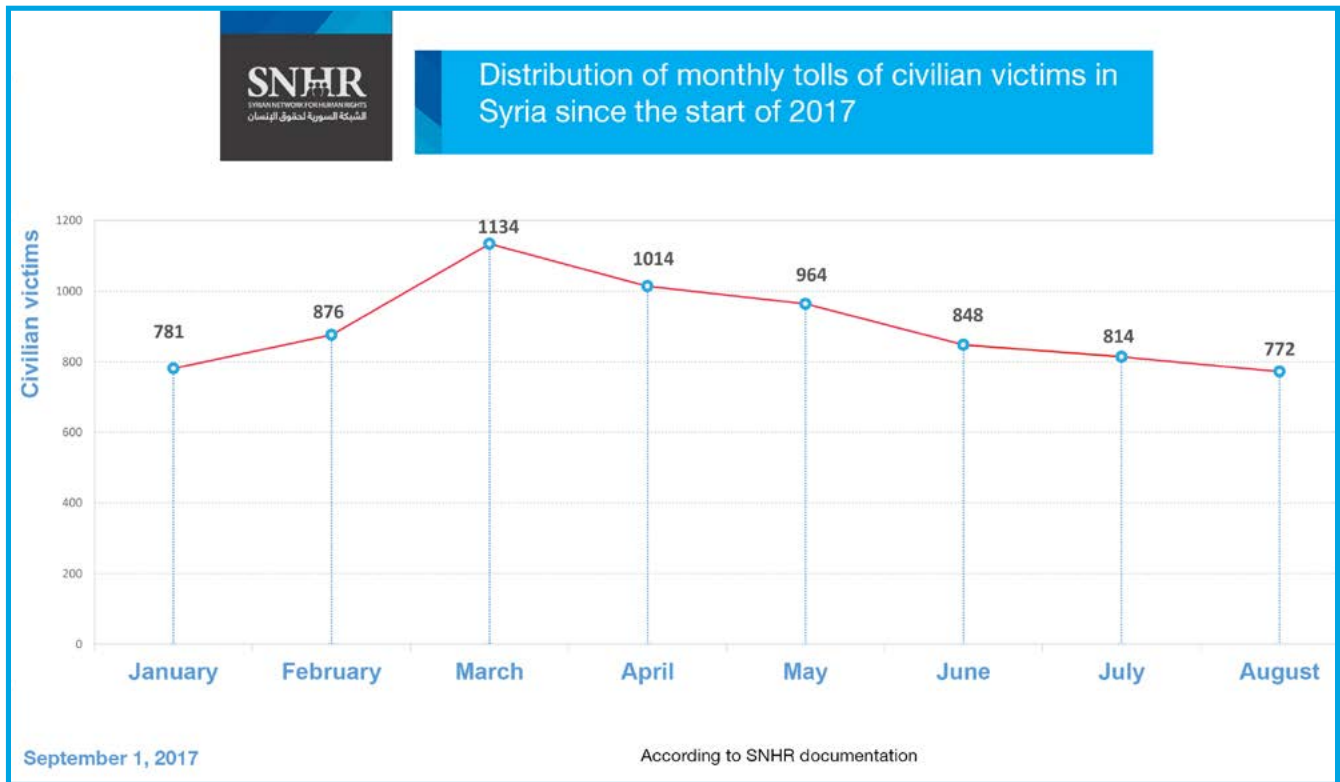
Please see SNHR [methodology](#) in documenting victims:



## II. Details

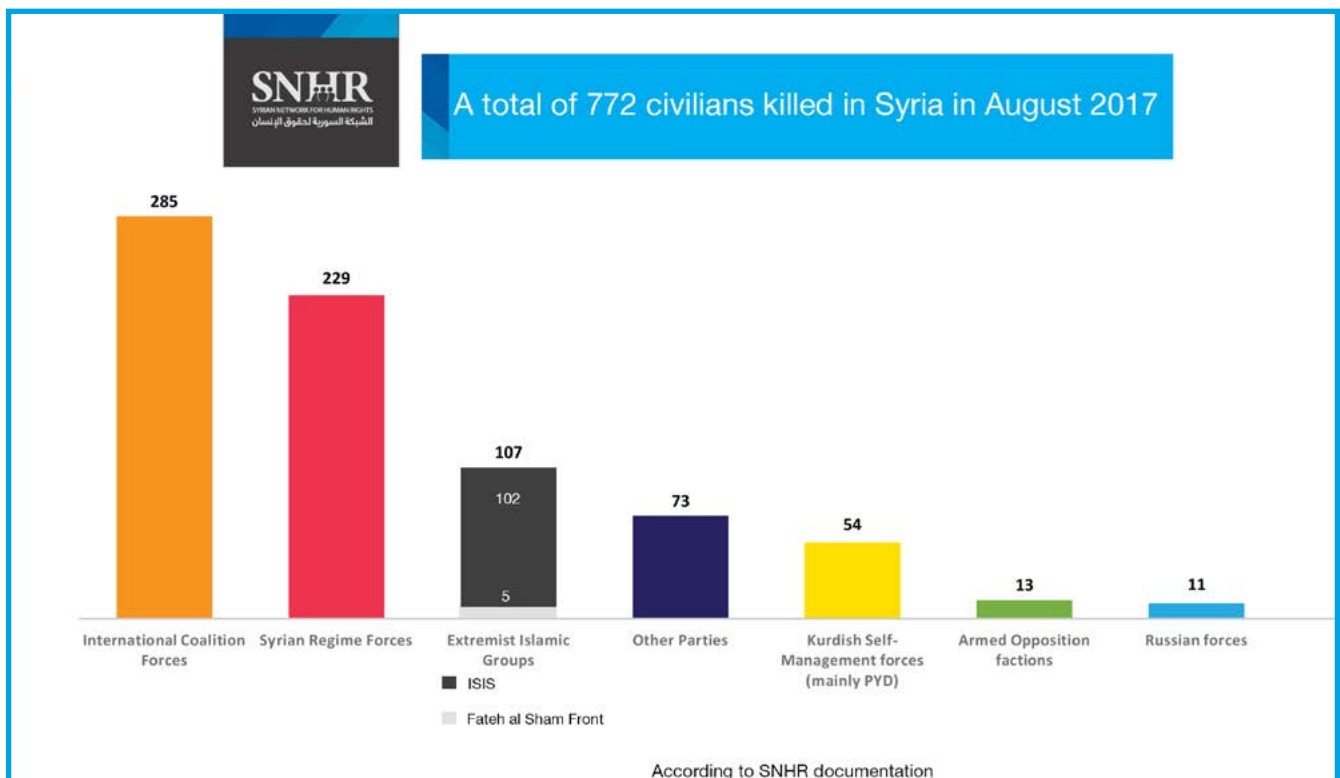
### A. Civilian death toll in 2017

SNHR has documented the killing of 7,203 civilians at the hands of parties to the conflict in Syria between the start of 2017 and September of the same year



### B. Death toll in August 2017

SNHR has documented the killing of 772 civilians in the month of August 2017. Death toll is distributed by the parties to the conflict in Syria.

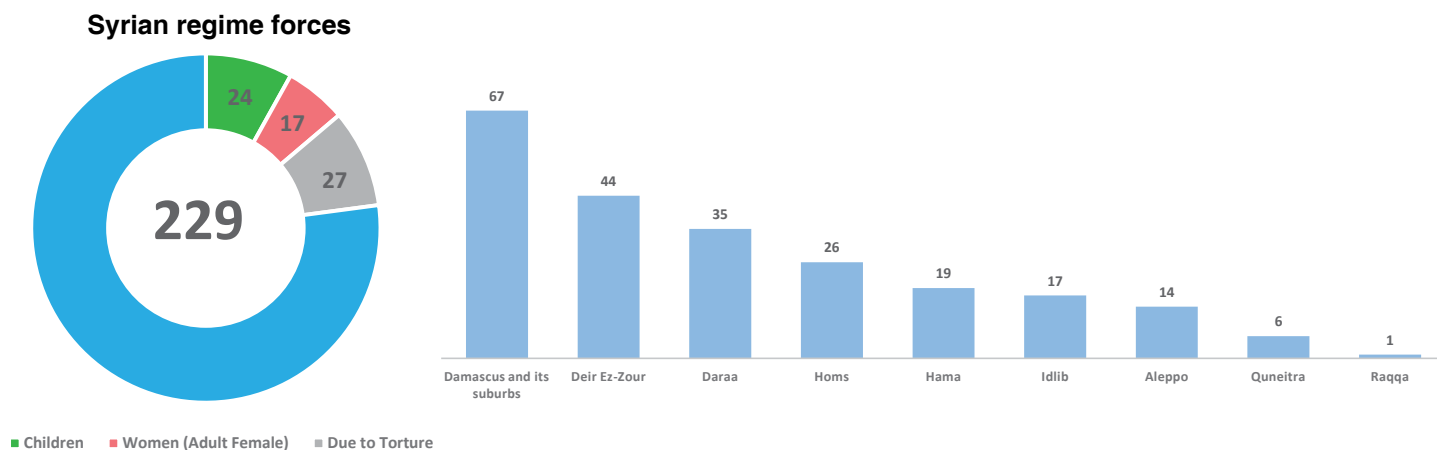


## Death toll is distributed by the parties to the conflict as follows:

### A. Syrian regime forces

SNHR has documented the killing of 229 civilians at the hands of Syrian regime forces, including 24 children (one child is killed every day on average) and 17 women (adult female). Additionally, among the victims were 27 civilians who died due to torture.

Death toll is distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

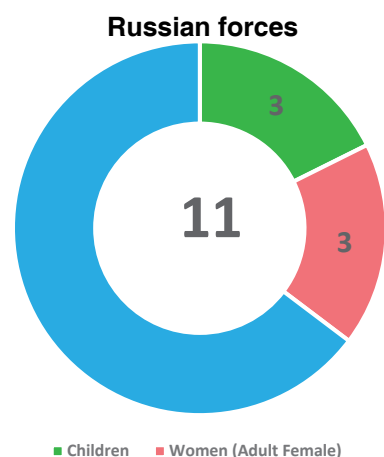


### B. Russian forces

We recorded the killing of 11 civilians, including three children and three women, in bombardment operations we believe were Russian. The death is distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

Raqqa: 8

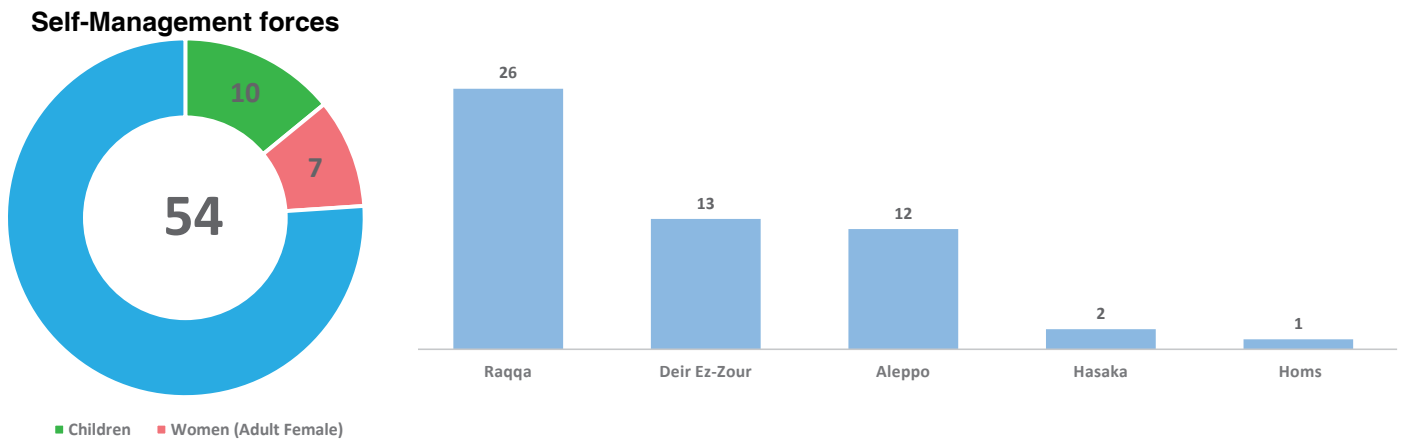
Deir Ez-Zour: 3



### C. Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party)

Killed 54 civilians, including 10 children and seven women.

Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:

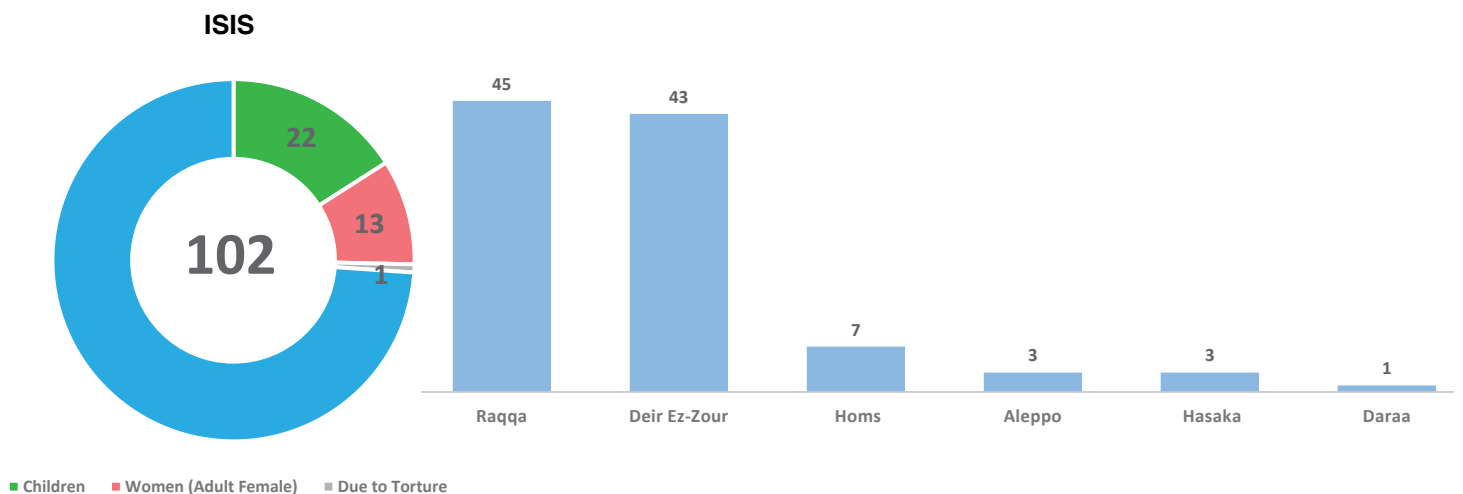


### D. Extremist Islamic groups:

killed 107 civilians, including 23 children and 13 women. Additionally, among the victims were three who died due to torture:

- **ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State):** killed 102 civilians, including 22 children and 13 women. Also, among the victims was one civilian who died due to torture.

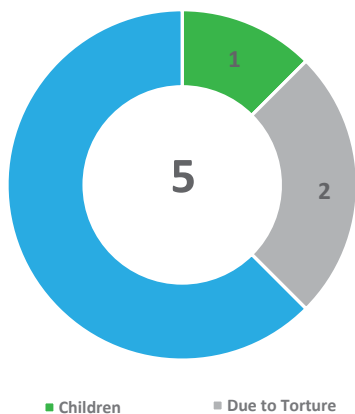
Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:





• **Fateh al Sham Front (formerly al Nusra Front):** killed five civilians, including one child. Also, among the victims were two who died due to torture. Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows: Idlib: 3, Hama: 2

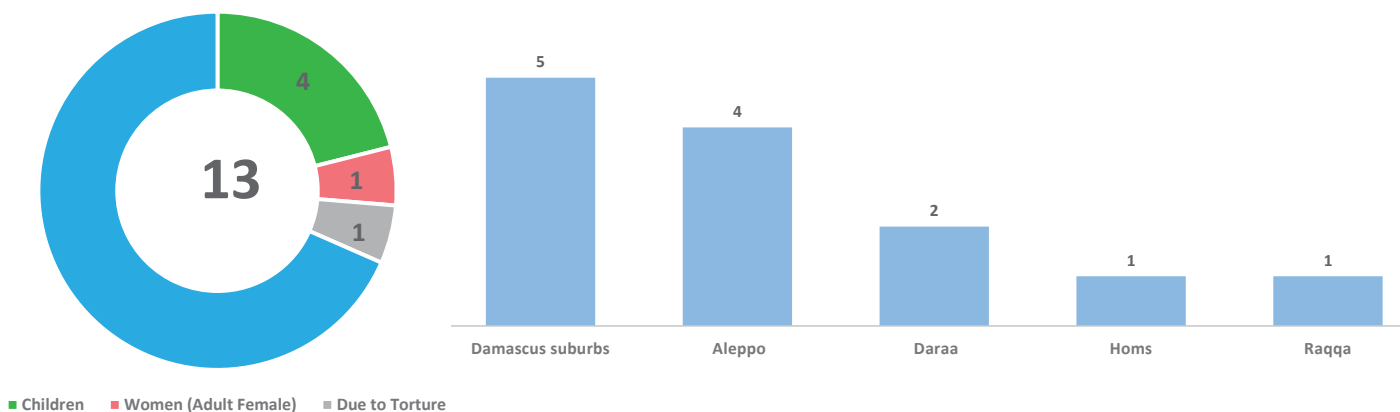
**Fateh al Sham Front**



**E. Armed opposition factions**

SNHR has documented the killing of 13 civilians, including five children and one woman. Also, among the victims was one child who died due to torture. Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:

**Armed opposition factions**

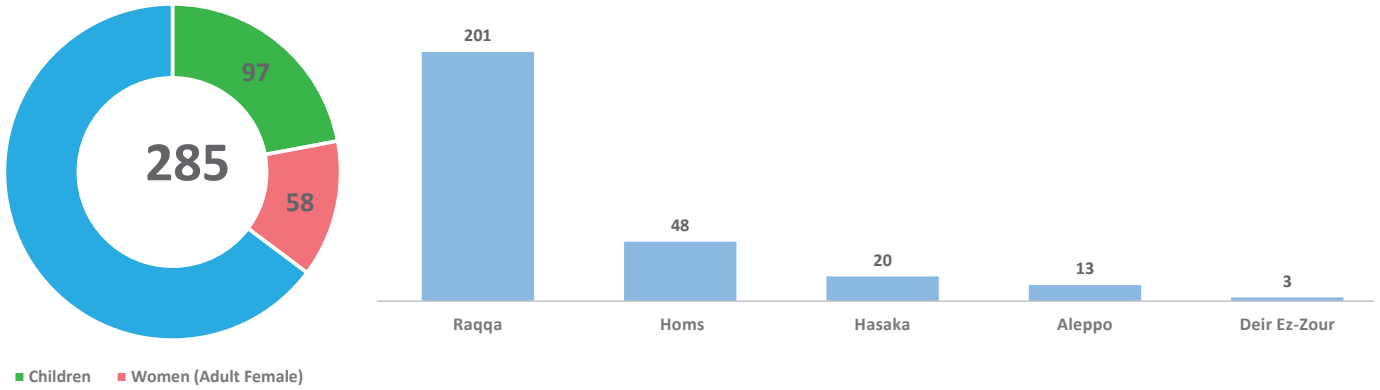


## F. International coalition forces

We recorded the killing of 285 civilians, including 97 children and 58 women, in bombardments by international coalition forces warplanes.

Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:

International coalition forces

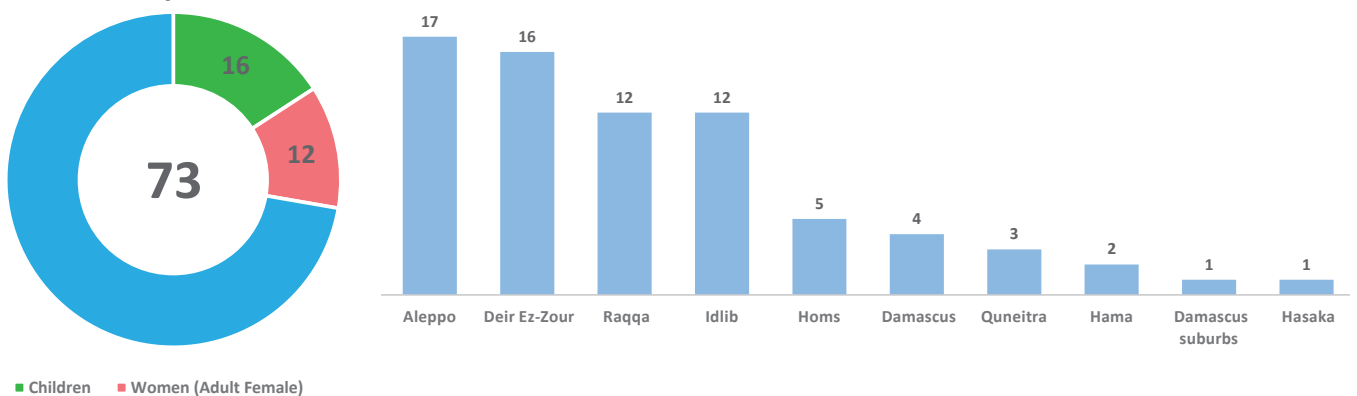


## G. Other parties

We documented the killing of 73 civilians, including 16 children and 12 women, at the hands of other parties. This category includes bombings that we couldn't identify the group behind them, bullets of unknown sources, landmines of unknown sources, drowning, victims who died in fires, and the indiscriminate bombardment incidents by the Turkish land and air forces, and victims killed by Jordanian and Lebanese forces.

Death toll is distributed across governorates as follows:

Other parties



We would like to note that this what we were able to document and verify with full names, place, and time through our members who are spread across Syria. It also should be noted that there are many cases that we couldn't access and document especially in the event of massacres where towns are villages are enclosed and communication is cut off which has come to be the case recently in Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zour governorates, which are the target of vicious military campaigns by the international coalition-backed Syrian Democratic Forces and by the Syrian-Russian alliance, in light of a suffocating siege imposed by ISIS in their areas of control. This suggests that the actual number of civilian deaths is greater. All of this is because the Syrian government bans any human rights organization from working on its grounds.

### III. Conclusions and Recommendations

1- SNHR affirms that the Syrian-Russian alliance forces have violated the rules of international human rights law which guarantee the right to life.

Evidences and proofs, according to hundreds of eyewitnesses' testimonies, indicate that 90% at least of the widespread and single attacks were directed against civilians and civilian facilities.

All of this discredits the Syrian government's claims that they are fighting "Al-Qaeda and terrorists"

SNHR notes that these incidents of killing constitute crimes against humanity where most of these cases involved the element of widespread or systematic attack against a group of civilian residents.

2- Kurdish Self-management forces have conducted extrajudicial killings that constitute war crimes.

3- Extremist Islamic groups have conducted extrajudicial killings as well that constitute war crimes.

4- Some of the armed opposition factions have conducted extrajudicial killings that constitute war crimes.

5- International coalition forces have conducted extrajudicial killings that constitute war crimes.

### Condemnation and liability

Every internationally unlawful act committed by the state will entail a legal responsibility on that state. Equally, the customary international law states that the state is responsible for all the acts committed by the members of its security and military forces. Consequently, the state is responsible for the unlawful acts, including crimes against humanity, that have been perpetrated by the members of its military and security forces.



Additionally, the Russian regime and all Shiite militias as well as ISIS are all foreign parties who were effectively involved in acts of killings and are all responsible legally and judicially in addition to the funders and supporters of the Syrian regime that is perpetrating massacres systemically and ceaselessly on a daily basis.

## **Recommendations**

### **The Security Council**

- The Security Council must take additional steps as it has been a year since Resolution 2139 was adopted and no pledges to stop the indiscriminate bombing, which causes daily destruction and killing, have been made.
- Apply pressure on the states that support Syrian regime forces such as Russia, Iran, and Lebanon in order to stop the weaponry and expertise supply for Syrian regime forces as it has been proven that Syrian regime forces have been involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as states and individuals who are supplying extremist groups, the Democratic Union Party, and some of the armed opposition factions.
- The Syrian case must be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible must be held accountable.
- Instill security and peace in Syria and implement the principle of Responsibility to Protect in order to save the Syrians' lives, history, and culture, from being destroyed, stolen, and ruined.

### **The sponsoring Russian side**

- The Syrian regime has to be stopped from dooming the de-escalation agreements. Otherwise, it will only be seen as an exchange of roles between the Russian regime, on one side, and the Syrian/Russian alliance on the other side.
- Start making progress in the detainees issue by revealing the fates of 76,000 forcibly-disappeared persons at the hands of the Syrian regime.

## **Acknowledgment and Condolences**

We gratefully thank all the families and local activists who majorly enriched this report with their contribution.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

