

964 Civilians Killed in May 2017

International Coalition Forces
Have Killed more Civilians than
Syrian Regime Forces and
Extremist Islamic Groups

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Thursday, June 1, 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



Report Contents

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

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, where we recorded last month a 69% decline in the rates of killings at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance throughout Syria from last April.



We noticed that this agreement reflected on the living aspects of the civilians who live in the areas that were included in the agreement, 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 Russian, Turkish, and Iranian sponsors- won't see are still going on as nothing had happened.

In May, we recorded that international coalition forces have again killed more civilian than any other party, where 29% of the total number of civilian victims were killed by international coalition forces whose operation were concentrated in the eastern parts of Syria, in al Raqqa governorate in particular, under the pretext of taking down ISIS.

We, at SNHR, hope that the de-escalation zones agreement sees 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 pressingly 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.



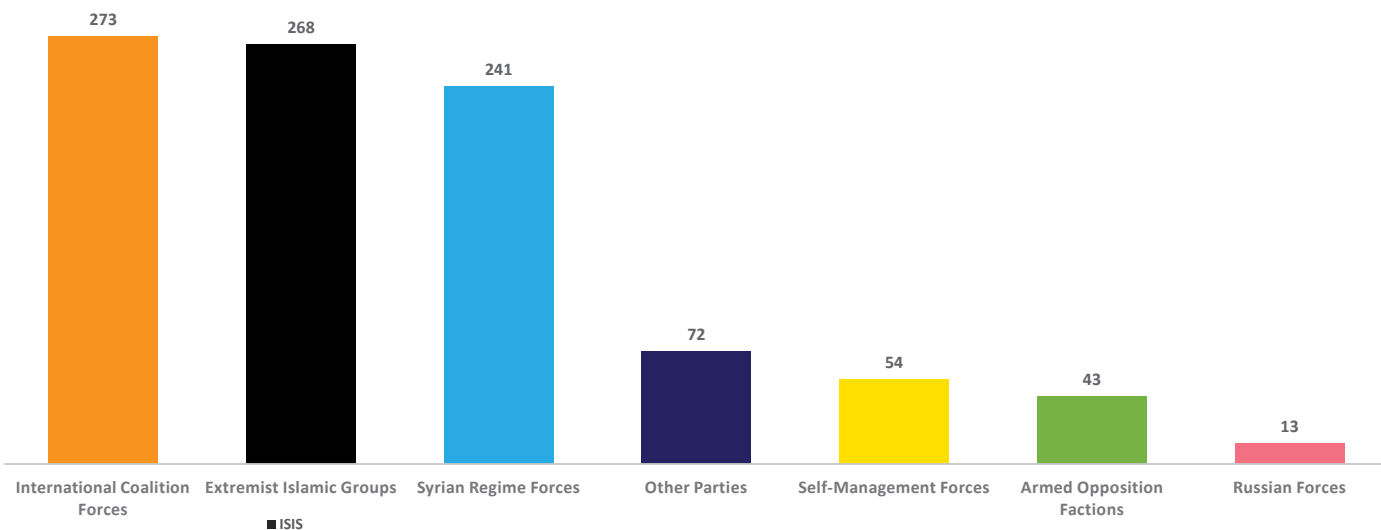
Victims from Syrian regime forces and ISIS: It is almost impossible to access information about this kind of victims and the margin of error is considerably higher due to the lack of any applicable methodology in this type of documentation. The Syrian government and ISIS don't publish, reveal, or record 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

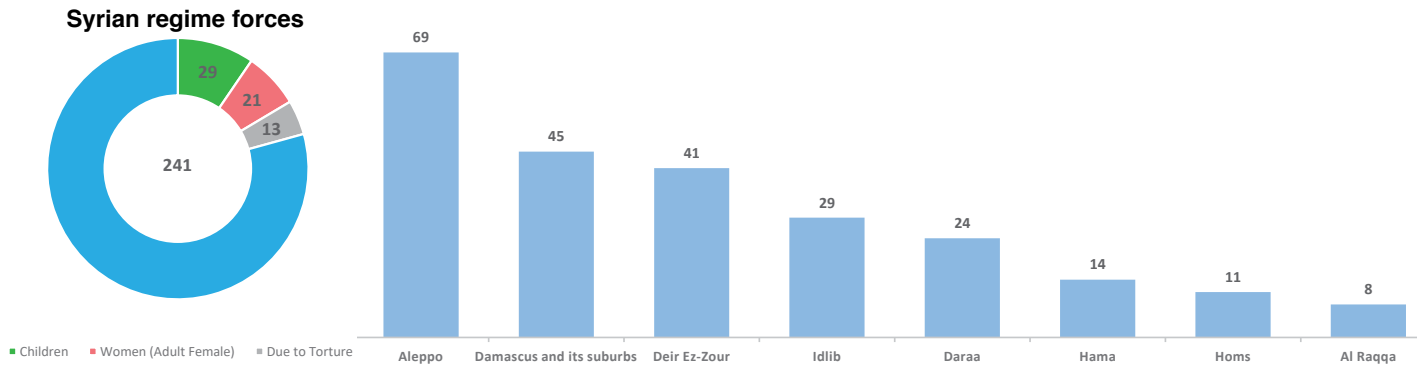
SNHR documented during the month of May 2017 the killing of 946 civilians. Death toll is distributed by the influential party as follows:



A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

SNHR documented the killing of 241 civilians at the hands of Syrian regime forces including 29 children (one child is killed every day on average) and 21 women (adult female). Additionally, among the victims were 13 civilians who died due to torture.

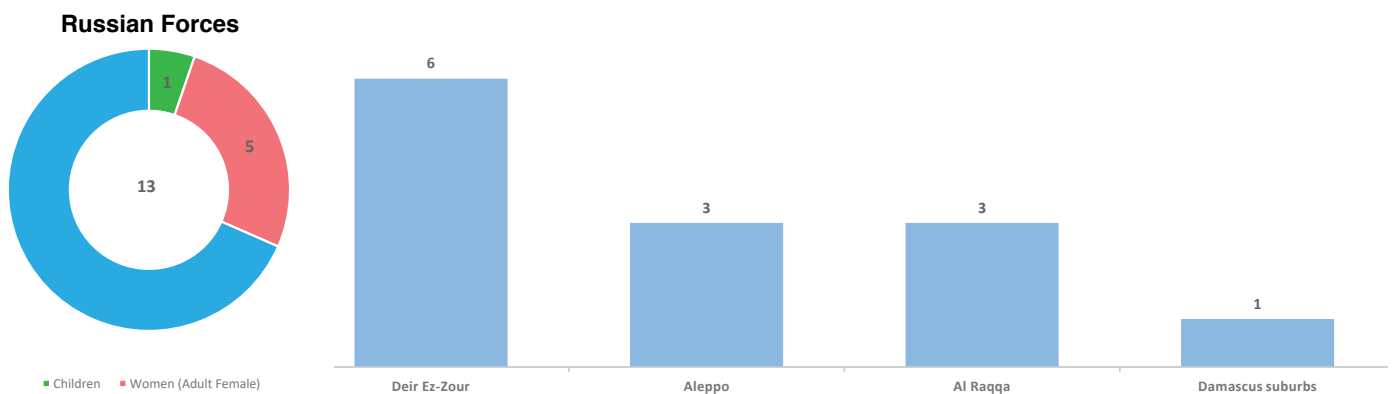
Distribution of victims across Syrian governorates



B. Russian Forces

We documented the killing of 13 civilians including one child and five women in bombardments by forces we believe were Russian.

Distribution of victims across Syrian governorates

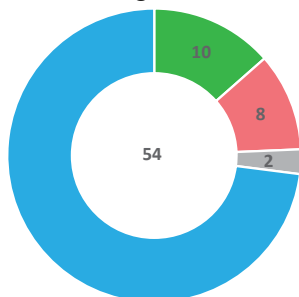


C. Self-management forces (Primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party forces – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party)

Killed 54 civilians including 10 children and eight women. Additionally, among the victims were two who died due to torture. The death toll is distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

Al Raqqa: 39, al Hasaka: 8, Aleppo: 7

Self-management forces

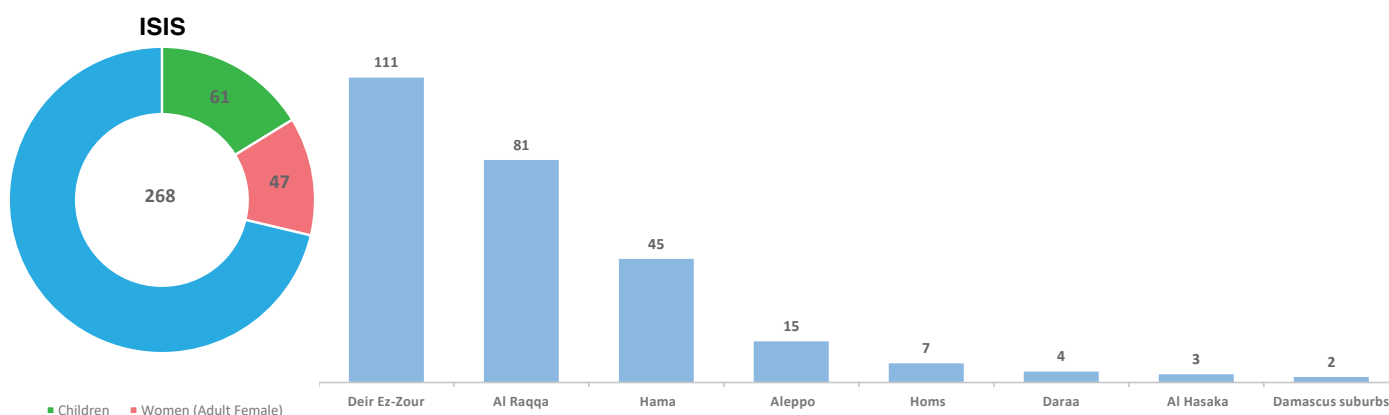


■ Children ■ Women (Adult Female) ■ Due to Torture

D. Extremist Islamic groups

ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State): Killed 268 civilians including 61 children and 47 women.

Distribution of victims across governorates



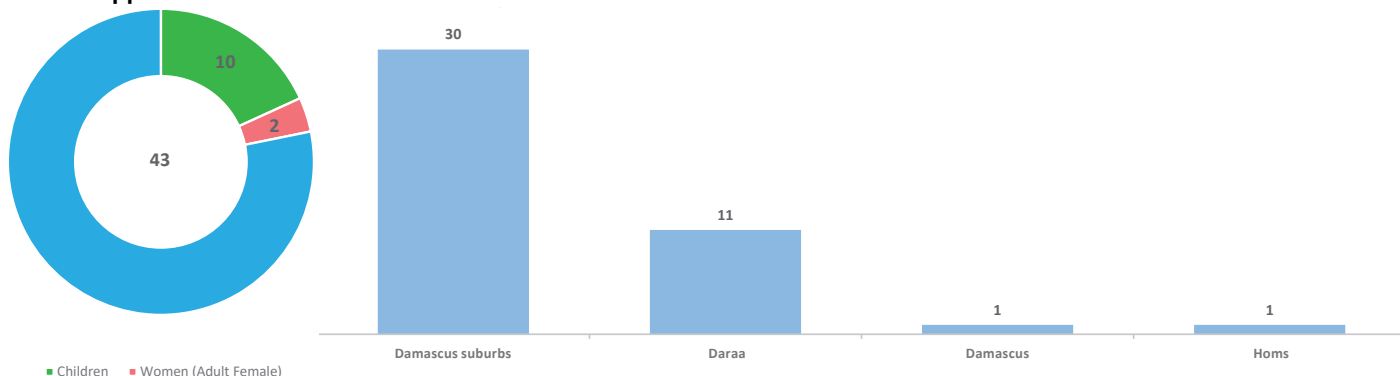
■ Children ■ Women (Adult Female)

E. Armed opposition factions

SNHR documented the killing of 43 civilians including 10 children and two women.

Distribution of victims across Syrian governorates

Armed opposition factions



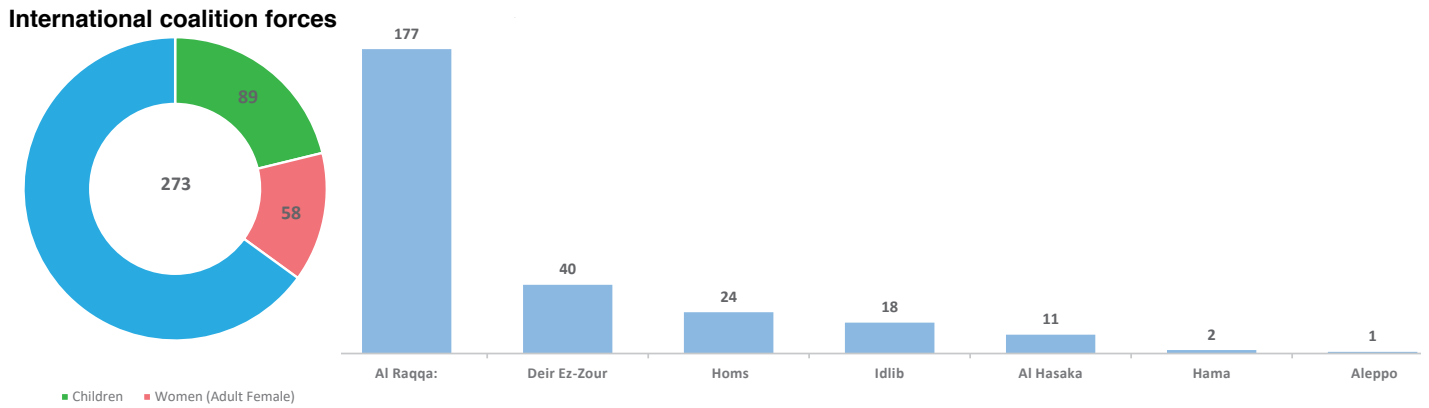
■ Children ■ Women (Adult Female)



F. International coalition forces:

We recorded the killing of 273 civilians including 89 children and 58 women by the bombardment of the international coalition forces warplanes.

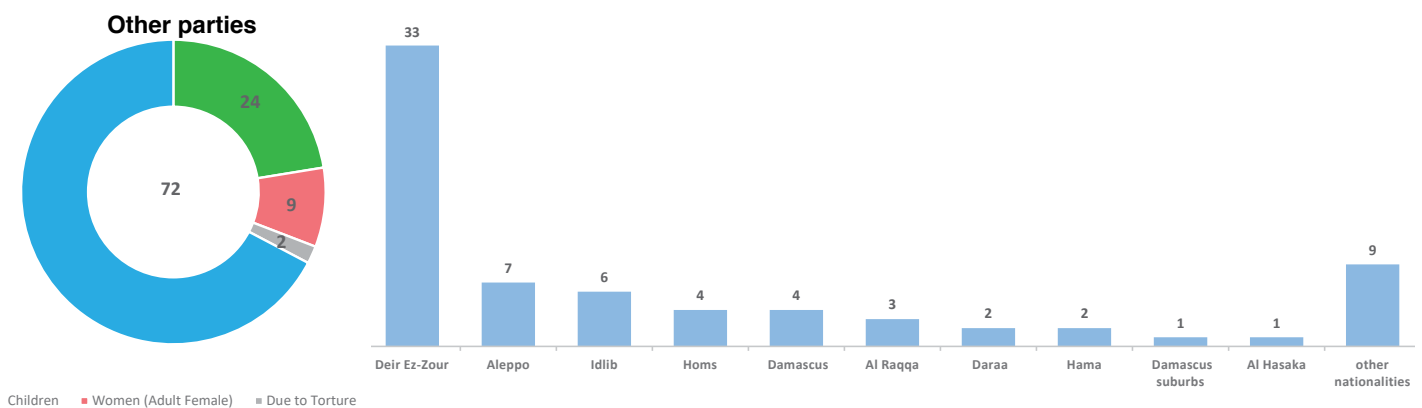
Distribution of victims across Syrian governorates



G. Other parties

We documented the killing of 72 civilians, including 24 children, nine women, and two who died due to torture, by 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.

Distribution of victims across Syrian governorates:



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 is what the Syrian government repeatedly does every time. 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.

Acknowledgment

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





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

