

No less than 28 Massacres in July 2017

Including 14 Massacres at
the Hands of International
Coalition Forces

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Sunday, August 6, 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. Executive Summary
- III. Details of July's Incidents
- IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

I. Introduction and Methodology

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 de-escalation areas – 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.

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.

Since these agreements went into effect, the included areas saw a significant and relatively good drop in killing rates compared to the previous months since March 2011.



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 -particularly the sponsoring states- won't see are still going on as nothing had changed.

We didn't record any drop in the number of massacres by Syrian regime forces and international coalition forces in July compared to June. While international coalition forces perpetrated more massacres than any other party for the third month in a row with 14 massacres in July, most of which were in Raqqa governorate, Syrian regime forces came second with 10 massacres – half of which were in Deir Ez-Zour governorate.

SNHR incorporates high documentation standards that rely on direct accounts from survivors or victims' families and local media activists. This report contains one account. We have explained the purpose of the interviews for the eyewitnesses who gave us permission to use the information they provided without offering or giving them incentives. Also, SNHR tried to spare them the agony of remembering the agony of the violations, and we gave guarantees to conceal the identity of anyone who preferred to use an alias. In addition, we have analyzed the pictures and videos and some medical records we received. We have all the pictures and videos that are mentioned in this report in a secret online database, and backup copies on hard drives. Certainly, we can't claim that we have documented all cases in light of the ban and pursuit by Syrian regime forces and other armed groups.

The type and number of evidences vary from one case to another. In light of the challenges we mentioned above, many of the incidents' legal description change based on new evidences or clues that surface after we had released the report. We add these evidences and clues to our database archive. On the other hand, many incidents don't constitute a violation to the international humanitarian law, but it involved collateral damages, so we record and archive these incidents to know what happened historically and to preserve it as a national record. However, we don't describe it as massacres.

SNHR describes an incident as a massacre if it involves the killing of five peaceful individuals at the same time. For more information about our [methodology](#) in documenting victims, please see the Following URL

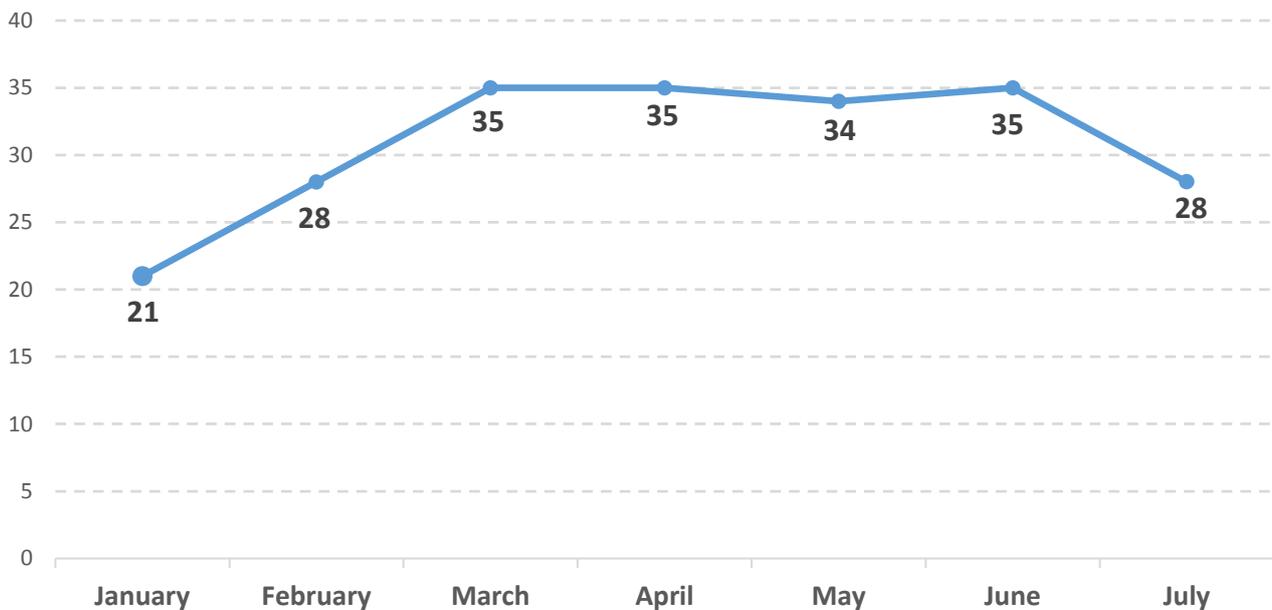


II. Executive Summary

A. Toll of massacres in the 2017

SNHR has documented 216 massacres at the hands of the parties to the conflict between the start of 2017 and August of the same year

Distribution of Massacres by Month since the Start of 2017



B. Toll of massacres in July 2017

SNHR has documented no less than 28 massacres in July, as follows:

- A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 10
- B. Russian forces: 3
- C. International coalition forces: 14
- D. Other parties: 1

The massacres perpetrated by Syrian regime forces were distributed by area of control as follows:

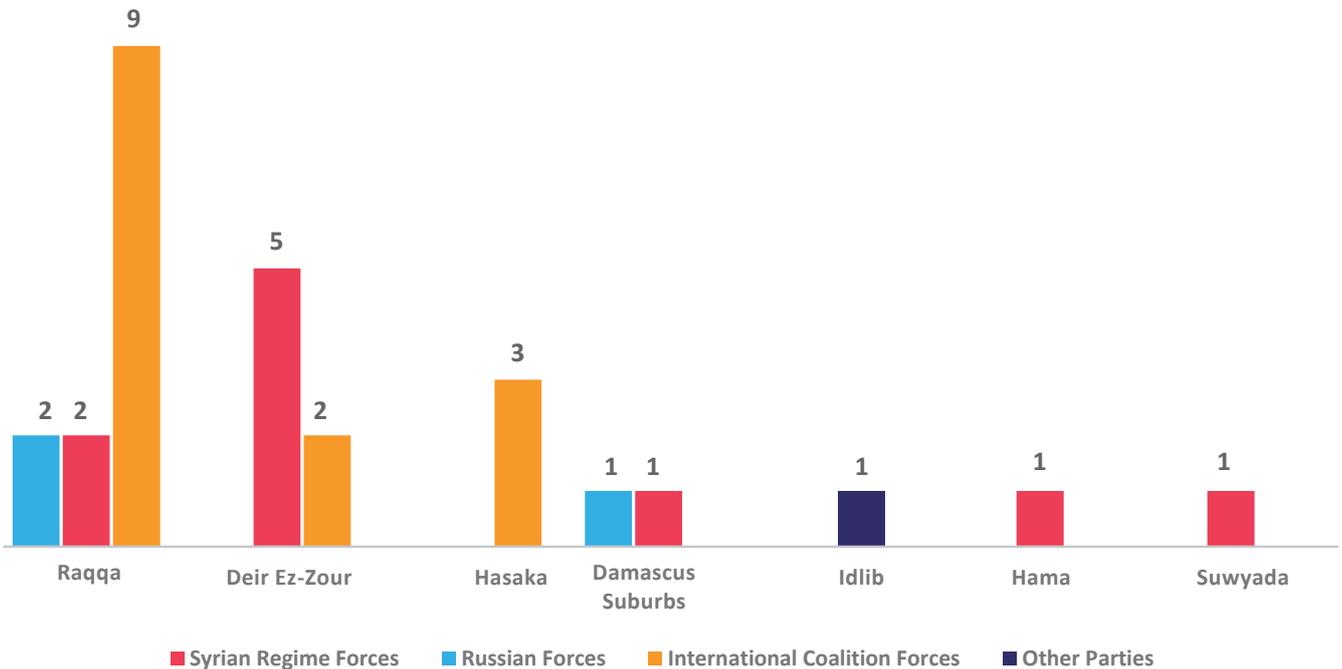
- Two massacres in areas under the control of armed opposition factions.
- Eight massacres in areas under the control of ISIS.

The massacres are distributed across governorates as follows:

Raqqa: 13, Deir Ez-Zour: 7, Hasaka: 3, Damascus suburbs: 2, Idlib: 1, Hama: 1, Suwayda: 1



Distribution of Massacres in July 2017 by the Perpetrator Party



According to the victim documentation team at SNHR, 264 individuals were killed in those massacres, including 106 children and 55 women (adult female). This means that 61% of the victims were women and children, which is a considerably high percentage and an indication that civilians were targeted in most of these massacres.

The death toll of these massacres is distributed by the perpetrator as follows:

Syrian regime forces: 95 individuals, including 43 children and 19 women.

Russian forces: 30 civilians, including six children and eight women

International coalition forces: 132 civilians, including 57 children and 28 women

Other parties: seven civilians

II. Details of July's Incidents

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

Deir Ez-Zour governorate

Saturday, July 8, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in [al Mayadeen city](#), eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of five civilians at once, including three children. Also, about 10 others were wounded. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Saturday, July 15, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Mayadeen city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of seven civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including three children and one woman. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Sunday, July 16, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Mayadeen city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 11 civilians, including four children. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, July 19, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in Ayyash village, western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 15 civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including 10 children and three women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, July 26, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Tayba village, which administratively follows al Mayadeen city in eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, killing nine civilians -as of this writing- from the same family including two children and three women. Additionally, about 15 others were wounded. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Some of the victims' dead bodies in the aftermath of a massacre by the Syrian-Russian alliance in Irbeen city, Damascus suburbs – July 24, 2017



Damascus suburbs governorate

Monday night, July 24, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian-Russian alliance (investigations are still ongoing to identify the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles in al [Asqlani area](#), [Irbeen city](#), northeast of [Damascus suburbs](#) governorate, which resulted in the killing of nine individuals at once, including [five children](#) and one woman. Additionally, about 50 others were wounded. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Raqqa governorate

Tuesday, July 18, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Zour Shammar village, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of nine civilians from the same family (seven children and two women). Additionally, about five others were wounded. It should be noted that the same warplanes perpetrated a massacre on that day by bombing another site in the village with missiles, as five civilians were killed from the same family (three children and two women), while about 10 others were wounded. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Hama governorate

Sunday, July 23, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian--Russian alliance (investigations are still ongoing to identify the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles in al Khdeira village, which administratively follows Egerbat county, eastern suburbs of Hama governorate, killing nine civilians, including three children and one woman. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Some of the victims' dead bodies in the aftermath of a massacre by the Syrian-Russian alliance in al Hqaf area, Suwayda – July 2, 2017



Suwayda governorate

Sunday, July 2, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian-Russian alliance (investigations are still ongoing to identify the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles at an IDPs gathering in al Hqaf area, which is located to the west of Tal al Asfar in northeastern suburbs of Suwayda governorate, killing 16 individuals, including three children and six women. The area was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident, whereas it is, at the time of this report, under the control of Syrian regime forces.

B. Russian forces

Raqqa governorate

Monday, July 24, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired missiles in al Jaber village, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of seven civilians at once, including one woman. Additionally, about 10 others were wounded. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Monday, July 24, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles in al Sabkha village, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of nine civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including three children and one woman. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Damascus suburbs governorate

Friday, July 14, 2017, [fixed](#)-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a missile at a [residential building](#) in the middle of [Ein Tarma town](#), Eastern Ghouta, east of [Damascus suburbs](#) governorate, which resulted in the killing of 14 civilians, including three children and six women. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

A few hours after the massacre, SNHR contacted Adnan al Shami, head of the media office of Ein Tarma town, via Facebook. Adnan gave us his account:

“Friday morning, July 14, about 09:30, Russian warplanes fired a missile at al Balad area, which is located in the middle of the town. The missile landed on a residential building that was one block away from my house and was resided by about 12 families. The building collapsed completely because of the bombing on top of the people inside. I rushed to the site to help civil defense teams and residents with pulling out people. I saw nine children being pulled out of the rubbles and they alive thanks to God -they were less than six-year-old and two of them were infants- in addition to five women and two men. I learned that 12 individuals died under the rubbles of their homes, including five women and three children, and one of the children was a female infant. The rescues lasted until 1:00 after



midnight. One of the women we pulled out didn't let us take her for treatment until we find her infant who was alive, while another elderly woman came back from the hospital in a rush and helped the civil defense dig out the rubbles in order to find her grandson who was buried under the rubbles. Sadly, we found him dead. It was a horrifying and painful scene.”

“The building is filled with families, and the area that was bombed is a civilian area with no military aspects or centers for the Free Army. They even don't live here.”



One of the victims' dead bodies being pulled out in the aftermath of a massacre by Russian forces in Ein Tarma, Damascus suburbs – July 14, 2017

C. International coalition forces

Raqqa governorate

Sunday, July 2, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Dar'iya neighborhood, west of Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of five civilians, who were mostly from the same family (three children and two women). The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Sunday, July 2, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Atiq area, east of Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of five civilians (four children and their father). The area was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Thursday, July 13, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in Hesham ben Abdul Malek neighborhood, south of Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of seven civilians from the same family, including four children and two women. The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Sunday, July 16, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in the middle of Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of seven civilians, who were mostly from the same family, the victims were IDPs from Mheimda village, western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. Among the victims were two women. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, July 18, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at a [residential building](#) -known as [al Nojourn Building](#)- in Saif al Dawla neighborhood, east of Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of 10 civilians from two families, including five children and two women. The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Some of the victims' dead bodies in the aftermath of a massacre by international coalition forces in Saif al Dawla neighborhood, Raqqa – July 18, 2017



Tuesday, July 18, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Nazlat al Shehada in the middle of Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of eight civilians at once, including three children. The area was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Saturday, July 22, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Dar'iya neighborhood, west of Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of five civilians from the same family, including two children and one woman. The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, July 25, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Dar'iya neighborhood, west of Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of five civilians from the same family, including one female child and one woman. The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Friday, July 28, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at a residential building in al Shammas alley in the middle of Raqqa city, which resulted in the killing of 18 civilians from the same family. The victims were from Tedef city in eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate but live in Raqqa city. Among the victims were 10 children and four women. The area was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Hasaka governorate

Monday, July 3, 2017, around 01:00, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Zyanat village, which administratively follows Markada city, southern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, killing nine civilians from the same family, including seven children and one woman. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, July 4, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in Tal al Jayer village, which administratively follows Markada city, southern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, killing 15 civilians, including three children and three women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, July 11, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Zyanat village, which administratively follows Markada city, southern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, killing nine civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including two female children and three women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Deir Ez-Zour governorate

Tuesday, July 11, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Bokamal city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 20 civilians from the same family, including 10 children and six women. Additionally, about 20 others were wounded. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, July 26, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in al Bokamal city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of nine civilians, including three children and one woman. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

D. Other parties

Idlib governorate

Tuesday, July 4, 2017, a car bomb exploded in front of Quneitra Sharia Institute -formerly al Quneitra School for Elementary Education- which is affiliated to Hay'at Tahrir al Sham in Quneitra village, northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The bombing resulted in the killing of seven members of the teaching staff, who are also Sharia scholars, at the institute, while about 20 others were wounded. As of this writing, we have not been able to identify the group responsible for the bombing. The village was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Syrian regime forces and Russian forces

1. SNHR can confirm the bombing cases, deliberate or indiscriminate, targeted armless civilians, thus, the Syrian-Russian alliance forces have violated the rules of the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. Furthermore, these violations were perpetrated during a non-international armed conflict which amounts to war crimes as all elements of a war crime have been fulfilled.
2. SNHR believes that the acts of killing that took place during these massacres can be classified as crimes against humanity.
3. These attacks, especially bombardment, have resulted in collateral damages that involved casualties, injuries, and damages to civil facilities. There are strong indicators that compel to believe that the damage was deeply severe compared to the anticipated military benefit. In all of the cases, we couldn't confirm that there were any military targets before or during these attacks.
4. The magnitude of the massacres, its frequent pattern, the exaggerated use of strength, its military nature, the indiscriminate manner of the bombing, and the coordinated approach of these attacks must be based on high orders, and a state policy.



Other forces

According to this report, international coalition forces and other parties (includes groups that we weren't able to identify in addition to Turkish, Lebanese, and Jordanian forces) have committed massacres that constitute war crimes. However, these crimes are not crimes against humanity as with the case of Syrian regime forces and their pro-regime forces that are committing massacres in a widespread and systematic manner.

Recommendations

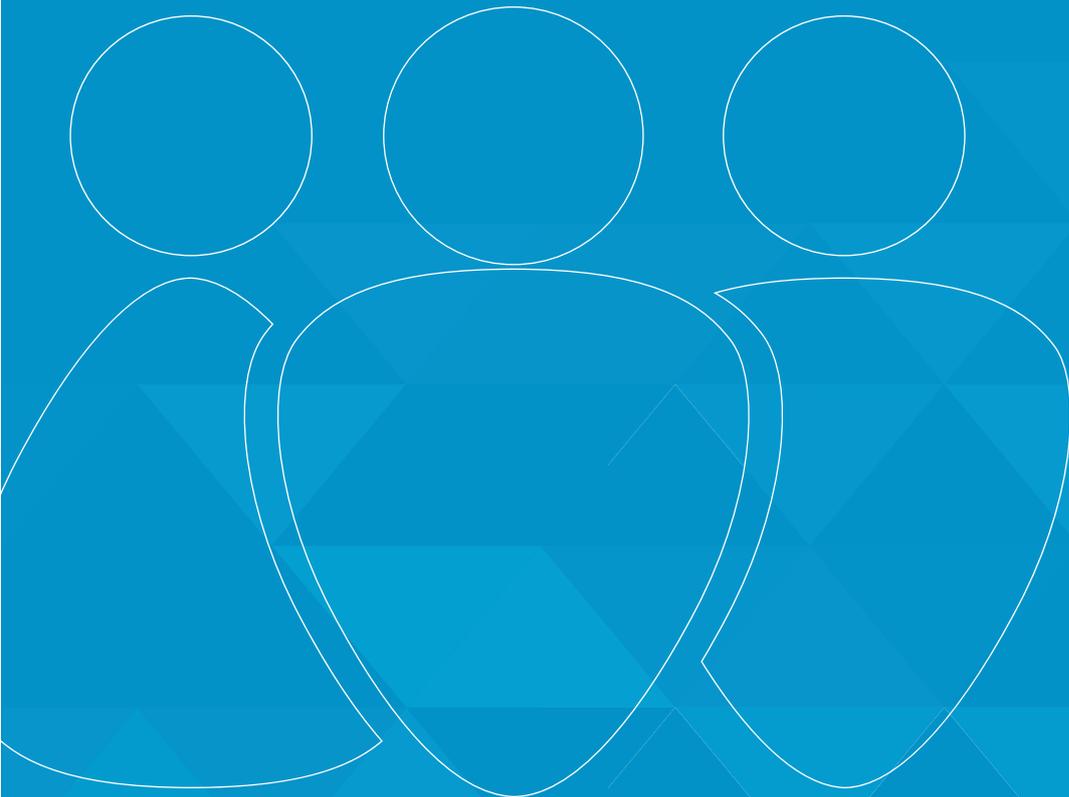
The United Nations and the Security Council

1. Refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court and stop 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 around the world and supports the culture of crime.
2. Impose urgent punishments on those who are involved in widespread violations of human rights in Syria.
3. Bind the Syrian government to allow all relief and human rights organizations to enter Syria as well as the International Intendent Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and journalists and let them work without any obstructions.
4. Insure that all weapon imports to the Syrian government, who is using weapons in widespread attacks against civilians, are halted.
5. the Security Council must shoulder its responsibility in preserving security and civil peace in Syria considering that the violations of the Syrian government entail a gross threat to the international peace and security.
6. List the militias that are fighting with the Syrian government and have committed widespread massacres, like Iranian militias, the Lebanese group Hezbollah, other Shiite brigades, National defense Army and "Shabiha" militias, on the international list of terrorist organizations.
7. Implement the "Responsibility to Protect" norm, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, in Syria as it is direly needed there.
8. With the crimes against humanity committed by the Syrian government, the international community should stop dealing with this government as an "official side" concerning the relief issues, and stop supplying the Syrian government with most of the financial and humanitarian aids that, in most cases, are not being delivered to those who are in need and go instead to the people and parties that support the Syrian government.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

Our thanks and appreciations go to the victims' families, eyewitnesses, and local activists whose accounts contributed majorly to this report. Our most profound consolations go out to the victims' families and friends.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

