

No less than 40 Incidents of Attack on Vital Civilian Facilities in May 2017

The Syrian-Russian Alliance is still Attacking more Vital Civilian Facilities than any other Party Despite the De-Escalation Agreement

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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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. Executive Summary
- II. Details
 1. Places of Worship
 2. Vital Educational Facilities
 3. Vital Medical Facilities
 4. Communal Facilities
 5. Infrastructures
 6. Refugee Camps
- III. Conclusions and Recommendations

I. Executive Summary

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. 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.

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 has changed.



In May 2017, we recorded an unprecedented drop in the numbers of targeted vital civilian facilities at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance. While Syrian regime forces' attack saw a 65% drop in numbers of attacks on vital civilian facilities compared with last April, Russian forces' attacks have been at their lowest in May since the start of the Russian intervention on September 30, 2015. In contrast, international coalition's campaign continues in the east region of Syria which has been the deadliest and heaviest in terms of civilians' deaths since February 2017.

Through daily documentation and monitoring at SNHR, we recorded no less than 40 incidents of attack on vital civilian facilities in May 2017 which are distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:

- A. Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 14
- B. Russian forces: 2
- C. Extremist Islamic groups
 - ISIS (Self-proclaimed the Islamic State): 5
- D. Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party): 1
- E. International coalition forces: 11
- F. Other parties: 7

Most notable facilities that were targeted in May 2017

13 infrastructures, 12 places of worship, six vital educational facilities, four communal facilities, three vital medical facilities, two refugee camps

For more information on the [methodology](#) adopted by SNHR for classifying vital civilian facilities, see the following URL



Attacks on these facilities are distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:

Distribution of Targeted Vital Civilian Facilities in May 2017						
Perpetrator Party	Syrian Regime Forces	Russian Forces	ISIS	Kurdish Self-Management Forces	International Coalition Forces	Other Parties
Targeted Facility						
Places of Worship						
Mosques	5	1			5	1
Vital Educational Facilities						
Schools	3				2	1
Vital Medical Facilities						
Medical Facilities		1		1	1	
Communal Facilities						
Gardens	1					
Markets	3					
Infrastructures						
Power Stations and Energy Sources					1	
Civil Defense Centers	2					1
Water Systems			5			
Official Headquarters					2	2
Refugee Camps						
Refugee Camps						2
Total	14	2	5	1	11	7

The bombardment and what it entails of systematic killing and destruction by the ruling regime seems to aim mainly to undermine the establishment of any alternative governing system. Also, it leads to residents displacing from opposition-held areas to the regime-held areas which are relatively safer.

If the Security Council is unable to bind the conflict parties to implement Resolution 2139, adopted on April 22, 2016, which states: “Demands that all parties immediately cease all attacks against civilians, as well as the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas, including shelling and aerial bombardment, such as the use of barrel bombs”, it should at least apply pressure mainly on Syrian regime forces to cease attacks against vital facilities such as schools, hospitals, markets, bakeries, and places of worship. This report sheds light on the attacks against vital civilian facilities by the main parties. This operation is primarily carried out through our researches who are scattered across Syrian governorates with the cooperation and coordination of the local residents and activists. It should be noted that this is the bare minimum in light of the many practical obstructions we encounter



during documentations. SNHR can confirm, through its investigations, that there were no military centers in the centers mentioned in the report before or during the attacks. The Syrian regime, and other perpetrators, are going to have to justify their actions before the United Nations and the Security Council.

II. Details

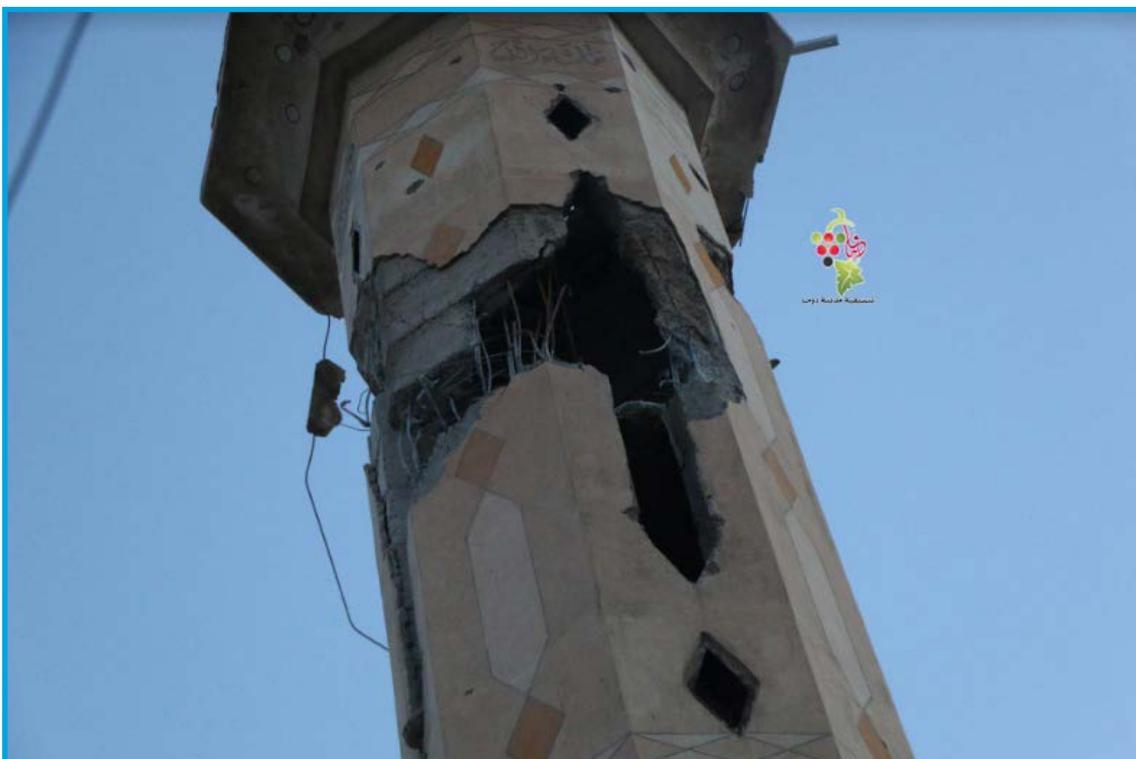
The report sheds light on incidents of attack against vital civilian facilities except for the details of the attacks on vital medical facilities, civil defense centers, and international humanitarian insignia which were put in a past monthly report: [“Eight Medical and Civil Defense Personnel Killed, and Six Attacks on their Vital Facilities in May 2017 - A Notable Decrease in Killing and Destruction Rates in Light of the De-Escalation Agreement”](#)

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

Places of worship

- Mosques

Tuesday, morning, May 9, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a shell at Huthayfa ben al Yaman Mosque on the outskirts of [Douma city](#), Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate. The shelling created holes in the mosque minaret. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Damages resulting from the shelling by Syrian regime forces on the minaret of Huthayfa ben al Yaman Mosque in Douma city, Damascus suburbs – May 5, 2017



Tuesday, May 16, 2017, around 10:30, Syrian regime forces rocket launchers fired a surface-to-surface rocket at [Hamouriya Grand Mosque](#), known as the Old Mosque, in Hamouriya town, Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in massacres. Additionally, [the mosque building](#) and its minaret were heavily destroyed, and its furniture was [heavily damaged](#). As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Damages resulting from a shelling by Syrian regime forces on the Old Mosque in Hamouriya town, Damascus suburbs – May 10, 2017

Wednesday, May 17, 2017, around 14:00, Syrian regime rocket launchers, stationing in Hel-faya city, northwestern suburbs of [Hama governorate](#), fired a number of rockets at [Abu Bakr al Siddeeq Mosque](#), known as Qaryat al Zaka Mosque, in al Zaka village, northern suburbs of Hama governorate. The mosque was destroyed almost completely and was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.





The destruction in the aftermath of a shelling by Syrian regime forces on Abu Bakr al Siddeeq Mosque in al Zaka village, Hama, May 17, 2017

Friday noon, May 19, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian-Russian alliance (Investigations are still ongoing to accurately determine the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles at Jarrah Kabir Mosque in Maskana town, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The mosque was heavily damaged. As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Sunday, May 28, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles near Othman ben Affan Mosque in al Qouriya city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The mosque was slightly damaged. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Vital educational facilities

- Schools

Monday, May 1, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian-Russian alliance (Investigations are still ongoing to accurately determine the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles at a complex that contains [three schools](#) – Saqba Boys' School (elementary), al Muhdatha School for Girls, and Saqba High School for Boys in Saqba city, Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate. The missile fell on Saqba Boys' School and partially destroyed



the school fence and heavily damaged its furniture. As a result, the school was temporarily rendered out of commission. No damages were recorded to the other two school buildings. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Thursday, May 11, 2017, about 22:50, Syrian regime forces rocket launchers, stationing in [Jabal al Akrad](#), northwestern suburbs of Latakia governorate, fired a number of rockets at Bdama Elementary School in Bdama town, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. The school building was partially destroyed, and its furniture was moderately damaged. The town was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.

Friday, May 19, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes of the Syrian-Russian alliance (Investigations are still ongoing to accurately determine the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles at Ibteen School in Maskana town, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The school building was heavily damaged. As a result, the school was rendered out of commission. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Communal facilities

- Gardens

Monday, May 1, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired two missiles at Sukkar Garden in Irbeen city, northeastern Damascus suburbs governorate. The garden fence and facilities were heavily destroyed. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

- Markets

Monday, May 1, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a number of shells at the main market in Irbeen city, northeastern Damascus suburbs governorate. A number of shops were moderately damaged. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Monday, May 22, 2017, around 12:30, Syrian regime artillery fired a mortar shell at the market in Kafr Batna city, Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, a number of shops were moderately damaged. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Monday, May 29, 2017, around 13:00, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a shell at the local market in the middle of Douma city, Eastern Ghouta, Damascus suburbs governorate. A number of shops were slightly damaged. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzGXEIK16xG6bG9jOTRqQ0JVeUU/view>

B. Russian forces

Places of worship

- Mosques

Thursday, May 25, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at al Tarn village in western suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, the mosque was destroyed almost completely and was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

C. Extremist Islamic groups

- ISIS

Infrastructures

- Water systems

Thursday, May 18, 2017, ISIS bombed the high water tank in Mazr'at Hitteen, north suburbs of Raqqa governorate used IEDs. The tank was heavily destroyed and was rendered out of commission. As a result, the water was cut off in parts of the village. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Saturday, May 20, 2017, ISIS bombed the high drinking-[water tank](#) in Hneida village, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate, using IEDs. The tank was destroyed completely and was rendered out of commission. As a result, the water was cut off in parts of the village. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Monday, May 22, 2017, ISIS bombed the high water tank in Hmam village, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate, using IEDs. The tank was destroyed completely and was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Saturday, May 27, 2017, ISIS bombed the high water tank in [al Mansoura town](#), western suburbs of Raqqa governorate, using IEDs. The tank was destroyed completely, and was rendered out of commission. As a result, water was cut off in parts of the town. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.





The destruction in the aftermath of ISIS bombing the high water tank in al Mansoura town, Raqqa – May 27, 2017

Saturday, May 27, 2017, ISIS bombed the high water tank in al Aliya village, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate, using IEDs. The tank was destroyed completely and was rendered out of commission. As a result, the water was cut off in parts of the village. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

D. International coalition forces

Places of worship

- Mosques

Wednesday, May 3, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [Hamada al Iliwi Mosque](#) in Hneida village, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The mosque building was [heavily destroyed](#). As a result, the mosque was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.





A picture showing Hamada Iliwi Mosque in Hneida village, suburbs of Raqqa, before and after it was bombed by international coalition forces with missiles – May 3, 2017

Saturday, May 6, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Urwa al Wouthqa mosque in Hneida village, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The mosque building was heavily destroyed, and was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Friday, May 19, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Bayoud village, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The mosque building was destroyed completely, and was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.





Saturday, May 27, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Ulo Mosque in [Al Haramiya area](#), southeast of Raqqa city. The mosque building and furniture were heavily damaged. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.





Damages resulting from a missile bombardment by international coalition forces warplanes near al Ulo Mosque in Raqqa city – May 27, 2017

Saturday, May 27, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Nour Mosque in al Dar'iya neighborhood, west of Raqqa city. The mosque building was moderately damaged. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Vital educational facilities

- Schools

Sunday, May 28, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes bombed a school in al Shamali neighborhood in al Mansoura town, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The school building was heavily destroyed. As a result, the school was rendered out of commission. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, May 30, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Alya bent al Mahdi in Ma'adan city, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The school fence was partially destroyed. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Infrastructures

- Power stations and energy sources

Monday, May 29, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [Abu Heif station](#) that sells fuel in al Badou area, Raqqa city. Parts of the station burned, and its facilities were heavily damaged. As a result, the station was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

- Official headquarters

Tuesday, May 30, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the Post Mail building in [al Dar'iya neighborhood](#), west of Raqqa city. The building was heavily destroyed and was rendered out of commission. Telecommunications were cut off in parts of the city. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, May 30, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the [Post Mail building](#), known as Barid al Sa'a, which is located near al Sa'a Circle in the middle of Raqqa city. The building was heavily destroyed and was rendered out of commission. Communications were cut off in most of the city's neighborhoods. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

E. Other parties

Places of worship

- Mosque

Wednesday, May 3, 2017, a car bomb blew near [al Maytam Mosque](#) in the middle of Izaz city, northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, the mosque building and its cladding materials were moderately damaged. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the group behind the bombing. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.





Damages in al Maytam Mosque in the aftermath of a car bomb explosion in the middle of Izaz city, Aleppo – May 3, 2017

Vital educational facilities

- Schools

Wednesday, May 3, 2017, a car bomb blew near a school in the middle of [Izaz city](#), northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, the school fence was partially destroyed, and its building was moderately damaged. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the group behind the bombing. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Infrastructures

- Official headquarters

Wednesday, May 3, 2017, a car bomb blew near the local council building in the middle of Izaz city, northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, the building was partially destroyed, and its furniture were moderately damaged. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the group behind the bombing. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Tuesday, May 16, 2017, a motorbike exploded in front of the police station in [Izaz city](#), northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The station building and a vehicle belonging to the station were moderately damaged. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Refugee camps

Wednesday, May 3, 2017, a scouting plane fired a shell in Al Wafaa IDPs camp near the Turkish-Syrian borders west of [Darkoush city](#), which is located in northern [Jesr al Shoughour](#) city, western suburbs of [Idlib governorate](#). Three tents were [moderately damaged](#). As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the party responsible for the bombing. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, May 3, 2017, a scouting plane fired a shell in Aleppo IDP Camp 1 west of [Darkoush city](#), which is located in northern [Jesr al Shoughour](#) city, [western suburbs](#) of Idlib governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, more than 50 IDPs tents [burned completely](#). It is worth nothing that the shell hit a gas tank inside a camp, which amplified the damages resulting from the bombing. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the party responsible for the bombing. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Fateh al Sham Front at the time of the incident.



Damages resulting from a scouting plane firing a shell in Aleppo IDP Camp 1 in Darkoush city, Idlib – May 3, 2017



III. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

According to the international humanitarian law, indiscriminate, deliberate, or disproportionate attacks are considered as unlawful attacks. Syrian regime forces' attacks against schools, hospitals, mosques, and bakeries is an utter disregard for the most basic standards of the international humanitarian law and the Security Council Resolution.

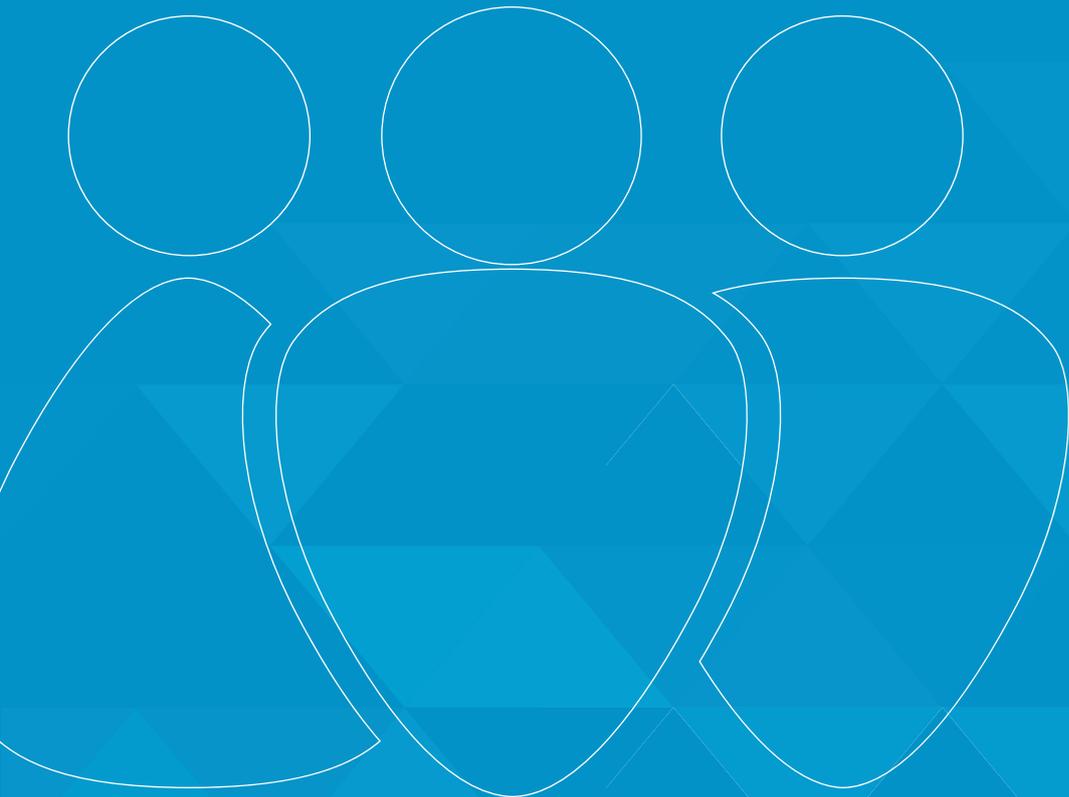
Additionally, Russian forces, ISIS, international coalition forces, Kurdish Self-Management forces and other parties (Includes groups that we weren't able to identify and the Turkish, Lebanese, and Jordanian forces) have attacked some of these facilities. The indiscriminate random shelling is a violation of the international humanitarian law and amounts to a war crime.

Recommendations

The Security Council

- 1- Bind all parties, especially Syrian regime forces considering that they are the main perpetrator of most of these violations, to implement Resolution 2139 and, at least, condemn the targeting of vital civilian facilities that are indispensable for the lives of civilians.
- 2- A comprehensive arms embargo must be imposed on the Syrian government as it has been involved in gross violations of international laws and Security Council Resolutions.
- 3- Deem the states that supply Syrian regime forces and groups that have been involved in crimes against civilians with weapons partners in these crimes in addition to all supplies and distributors.





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