

The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in July 2019

The Highest Toll of Civilian Victims Since the Start of the Recent Military Campaign on the Fourth De-Escalation Zone

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Sunday, August 4, 2019

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.

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I. Introduction and Methodology

Syria has seen an unprecedented number of violations since the start of the popular uprising for democracy in March 2011. Extrajudicial killings, arrests, torture and enforced disappearances are the violations most frequently perpetrated against Syrian citizens. While the Syrian regime and its affiliated militias were the sole perpetrators of these violations for the first seven months or so of the uprising, other parties subsequently joined in, also violating the rights of Syrian citizens. The SNHR has continued to document every incident that its team members are able to verify, with these violations escalating very dramatically in 2012 and 2013, prompting us to expand our publication of periodic monthly reports recording and highlighting the continued suffering of the Syrian people, which subsequently grew to eight reports on different issues issued at the beginning of each month. In the course of our work, SNHR has compiled a massive database cataloguing hundreds of thousands of incidents, each of which involves a pattern of violations that we have been able to document.

By the end of 2018, with a reduction in the level of violence compared to previous years, we changed our previous strategy and now compile our reports into a single monthly report featuring the most prominent violations in Syria which we have been able to document in the preceding month.

This month's report focuses on the human rights situation in Syria in July 2019, and catalogues the record of civilian victims whom we documented killed by the main parties to the conflict during this period, as well as the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearance. The report also highlights indiscriminate attacks and the use of outlawed weapons (cluster munitions, chemical weapons, barrel bombs, incendiary weapons) and attacks on civilian objects.



The report also includes documentation of violations distributed according to the perpetrator parties responsible for each one. Accurately ascribing responsibility sometimes requires more time and investigation than usual, especially in the case of joint attacks. On some occasions, when we are unable to definitively assign responsibility for specific attacks to one particular party, as in the case of air strikes by Syrian or Russian warplanes, Syrian-Iranian attacks, or attacks by Syrian Democratic Forces and International Coalition forces, we indicate that responsibility for these attacks is held jointly by the parties in question until we are able to likely establish which one of the parties was likely responsible, or it's proved that the attack was a joint initiative carried out in coordination between the two parties.

This report draws upon the ongoing daily monitoring of news and developments by SNHR's team, and on information from our extensive network of relations with various sources that have been built up over the course of our work since 2011. When we receive information or learn some news about violations via the internet or media outlets, our team works to follow up these reports and attempts to verify information and collect evidence and data. In some cases, researchers are able to visit the incident location promptly, although this is a rarity in light of the incredibly high security risks involved, and given the frequency of daily incidents and the scarcity of human and material resources to carry out this work. Therefore, the opportunities available to access evidence vary between one case and another, and consequently the level of certainty in classification of each incident varies. SNHR's customary policy in such cases is to rely on accounts from survivors who experienced the violation firsthand, in addition to analyzing available materials from open sources such as the Internet and media outlets. We also talk with medical personnel who treated the injured in these incidents, examined the deceased victims' bodies, and identified the cause of death. SNHR also analyzes videos and photographs that our team has documented, or which were posted online, or submitted by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media platforms. These videos and photos show, amongst other things, sites of attacks, and the bodies of the deceased victims and the injured, the scale of destruction, and the remnants of the incendiary and cluster munitions and other munitions used, whilst other photos may show victims killed under torture, and victims amongst medical and media personnel who died in attacks carried out by parties to the conflict. We also retain copies of all the videos and photographs included in these reports, which are also reviewed in this report, in a confidential electronic database, as well as keeping hard disk backup copies, and we ensure always that all these data are stored with their original source. We do not claim, however, that we have documented all cases, given the severe prohibitions, restrictions and persecution by the Syrian Regime forces and some other armed groups. Readers are welcome to find out more about our methodology.¹

¹ "Syrian Network for Human Rights Methodology", Syrian Network for Human Rights, <http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR_Methodology_en.pdf>



This report contains one account that we've collected through speaking directly with eyewitnesses, with none of our accounts cited from any open sources. We explained the purpose of this interview beforehand to the eyewitness, who gave us permission to use the information they provided without us offering or giving them any incentives. Also, SNHR endeavors always to spare the eyewitnesses the agony of remembering the violations as much as possible, and to provide assurances that we will conceal the identity of any witness who prefers to use an alias.

This report only represents the bare minimum of the actual severity and magnitude of the violations that occurred. Also, it doesn't include any analysis of the profound social, economic, and psychological ramifications.

II. July Outline

July saw an increase in the rate of military operations by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces against the populated areas in the fourth de-escalation zone, during which we recorded the highest toll of victims at the hands of these forces in the fourth de-escalation zone since the start of the military campaign on the region on April 26.

The twenty-second of July was the bloodiest day since the beginning of the military campaign on the fourth de-escalation zone, with the Russian forces committing a massacre in Ma'aret al Numan city in the southern suburbs of Idlib which resulted in the deaths of 39 civilians. These forces were quick to deny responsibility for the massacre; this certainly wasn't the first time that the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation has denied responsibility for certain attacks by its forces in Syria. According to the information we have been able to verify, of the eight large massacres that Russian forces have denied responsibility for since the beginning of the Russian military intervention in Syria in September 2015, the SNHR team proved Russia's involvement in seven of them. The record of the massacres committed by Russian forces during the current campaign has reached six massacres to date, three of which were in July. The SNHR has already issued [a report](#) outlining the most notable massacres committed in the three months since the start of the military campaign by Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the fourth de-escalation zone, particularly highlighting the massacre in Ma'aret al Numan city.



Assassinations and bombings have also continued to result in civilian deaths in most of the areas outside the control of Syrian Regime forces. In July we recorded an increase in death rates due to drowning in bodies of water due to high temperatures and lack of sanitary facilities.

Arrests by all parties also continued almost daily in most of Syria in July. July saw the highest monthly rate of arbitrary arrests since early 2019 due to Syrian regime forces' continued policy of arresting those who had reached settlements, and due to Syrian Democratic Forces' systematic arrests of Arab citizens in the areas under their control, especially in Manbej city in the northeastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

In July, we documented a continuation of the previous attacks by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces on vital civilian facilities in the fourth de-escalation zone, targeting facilities that have a significant impact on the lives of civilians. We recorded attacks by these forces on two water facilities in the Ma'aret al Numan area, putting both out of service and depriving the residents of the area of water. We also documented 11 attacks on medical facilities, two of which are listed in the humanitarian de-confliction mechanism, and 14 other attacks on Civil Defense vital facilities (centers and vehicles), as well as four attacks on IDP accommodation centers, a significant increase in such attacks compared to previous months.

July also saw a relative decrease in the number of indiscriminate attacks and the use of outlawed weapons that we were able to document compared to the previous two months.

The fierce military attacks by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the cities and towns in the de-escalation zone resulted in emptying them from their inhabitants, most of whom headed towards north-west Syria near the Turkish-Syrian border and towards the areas under the control of the Euphrates Shield forces.

Regular and randomly constructed camps in north-western Syria continue to suffer from poor living conditions due to a poor response by international humanitarian organizations. Al Hawl Camp, located southeast of Hasaka city, which is the largest such camp in the eastern region, holding some 70,000 people, mostly women and children, continues to suffer from terrible humanitarian conditions, and almost daily arrests by members of the Syrian Democratic Forces who control the camp. In July, after the intervention of some dignitaries and sheikhs of the eastern region with Syrian Democratic Forces, we documented that the latter allowed some 350 persons, who had previously been displaced from the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour and Manbej city in Aleppo suburbs, to leave the camp and return to their cities and towns.



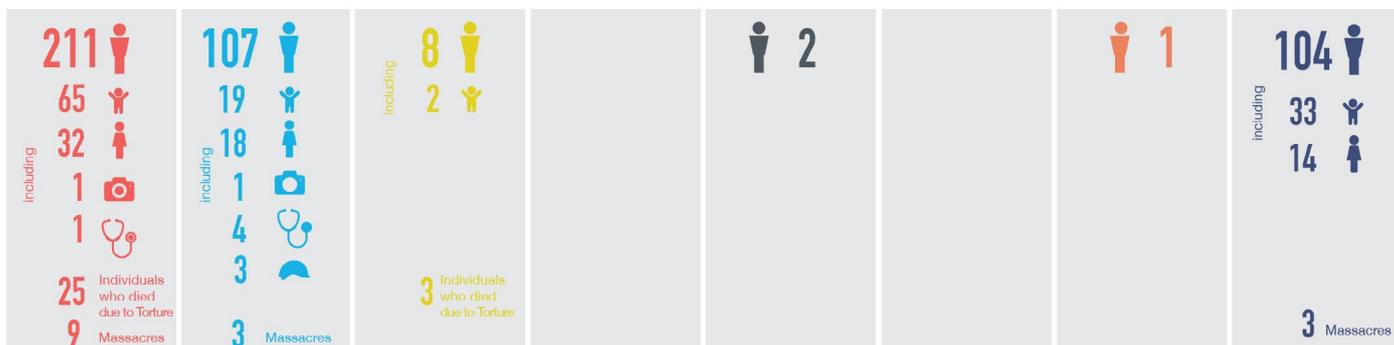
III. The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in July

This report outlines the most notable human rights violations that were documented by the SNHR in July 2019 at the hands of the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria.

Record of the Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in July 2019

Syrian Regime forces	Russian forces	SDF (mainly PYD)	Extremist Islamist groups ISIS Hay'at Tahrir al Sham	Factions of the Armed Opposition	International Coalition forces	Other parties
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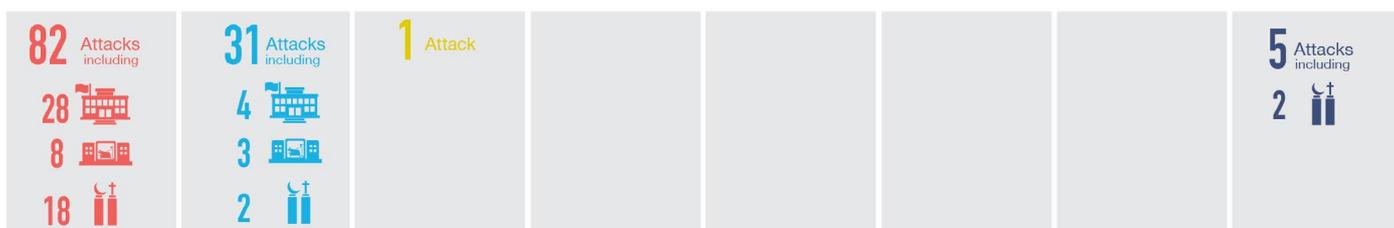
Extrajudicial Killing



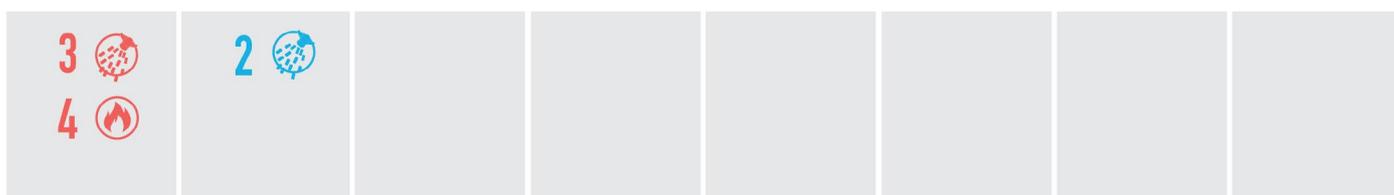
Arbitrary Arrests and Unlawful Detention



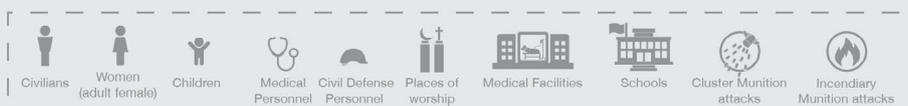
Attacks on Vital Civilian Facilities



Record of Indiscriminate Attacks and Attacks Using Outlawed Weapons



At least 581 barrel bombs were dropped by the Syrian Regime air force, resulting in the deaths of 22 civilians, including 9 children and 7 women (adult female)



As documented by SNHR

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A. Extrajudicial killing:

In July 2019, SNHR documented the deaths of 433 civilians, including 199 children and 64 women (adult female), including five medical personnel, two media workers, and three Civil Defense personnel, with the highest rate of killings being carried out at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance forces. We also documented the deaths of 28 individuals due to torture, and at least 15 massacres. We issued a report on the first of this month detailing the civilian victims documented killed in July at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria.

The death toll of civilian victims was distributed by the main perpetrator parties as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):**

211 civilians, including 65 children and 32 women.

- **Russian forces:** 107 civilians, including 19 children and 18 women.

- **Extremist Islamist groups:** Two civilians were killed at the hands of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition)

- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):** Eight civilians, including two children.

- **International Coalition forces:** One civilian.

- **Other parties:** 104 civilians, including 33 children and 14 women.

B. Arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance:

SNHR documented in July 2019 at least 589 cases of arbitrary arrests, including 38 children and 24 women (adult female), at the hands of the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria. The largest number of arrests was carried out by Syrian Regime forces in the governorates of Damascus Suburbs, Aleppo then Damascus. We issued a report on the second of this month detailing the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearances which we documented in July 2019 at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria.

These arrests are distributed according to the main perpetrator parties, as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 296, including 16 children, and eight women.

- **Extremist Islamist groups:** 11, including one child, all at the hands of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.

- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** 55, including three children and two women.

- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 227, including 18 children and 14 women.



C. Attacks on vital civilian facilities:

SNHR documented in July at least 119 attacks on vital civilian facilities, 113 of which were carried out at the hands of Syrian-Russian alliance forces, all in the fourth de-escalation zone. Among these attacks, 32 were on schools, 11 were on medical facilities and 22 others were on places of worship.

These attacks are distributed by the main perpetrator parties as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 82
- **Russian forces:** 31
- **Syrian Democratic forces:** One
- **Other parties:** Five

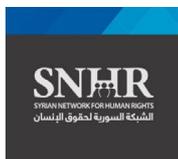


The record of attacks documented in July on vital civilian facilities is distributed according to the perpetrator party as follows:

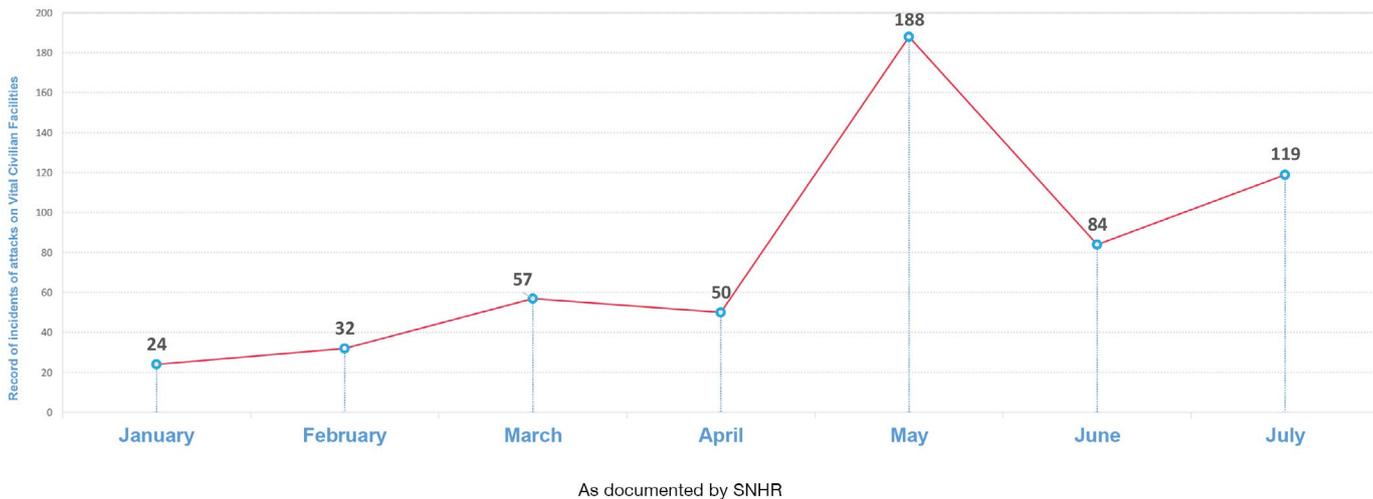
Perpetrator Party	Syrian Regime Forces	Russian Forces	Syrian Democratic Forces	Other Parties
Attacked Facility				
Places of Worship				
Mosques	18	2	-	1
Churches and monasteries	-	-	-	1
Vital Educational Facilities				
Schools	28	4	-	-
Vital Medical Facilities				
Medical Facilities	8	3	-	-
Ambulances	1	2	-	-
Vital Cultural Facilities				
Museums	1	-	-	-
Communal Facilities				
Markets	3	1	-	2
Playgrounds and stadiums	1	-	-	-
Infrastructure				
Civil Defense centers	3	11	-	-
Water facilities and related resources	1	1	1	1
Official Headquarters	4	1	-	-
Bakeries	5	4	-	-
Domestic animal farms	1	-	-	-
Industrial facilities	1	1	-	-
Civil society organizations	4	-	-	-
Refugee Camps				
Refugee camps	3	1	-	-
Total	82	31	1	5



Thus, the record of attacks on vital civilian facilities since the start of 2019 up to the start of August of the same year at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria has now reached 554 in total, distributed monthly as follows:



At least 554 incidents of attacks on vital civilian facilities in Syria in 2019 From January to August



The previous chart shows an increase in the number of attacks on civilian vital facilities in July compared to June. The previous three months saw a marked increase in terms of the number of attacks documented against civilian vital facilities following the recent military escalation by Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the fourth de-escalation zone since April 26, 2019.

The most notable attacks on vital civilian facilities that were documented in July:

On Wednesday, July 3, 2019, a motorcycle carrying explosives exploded in the local market in al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, resulting in casualties, in addition to [causing severe material damage](#) to [several shops](#) and market facilities. We were unable to identify the party responsible for the bombing up to the time of the preparation of this report, given the difficulty in identifying the perpetrators of such bombings. Al Bab city was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.



On the evening of Saturday, July 6, 2019, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes launched a machinegun air raid using small-sized missiles on Mouqa al Jadida Preparatory School in Mouqa village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [partially destroying](#) the school building, and causing [moderate material](#) damage to its furniture. Mouqa village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Damage caused by a Syrian regime air attack on Mouqa al Jadida Preparatory School in Mouqa village, Idlib – July 6, 2019

On Monday, July 8, 2019, Syrian Democratic Forces took over the Makayen al Hawija Water Pumping Station, located on the bank of the Euphrates River between Abu Hamam city and al Keshkiya town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, turning it into a military headquarters for the affiliated self-defense forces. The area was under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, July 10, 2019, fixed-wing (L-39) Syrian regime warplanes launched a machinegun air raid using small-sized missiles on Ma'aret al Numan Central Hospital, known as the National Hospital, which is considered one of the largest hospitals in the north of Syria. The air raid on the hospital, located in Ma'aret al Numan city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which is listed in the humanitarian de-confliction mechanism, and is supported by Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), [caused moderate material damage](#) to



[the hospital's](#) building [and equipment](#). Ma'aret al Numan city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

The Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), which support the hospital, issued [a statement](#) condemning the attacks on health facilities and calling on the United Nations to investigate the attacks on them and to take steps to protect them.

On Wednesday, July 10, 2019, fixed- wing (Su-22) Syrian regime warplanes fired missiles at the Jisr al Shoghour Surgical Hospital, known previously as al Kalawi Hospital, located in Jisr al Shoghour city in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, which is supported by the Syrian Expatriate Medical Association (SEMA). The attack [partially destroyed](#) the hospital building, and caused [moderate material](#) damage to [its equipment](#), in addition to igniting a fire in the main hospital power generators, and inflicting moderate material damage to [an ambulance](#) belonging to the hospital. Jisr al Shoghour city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

[The Syrian Expatriate Medical Association](#) issued a statement on the targeting of Jisr al Shoghour Hospital and other medical centers on their official website.



Destruction inflicted in Jisr al Shoghour Surgical Hospital by a Syrian air attack on Jisr al Shoghour city, Idlib – July 10, 2019



On Wednesday, July 10, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles at IDP homes, which are affiliated with al Huda Charitable Association, in north of [Ma'aret Harma](#) village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, resulting in casualties, in addition to causing [severe destruction](#) to [two residential units](#). The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On the morning of Thursday, July 11, 2019, fixed-wing (SU-24) warplanes, which we believe were Russian, launched 14 consecutive missile attacks on the Civil Defense Center, which was located inside a fortified cave located at the northern outskirts of Khan Sheikhoun city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. These attacks, which began at around 07:30 and continued until 11:30, caused [significant destruction](#) to the [center's building](#), and severe material damage to its equipment, in addition to significantly destroying five vehicles belonging to the center (an ambulance, a fire engine, two service vehicles, and a Bobcat used to remove debris), putting the center out of service. We note that the center was again attacked by the same warplanes the next day despite having been put out of service. Khan Sheikhoun city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

[The Syrian Civil Defense](#) organization published a news report on the targeting of the Khan Sheikhoun Center on their official website.



A video showing the Russian air strike targeting the Civil Defense Center in Khan Sheikhoun city, Idlib - July 11, 2019



On Thursday, July 11, 2019, at around 17:30, a car bomb exploded near [the Holy Virgin Syriac Orthodox Church](#) in al Wakalat Street in al Wusta neighborhood in al Qameshli city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, injuring 15 civilians, [in addition](#) to causing [significant destruction](#) to the [church building](#). We were unable to identify the party responsible for the bombing up to the time of the preparation of this report, given the difficulty in identifying the perpetrators of such bombings. Al Qameshli city was under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces at the time of the incident.



Damage caused by the explosion of a car bomb near the Holy Virgin Syriac Orthodox Church in al Qameshli city, Hasaka – July 11, 2019

On Saturday, July 13, 2019, fixed- wing Syrian regime warplanes fired missiles at the Martyr Mustafa Abdul Qader High School in [Morek](#) town in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, [partially destroying](#) the [school building](#), and causing severe [material damage](#) to its furniture. The town was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Destruction inflicted by a Syrian regime air attack on Martyr Mustafa Abdul Qader High School in Morek town, Hama – July 13, 2019

On Wednesday, July 17, 2019, Syrian Regime forces used artillery to fire a shell at the Khaled Bin al Walid Mosque in al Kenda village, which is administratively a part of Jisr al Shoghour city in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate. The shell directly hit the mosque's minaret, [partially destroying it](#), and causing moderate material damage to the mosque's furniture. Al Kenda was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Sunday, July 21, 2019, fixed-wing (SU-24) Syrian regime warplanes fired a number of missiles that landed in front of [al Eman Mosque](#) in al Karaj area in the middle of Urm al Jawz village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, perpetrating a massacre, in addition to causing [moderate material](#) damage to [the mosque's building](#). Urm al Jawz village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Destruction of al Eman Mosque in a Syrian air attack on Urm al Jawz village, Idlib – July 21, 2019

On Monday, July 22, 2019, fixed-wing (MiG-23) Syrian regime warplanes fired missiles at the Najdat al Khaled High School for Girls in Saraqeb city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, severely damaging the [school building](#). Saraqeb city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Destruction inflicted by a Syrian air attack on Najdat al Khaled High School for Girls in Saraqeb city, Idlib – July 22, 2019



On Friday, July 26, 2019, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired a number of missiles at [al Hal Market](#) in the north of Saraqeb city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, resulting in casualties, as well as [partially damaging several shops](#), and [causing moderate material damage](#) to the [market facilities](#). Saraqeb city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Friday, July 26, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles at the Ahmad Juma Orabi School in Morek town in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, [partially damaging](#) the school building, and causing [severe material damage](#) to its furniture. Morek town was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



On Saturday, July 27, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles that landed near an ambulance belonging to the Kafr Zita Emergency System of the 'Free' Hama Health Directorate on the road between Kafr Zita city and al Latamena town in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, as the ambulance personnel were on their way to aid those wounded in earlier bombing of the area by Syrian-Russian alliance forces; the missile attack killed three of the ambulance personnel, in addition to inflicting severe material damage to the vehicle structure. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



D. Record of indiscriminate attacks and attacks using outlawed weapons:

SNHR documented at least five cluster munitions attacks in July, all in Idlib governorate, distributed as follows:

Syrian Regime forces: Three attacks, one of which resulted in the death of one civilian.

Russian forces: Two attacks.

We also recorded at least four incendiary weapons attacks in July, all of which were carried out by Syrian Regime forces, including two each in the governorates of Idlib and Hama.

The Syrian Regime's air force, including fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, also dropped at least 581 barrel bombs on the governorates of Idlib, Hama and Latakia during July. These attacks resulted in the deaths of 22 civilians, including nine children and seven women, as well as damaging at least 19 vital civilian facilities, including 10 schools, three mosques, and two medical facilities.

The following are the most notable indiscriminate attacks and attacks using outlawed weapons that we were able to document in July:

On Monday, July 1, 2019, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to fire at least 10 missiles loaded with incendiary substances targeting agricultural lands and civilians' houses in al Rakaya village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, causing the outbreak of fires in the houses and agricultural farmland. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.

On Friday, July 5, 2019, at round 21:00, two Syrian Regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on three sites in Mhambel town in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the deaths of [13 civilians](#), including [seven children](#), an [unborn baby](#), and [three women](#), and injured 20 others. The civilian death toll was distributed across the three sites as follows:

The first site: Some barrel bombs fell on [a complex of residential buildings](#) about 200 meters from the [Martyr Mohammad Saleh Abdul Aal Primary School](#) in the western outskirts of the town, perpetrating a massacre of seven civilians from one family, including four children (three males and one female) and two women, who were inside the lobby of a house.

The second site: [Residential buildings](#) located in front of the Martyr Mohammad Saleh Abdul Aal Primary School, resulting in the deaths of three civilians, including two children.

The third site: [Residential buildings](#) located near the Agricultural Extension building in the northern outskirts of the town, resulting in the deaths of three civilians who were IDPs from Damascus Suburbs governorate, namely a pregnant woman, her child and her unborn baby. Mhambel town was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Hassan al Ali², the director of the Civil Defense Center in Mhambel town, told the SNHR: **“At around 9:00 pm on July 5, the observatories publicized that helicopters had taken off from Hama Military airport, specifying that their destination was Idlib’s western suburbs. When the helicopters arrived in the airspace over the town, they began to drop their load of barrel bombs respectively, and when they finished the airstrikes, our teams headed to the places where the barrel bombs had fallen, where we retrieved about 14 martyrs and aided 14 others, some of whom are displaced from other governorates and reside in the town.”**

On Monday, July 8, 2019, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired an RBK-500 bomb loaded with AO-2.5RT / AO-2.5RTM [cluster munitions](#). The remnants fell on the eastern outskirts of Hazarin village in the southern suburbs of Idlib. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

² Via WhatsApp on July 6, 2019



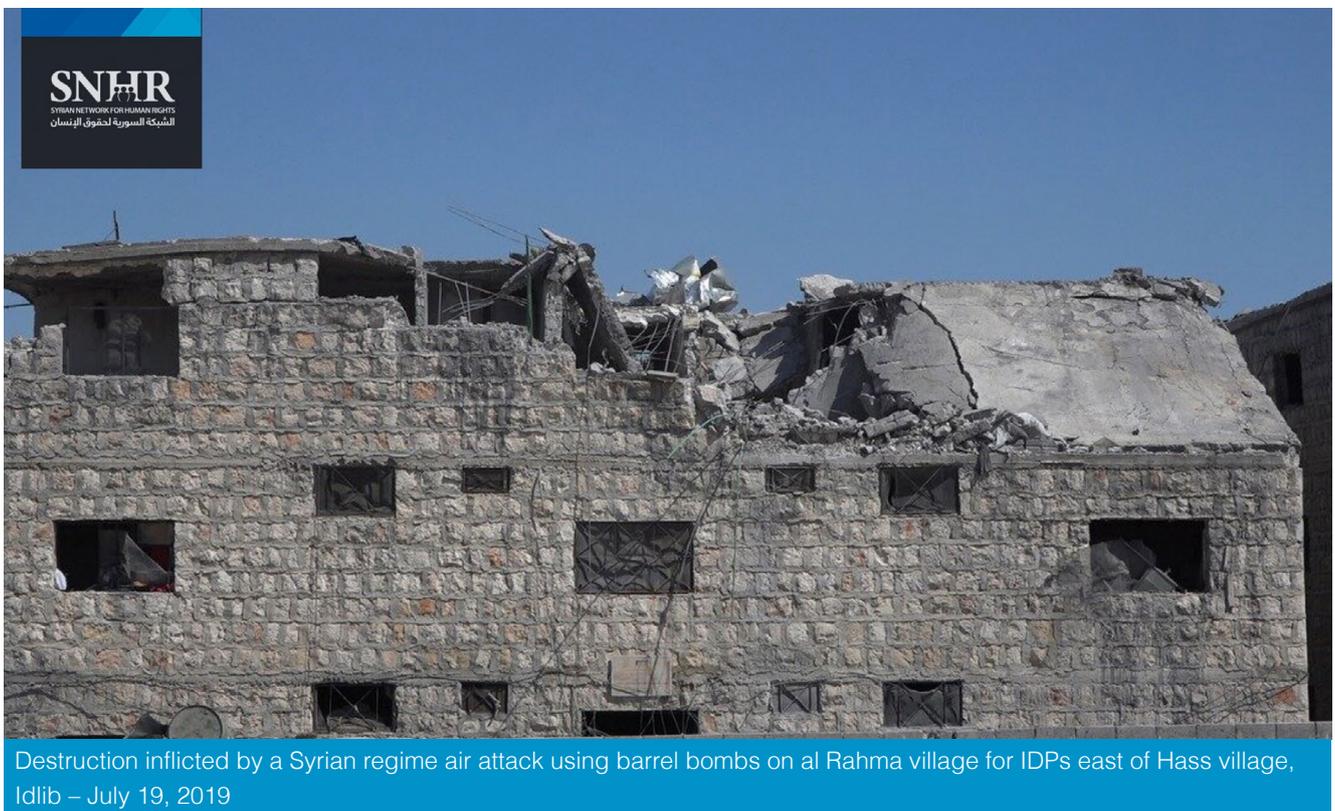
On Friday, July 12, 2019, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher stationed in the Braidij camp to fire a number of missiles loaded with incendiary substances targeting civilians' houses and agricultural land in Kafr Zita city in the northern suburbs of Hama, causing the outbreak of fires in the agricultural land. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Sunday, July 14, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, launched a number of raids on Ma'aret al Numan city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [one of which](#) used two [RBK bombs](#) loaded with AO-2.5RTM / AO-2.5RT cluster munitions. The cluster submunitions fell on the water station of al Zarqaa tank on the western outskirts of the city, [partly destroying the station's](#) facility, and [causing moderate material damage to its equipment](#), putting it out of service, in addition to injuring four of the site's guards. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



We note that the water station facility contains pumping stations in addition to a catchment ground reservoir, with a capacity of 5,000 cubic meters, that provides drinking water for about 120,000 people in the area, and that it was the only one still in operation in the area after the Bsida station was put out of service by a Syrian air strike that targeted it on July 5. UNICEF issued [a statement](#) on July 20 calling on all parties to stop attacks on water facilities.

On Friday, July 19, 2019, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on al Rahma village for IDPs, a settlement of houses for IDPs located east of Hass village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, resulting in casualties, [in addition](#) to [severely destroying](#) the houses. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



On Thursday, July 25, 2019, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs that landed near the Ibn Hayyan Elementary School in Kafrooma village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, partially destroying the building and schoolyard. Kafrooma village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Destruction inflicted by a Syrian regime air attack using barrel bombs near Ibn Hayyan Elementary School in Kafrooma village, Idlib – July 25, 2019

IV. Attachments

[433 Civilians, Including Two Media Workers and Eight Medical and Civil Defense Personnel, Documented Killed in Syria in July 2019](#)

[At least 589 Cases of Arbitrary Arrests Documented in Syria in July 2019](#)

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions:

- The evidence we have gathered indicates that attacks continue to be directed against civilians and civilian objects. Syrian-Russian alliance forces have committed various crimes, including extrajudicial killings, arrest, torture, and enforced disappearance. In addition, the indiscriminate bombardment and other attacks carried out caused the destruction of facilities and buildings. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the war crime of attacking civilians has been committed in many cases.
- The Syrian government has not only violated international humanitarian law and customary law, but has also breached a number of UN Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2139, resolution 2042 on the release of detainees, and resolution 2254, all without any accountability.



- We could find no record of any warnings being issued by the Syrian Regime, or by Russian or International Coalition forces prior to any attack in accordance with the requirements of international humanitarian law. This has been the case since the beginning of the popular uprising for freedom, providing another blatant demonstration of these forces' total disregard for the lives of civilians in Syria.
- The magnitude and frequency of the violations, the disproportionate use of military force, the indiscriminate manner of the bombing, and the coordinated approach of these attacks leads to the inescapable conclusion that these acts are wholly deliberate and based on high-level orders, and as such constitute a part of state policy.
- The indiscriminate and disproportionate bombardment carried out by the alliance of International Coalition forces and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces is considered to be a clear violation of international humanitarian law, with indiscriminate killings amounting to war crimes.
- Extremist Islamist groups have violated international humanitarian law, causing the death of many civilians, as well as damage to vital civilian facilities.
- All the attacks documented in this report, particularly bombings, caused massive collateral damage that involved loss of lives, injuries, or significant damage to civilian objects. There are strong indicators suggesting that this damage was excessive compared to the anticipated military benefit.
- The use of explosive arms to target densely populated areas reflects a criminal and wholly deliberate mindset, with the perpetrators clearly intending to inflict the greatest possible number of deaths, which is a clear contravention of international human rights law and a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention (arts. 27, 31, 32).

Recommendations:

Security Council

- The Security Council must take additional steps following its adoption of Resolution 2254, which clearly insists that “all parties immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such.”
- The Syrian issue should be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible for violations should be held accountable including the Russian regime whose involvement in war crimes has been repeatedly proven.
- Ensure peace and security and implement the principle of responsibility to protect civilians' lives and to save the Syrian people's heritage and historical artefacts from destruction, looting and vandalism.



- The Security Council should adopt a resolution banning the use of cluster munitions in Syria, similar to the existing prohibition on the use of chemical weapons, and include advice on how to safely remove the remnants of such dangerous weapons.
- The four other permanent member states should put pressure on the Russian government to end its support for the Syrian regime, which uses chemical weapons, and to expose its involvement in this regard.
- Request that all relevant United Nations agencies make greater efforts to provide food, medical and humanitarian assistance in areas where fighting has ceased, and in internally displaced persons camps, and to follow-up with those States that have pledged voluntary contributions.

International Community

- In light of the split within the Security Council and its utter inability to take any effective action, action should be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people by protecting them from daily killing and by lifting sieges, as well as by increasing support for relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction should be enacted in local courts regarding these crimes in order to conduct fair trials for all those who were involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the 'Responsibility to Protect' in dozens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) after all political channels through the Arab League's plan and then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan have proved fruitless, along with the Cessation of Hostilities statements and Astana agreements that followed. Therefore, steps should be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, while the norm of the 'Responsibility to Protect', which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, should be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.
- Renew pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- Work on fulfilling justice and achieving accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and to activate the principle of universal jurisdiction.

OHCHR

- The OHCHR should submit a report to the Human Rights Council and other organs of the United Nations on the incidents mentioned in this report since these attacks were perpetrated by the parties to the conflict.



- Train Syrian organizations to undertake clearance of mines and other unexploded ordnance, and raise local awareness of the dangers of such ordnance.
- Establish a platform that brings together a number of Syrian organizations active in documenting violations and humanitarian assistance, in order to facilitate an exchange of skills and experiences within Syrian society.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI)

- Launch investigations into the cases included in this report and previous reports. SNHR is willing to cooperate and provide further evidence and data.

International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

- Collect further evidence about the crimes documented in this report.

The United Nations special envoy to Syria

- Condemn the perpetrators of crimes and massacres, and those who were primarily responsible for dooming the de-escalation agreements.
- Re-sequence the peace process so that it can resume its natural course despite Russia's attempts to divert and distort it, and empower the Constitutional Commission prior to the establishment of a transitional governing body.

The Syrian regime

- Stop indiscriminate shelling and targeting of residential areas, hospitals, schools and markets, and end the use of outlawed weapons and barrel bombs.
- End the acts of torture that have caused the deaths of thousands of Syrian citizens in detention centers.
- Reveal the fate of some 82,000 Syrian citizens arrested by the security services whose fate has been concealed to date.
- Ensure compliance with UN Security Council resolutions and customary humanitarian law.

The Russian regime

- Launch investigations into the incidents included in this report, make the findings of these investigations public for the Syrian people, and hold the those responsible accountable.
- Compensate all the damaged centers and facilities, rebuild and rehabilitate them, and compensate all the families of victims who were killed by the current Russian regime, as well as all the wounded.



- Completely cease the bombing of hospitals, protected objects, and civilian areas, and respect customary international law.
- As a guarantor party in Astana talks, the Russian regime must stop thwarting de-escalation agreements, and apply pressure on the Syrian regime in order to end all indiscriminate attacks and to allow unconditional passage of humanitarian aid to besieged areas.
- Stop using incendiary weapons in populated areas, compensate the victims and their families for all human and material damage caused by the use of these weapons, and provide treatment for dozens of civilian casualties.
- Provide detailed maps of sites where Russian forces have launched cluster munition attacks, issue these to the United Nations and inform the Syrian public about them, thus facilitating the safe disposal of unexploded ordnance.
- Begin to achieve a breakthrough in the issue of detainees by revealing the fate of 82,000 people forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime.

The Coalition (international coalition forces and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces)

- The states of the coalition must unequivocally and sincerely acknowledge that some of their bombing operations have resulted in the deaths of innocent civilians. Rather than attempting denial, these states should take speedy steps to launch serious investigations, and immediately compensate and apologize to the victims and all those affected.
- The states supporting the SDF should apply pressure on these forces in order to compel them to cease all of their violations in all the areas and towns under their control.
- The states supporting the SDF should cease all forms of support until the SDF commits itself to complying with the rules of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. This is primarily the responsibility of the supporting states. Providing the SDF with weapons and support while knowing that the SDF violates the rules of international humanitarian law can be seen as a contribution to these violations.
- Syrian Democratic Forces must immediately stop conscripting children, hold the officers involved in such violations accountable, and pledge to return all children who have been arrested for conscription immediately.

Armed Opposition factions

- Armed Opposition factions must ensure the protection of civilians in all areas under their control. These forces should also take care to distinguish between civilians and military targets and cease any indiscriminate attacks.
- Pledge to cease any arbitrary arrests, and investigate incidents that have resulted in violations of international humanitarian law.



- Take punitive action against those who commit violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

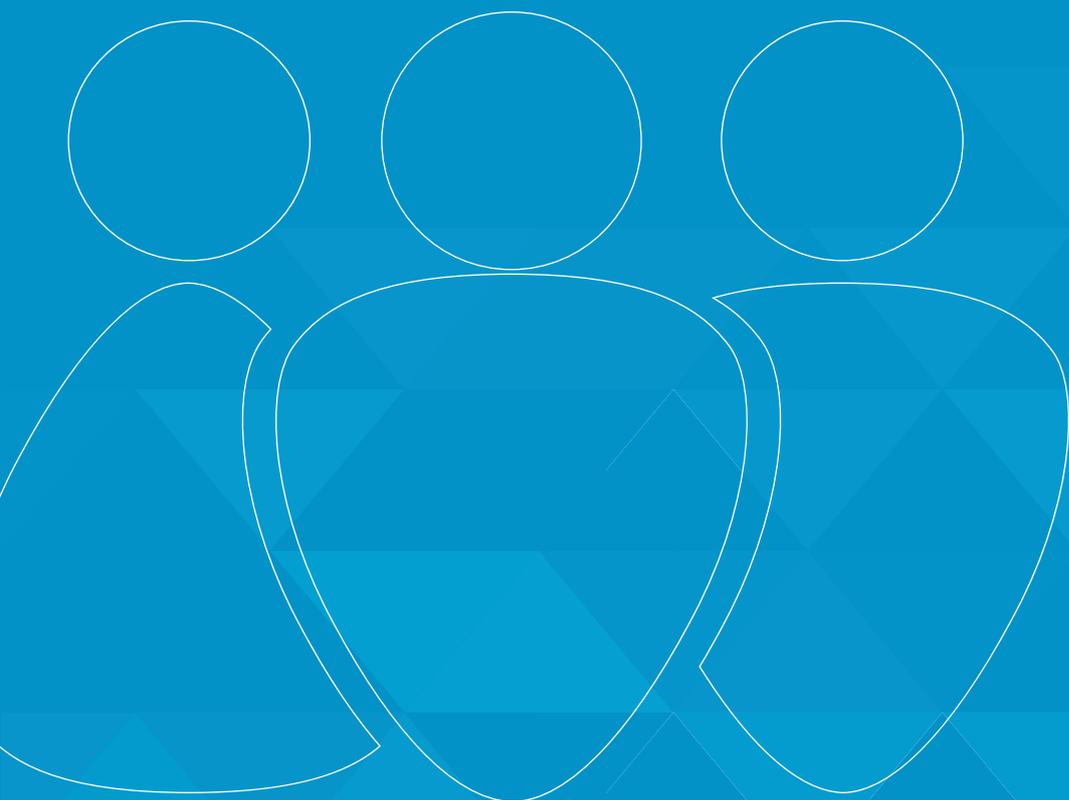
Humanitarian Organizations:

Develop urgent operational plans to secure decent shelter for internally displaced persons.

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