



## Statement

### **SNHR Participates in The Airspace Tribunal Hearing Organized by the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR)**

Berlin: On Friday, June 11, 2021, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) participated in the second day of [The Airspace Tribunal](#) hearings, organized by the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) and supported by the University of Kent. The hearings, which were chaired by Mr. Andreas Schüller, director of ECCHR's International Crimes and Accountability program, were held online via the Zoom platform.

The Airspace Tribunal, a pro forma tribunal established by Kent Law School Emeritus Professor Nick Grief, and Shona Illingworth, aims to examine the case for and against a proposed new human right to live without physical or psychological threat from above. Hearings have already been held in London (2018), Sydney (2019), and Toronto (2020), with the latest one held in Berlin on June 9-11, 2021.

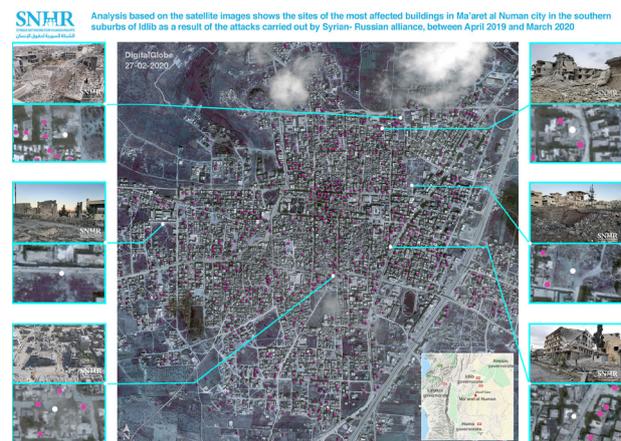
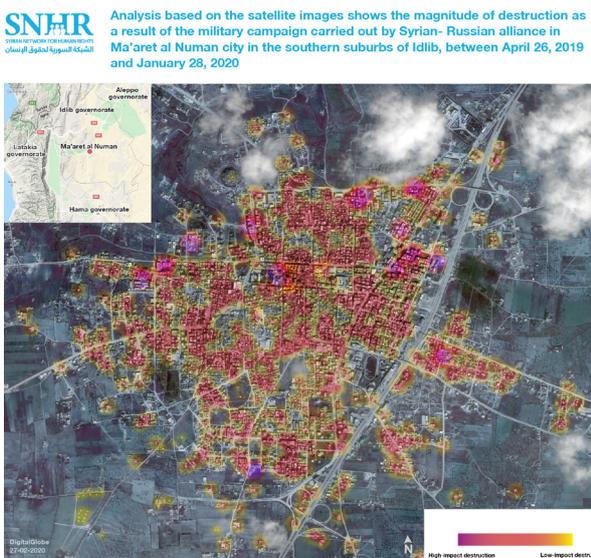
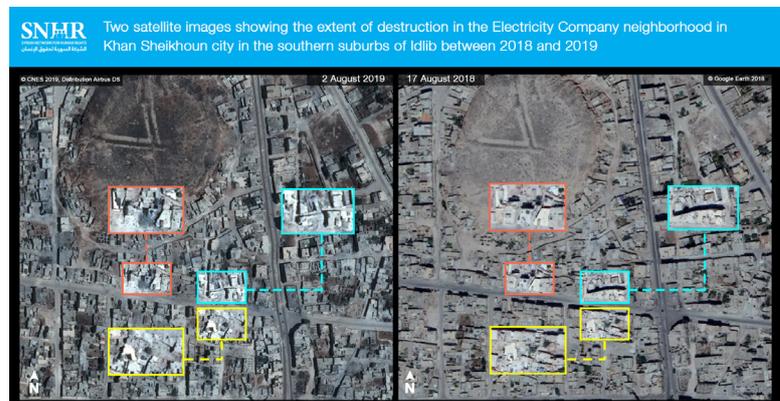
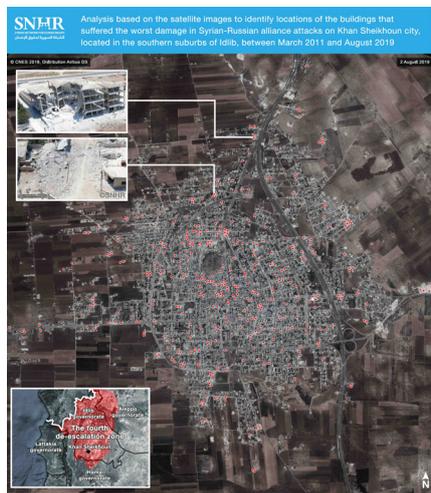
The Friday, 11 June session, chaired by Mr. Andreas Schüller, director of ECCHR's International Crimes and Accountability program, was introduced by Professor Nick Grief. Advocate Kirsty Brimelow interviewed the speakers, before taking questions from the audience at the conclusion of the event, with the participation of journalist Omar Mohammed from the Mosul Eye blog, journalist Pratap Chatterjee from the CorpWatch organization, Mr. Baraa Shiban, an investigator at Reprieve organization, and Mr. Fadel Abdul Ghany from the Syrian Network for Human Rights.

Mr. Fadel Abdul Ghany spoke at the beginning about the psychological impact of aerial bombardment, explaining that protection from this is almost completely absent in international law, and stressing the necessity to intensify human rights-related and legal efforts to work on creating legal texts that give greater attention to the issue of psychological damage resulting from deliberate or indiscriminate aerial attacks and the resulting killing, destruction and displacement. Mr. Abdul Ghany expanded further on this subject, talking about the exceptional threat from air forces in Syria's airspace, noting that nearly 75% of all the civilian deaths documented in Syria since March 2011 - around 227,000 of the total - were killed due to aerial bombardment, which is also the main reason for a similar percentage of destruction and forced displacement that has left nearly 13 million Syrian citizens either as IDPs or refugees, fleeing for fear of death coming from the sky, and due to the destruction of their homes, shops, businesses and local communities inflicted in the aerial bombardment. Mr. Abdul Ghany explained that the Syrian regime has used various types of weapons in bombing civilians from the sky, giving barrel bombs as a case model: **"I believe that one of the worst ideas that the Syrian regime has come up with was the use of the airspace to drop barrel bombs, which are known for their huge destructive power, while being simple in terms of mechanism and technology, meaning they can be manufactured locally."** He added, **"The location at which the barrel bomb lands is subjected to a number of variables, such as the height of the fall, the wind speed, the warplane, the barrel's mass, the barrel's weight, the ratio of its height, the length of the fuse being ignited, and the dimensions of the guiding wings. Therefore, it is almost impossible to hit a precise and determined target, with the use of barrel bombs thus constituting a blatant violation of international humanitarian law because they are disproportionate and indiscriminating, and amount to war crimes."**



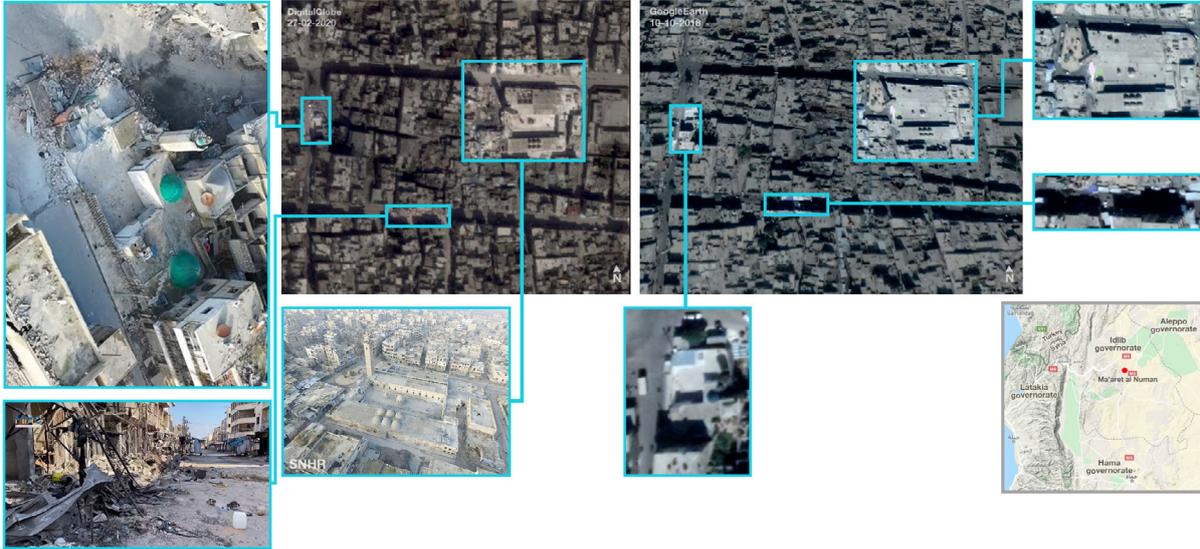
In this context, Mr. Abdul Ghany said that the database of the Syrian Network for Human Rights indicates that the Syrian regime's helicopters and fixed-wing warplanes have dropped nearly 81,916 barrel bombs from July 2012 to April 2021, resulting in the deaths of 11,087 civilians, including 1,821 children and 1,780 women (adult female), as well as using them in at least 728 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including medical facilities, schools, mosques, and markets. Mr. Abdul Ghany stressed that **"The heavy use of barrel bombs by the Syrian regime was aimed at causing the greatest possible destruction and terror among civilians."**

At the conclusion of his address, Mr. Fadel Abdul Ghany presented satellite images of several areas in Syria, showing before and after pictures of the locations to illustrate the extent of the destruction inflicted in the recent air attacks by the Syrian regime and its Russian ally on these areas.





Satellite images show the magnitude of destruction in the market area in Ma'aret al Numan city in the southern suburbs of Idlib between 2018 and 2020



The hearing held on June 11, 2021, can be viewed via [the following link](#).