

South Syria Torn between a Grim Fate of Forced Displacement and Starvation or an Almost Certain Death by Falling Back into Syrian Regime's Control

The US Abandons its Commitments in South Syria Agreement

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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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.



Contents

- I. Introduction and Methodology
- II. The US Administration is Directly Responsible for the South Syria Travesty
- III. Toll of Most Notable Violations in the aftermath of the Syrian-Russian Offensive on South Syria
- IV. South Syria is another Eastern Ghouta Scenario
- V. The Syrian Regime Violates Russia-Sponsored Agreements
- VI. Forced Displacement Enforced by the Barbarian Offensive, Followed by Coerced Evacuation Agreements
- VII. Civilians in Hawd al Yarmouk Area, Trapped between the Syrian Regime's Terrorism and ISIS's
- VIII. Most Notable Violations by Russian-Syrian Alliance Forces in the South Region
- IX. Legal Description and Recommendations

I. Introduction and Methodology

The region of south Syria has sealed the complete collapse of the so-called “the de-escalation zone agreements”, yet another item in a long list of Security Council’s failures as the Security Council didn’t maintain any form of security or peace in Syria or prevent the displacement of hundreds of thousands in south Syria. This crippling powerlessness was deliberately staged and repeated over the course of seven years. After Russian forces had crushed Damascus suburbs governorate’s Eastern Ghouta and ended the armed opposition’s resistance in northern suburbs of Homs, the collapse of the de-escalation agreement in south Syria comes as part of the policy to move from neutralizing one area to another despite the fact that the Syrian people, who refused to submit to the family rules in Syria, thought that south Syria will be different as this region (which comprises parts of Daraa, Quneitra, and Suwayda governorates) wasn’t only subject to the de-escalation agreement, which was the result of the fourth round of Astana talks, of which Russian was the primary sponsor, and came into effect in May 2017, but also to a subsequent, more important agreement, namely the bilateral Russian-American agreement which was struck between President Trump and President Putin. The agreement provided for a ceasefire and commenced on July 9, 2017. However, the barbarian bombardments, threats, displacements, and heinous massacres seen in south Syria all blatantly violate all pledges and agreements.



Methodology

This report highlights the attacks carried out by Russian-Syrian alliance forces between mid-June and July 30, 2018, in addition to documenting the violations by ISIS in Hawd al Yarmouk area. We relied on accounts from survivors or victims' relatives as well as the ongoing monitoring for developments and incidents by SNHR team and a wide network of relations including tens of various sources that have been built over the course of our work. This report contains two accounts that we've collected by speaking directly to eyewitnesses and are not cited from any open sources. We have explained the purpose of those interviews to the eyewitnesses.

The investigations included in this report have proved that the targeted areas were civilian areas that are devoid of any military bases or armories for factions from the armed opposition or extremist Islamic groups during or even before the attack. Also, Russian and Syrian forces never issued any alerts to civilians prior to the attacks as required by the international humanitarian law.

SNHR has analyzed the videos and pictures posted online or sent by local activist via e-mail, Skype, or social media. Some videos posted by activists showed dead bodies of children and women, as well as the huge destruction in the aftermath of the attacks, in addition to pictures showing thousands of IDPs on the Syrian-Jordanian borders and the Golan borders.

The south region is under the control of moderate armed opposition factions. The region embodied a vital model on how to eject extremist Islamic groups who only had a very limited presence in the most southwest areas (Hawd al Yarmouk). Nonetheless, we haven't recorded that those areas have been targeted in any Syrian or Russian attack until after one month into the offensive in south Syria.

This report only covers the bare minimum, which we have been able to document, of the severity and magnitude of the violation that occurred. It also doesn't cover the social, economic, psychological, and demographic ramifications.

II. The US Administration is Directly Responsible for the South Syria Travesty

Russian forces wouldn't have felt secure enough to launch their barbarian bombardment and perpetrate massacres in south Syria, displacing tens of thousands of people in the process, if they haven't had a greenlight from the US. The latter's utter inaction to stop the massacres and the intense, ongoing displacement by Russian forces only asserts that. This implies that the US is a partner in the south Syria travesty on account of its abrupt abandonment of its pledges to maintain stability there. As such, the US should shoulder the ramifications of its shocking abandonment of the agreement in favor of the Russian side.



The US administration has monitored the military troops mobilized by the Syrian regime for the south Syria battle. [The US Department of State released two statements](#) before the offensive in which it warned of escalation and called on Russia to apply pressure on the Syrian regime to compel it to cease its attack. A third statement was released on [June 21](#), but the US response was, eventually, limited to only that, issuing statements.

About a month after the Russian offensive started in south Syria, President Trump and President Putin held a meeting on July 16 in Helsinki city. The US president didn't even mention the violation of the south Syria agreement as if it was something of no concern to him. This reminded the Syrians of the former US President's redline which let the Syrian people down with respect to the chemical weapons issue.

III. Toll of Most Notable Violations in the aftermath of the Syrian-Russian Offensive on South Syria

SNHR has documented the following in the region of south Syria between June 15 and July 30, 2018

1. No less than 281 civilians were killed, including 84 children and 63 women (adult female)
2. No less than 12 massacres
3. No less than 25 attacks on vital civilian facilities, including 8 attacks on medical facilities
4. No less than 862 barrel bombs dropped by Syrian regime helicopters.
5. No less than 340,000 IDPs were forcibly displaced, some of them were displaced multiple times.



Most notable violations of human right in south Syria between June 15 and July 30, 2018

Syrian-Russian alliance



including



No less than
12
massacres

25 attacks on vital civilian facilities

including



No less than

862

barrel bombs were dropped by Syrian regime helicopters

Approximately

340,000

people were forcibly displaced, some were forced to flee multiple times

Approximately

140,000

are still on the borders with al Golan

ISIS



including



And about 1,220 families were displaced in Hawd al Yarmouk area

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As documented by SNHR



IV. South Syria is another Eastern Ghouta Scenario

In their offensive on the strategic south Syrian region, Syrian regime forces employed the same tactics used in the Eastern Ghouta offensive in February 2018 where they carried out heavy airstrikes followed by an aerial shelling that targeted the rear lines on battlefronts, and, thirdly, deliberately targeting residential neighborhoods, medical facilities, and markets which includes the civilians who are fleeing military operations. Backed by the Russian air force, Syrian regime forces carried out raids that aimed to split and besiege areas which forced their residents to surrender and agree to degrading negotiations and settlements.

The military offensive in South Syria was launched on June 15, 2018, by carrying out attacks on eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. These attacks were notable for a coordinated and intensified approach on June 19. Syrian regime forces managed to take over the villages of Bosr al Harir, Nahta, and Mleihat al Atash, as well as some villages in al Laja area in 11 days. This forced a number of areas (Dael and Ibta' cities, as well as al Ghariya al Sharqiya, al Ghariya al Gharbiya, and al Karak al Sharqi) to seek local settlements, some of which were under a Russian sponsorship. Thanks to those settlements, Syrian regime forces entered those areas with no resistance while the armed opposition factions who were in control had to surrender their weapons.

Starting on June 29, Bosra al Sham city saw a series of meetings between delegations from armed opposition factions and Russian forces. On the other hand, SNHR has monitored an escalation in terms of violations and airstrikes with each hurdle negotiations encounter, which was the case on July 4 when we recorded heavy Russian airstrikes on Seyda, Um al Mayathen, and Nasib towns. On July 17, the same scenario was repeated as Russian-Syrian alliance forces carried out hundreds of airstrikes and artillery attacks on Nawa city, northwestern suburbs of Daraa. On that day, SNHR monitored the killing of 22 civilians, including two children and four women, in Daraa governorate. Of those, 16 civilians, including three women and one female child, were killed in Nawa city. Additionally, houses and residential neighborhoods were widely destroyed while the city's hospital and civil defense center were destroyed completely. These attacks were carried out as a retaliation after the negotiating delegation came back to Nawa city before reaching an agreement with the Russian side.

V. The Syrian Regime Violates Russia-Sponsored Agreements

On July 6, 2018, an agreement between armed opposition factions and Russian forces was announced. The Agreement included the remainder of the areas in eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, as well as neighborhoods in Daraa city. The agreement provided for



a cessation of hostilities while the Syrian regime forces pledged to abstain from entering the areas included in the agreement, including Nasib border crossing with Jordan. Nonetheless, Syrian regime forces dismissed the agreement as we recorded a heavy artillery shelling on Nasib and Um al Mayathen towns on July 8 which was followed by Syrian regime forces raiding these towns. Despite the ceasefire that already went into effect, Syrian regime forces took over Nasib crossing a few hours after the agreement's commencement. Decidedly, Syrian regime forces violated most of the provisions that were agreed upon while Russia did nothing in response in what seems to be a new deception orchestrated by Russian forces in coordination with the Syrian regime.

It was on July 14 that the areas of northwestern Daraa suburbs (al Jaydour region) were included in the agreement as the region saw an unprecedented military escalation and Russian airstrikes prior to this day in order to submit the popular base in the region into surrendering and accepting the agreement. The agreement provided for a ceasefire in western and northern suburbs of Daraa (Inkhel – Jasem – Nemer - al Harra – Zamrin - Kafr Shams - Kafr Nasej - al Qnayya – Mahjja - al Fqea – al Sanamayn – al Qayta, al Dali) while Syrian regime forces had to go back to their military bases and those who wanted to be evacuated to north Syria, whether civilians or fighters, were granted so.

On July 17, Nawa city entered the negotiations path as a number of meetings were held between Russian forces and Syrian regime forces, on one side, and local representatives on the other side. The agreement for Nawa city, which was announced on July 18, provided that the city residents who were displaced in light of the recent offensive shall return to their city while the Syrian regime military troops can go through the city to head for the battlefronts adjacent to the ISIS-held Hawd al Yarmouk area.

On July 19, a similar agreement was announced in Quneitra governorate following an unprecedented military escalation in the villages of Nabe al Sakhr, Ein al Tina, and al Haja in Quneitra suburbs.

The Syrian regime has broken all the local agreements that were struck in Daraa governorate which is exactly what we have documented before in other areas such as Damascus suburbs, Homs, and Aleppo. The Syrian regime has seized control of areas it wasn't supposed to have its forces enter. In addition, the Syrian regime arrested civilians and even armed opposition factions' fighters who agreed to settle. SNHR has recorded no less than 86 incidents of arrest in Daraa governorate that were concentrated in the areas of Ibta', al Jeiza, Tafas, al Karak al Sharqi, and Daraa city, which have fallen recently into the control of the Syrian regime. While some of the detainees were released hours or days after their



arrest, the fate of many are still unknown and are now considered forcibly-disappeared persons. Additionally, the arrests saw also torture and degrading practices, as well as threatening released detainees to be arrested again.

Also, we've recorded lootings of properties, houses, and shops by Syrian regime forces and pro-regime militias in most of Daraa's eastern areas, especially al Hrak, al Msaifra, Seyda, and Bosr al Harir cities after they had fallen completely into the Syrian regime's control. The lootings by Syrian regime forces in the areas they seize control of constitute a systematic policy that was adopted by the Syrian regime in Homs, Aleppo, Damascus suburbs, and recently Daraa. Some of these practices exhibit a sectarian nature.

VI. Forced Displacement Enforced by the Barbarian Offensive, Followed by Coerced Evacuation Agreements

The bombardment, killing, and destruction that started in mid-June has resulted in the displacement of no less than 340,000 people who headed for the southern villages and the villages on the Jordanian borders while others headed for al Golan border line.

[In our past report](#), we've shed light on the tragic conditions that IDPs had to endure as thousands of them found themselves forced to live in shelters that were hastily constructed with extremely limited capacities while others lived in rudimentary tents in the villages near the Jordanian borders under a suffocating heat and alarming shortage of basic life needs, such as drinking water, food, and medications. In light of the humanitarian groups' major powerlessness to deliver enough relief convoys, which should be able to cross borders as per Security Council Resolutions 2165 of July 14, 2014, to the displaced civilians on the Jordanian borders. The UN's OCHA revealed that the latest humanitarian convoy to cross the Jordanian borders to Syria was [on June 25](#), noting that all aids and relief convoys that entered Syria after that date went to the areas that have fallen into the control of the Syrian regime recently [while thousands of displaced persons](#), [half of them are children](#), are still living under extremely harsh conditions on southern borders with al Golan.

Syrian regime forces managed to take over the east region of Daraa governorate and most of the border areas with Jordan in approximately a month into the offensive. Consequently, IDPs numbers decreased as many of them found themselves in front of a very difficult choice – either die of an unforgiving starvation and thirst in light of the scarcity of aids or return to the areas that saw local agreements and risk getting arrested or abducted. SNHR can confirm, after speaking to a number of IDPs, that the poor humanitarian and living conditions that they



had to endure at the border line was the primary factor that forced them to go back to the Syrian regime's areas of control in what amounts to a suicide in the absence of any guarantees that can protect them from the arrest or torture that might await them, which was the case in the areas that saw similar agreements in Homs, Aleppo, and Damascus suburbs.

It should be noted that thousands of Syrian citizens who opted not to go back to the Syrian regime's areas of control had to flee again towards areas in the western suburbs of Daraa, the villages of Quneitra suburbs, and al Golan border areas.

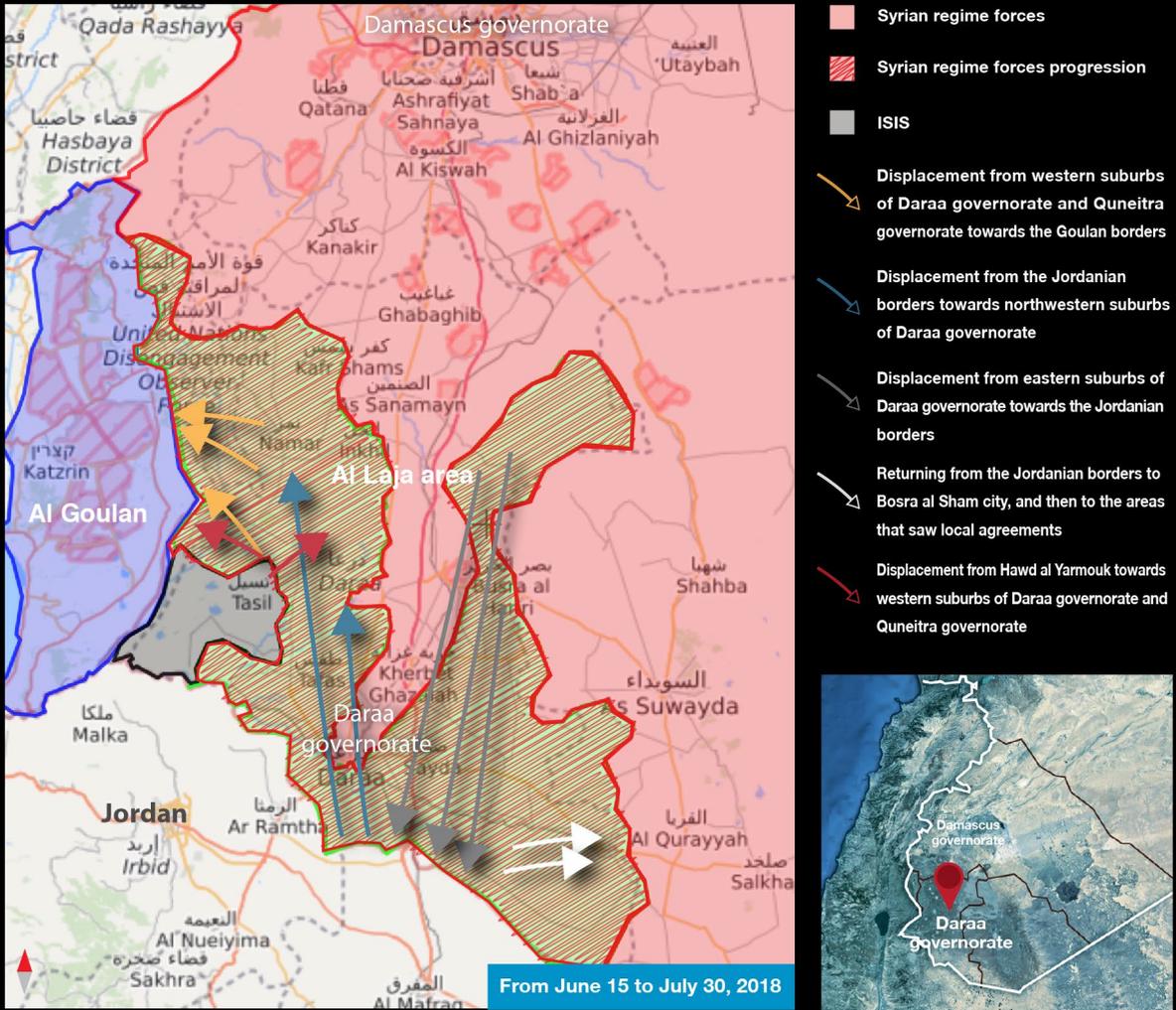
SNHR contacted Mr. Ammar al Zayed, a media worker from al Hrak city who was forcibly displaced multiple times in light of the military operations in the south. We spoke to Ammar on July 30 via WhatsApp, **“I had to flee five times in 12 days, from al Hrak city to Ghasm town, and then to Nasib crossing on the Jordanian borders, and from there I had to flee again to Tal Shehab town, and then a fourth time to western Daraa suburbs, before I headed for the borders with al Golan in al Rafid area.”**

“The fleeing to Tal Shehab was the toughest. We had to rent a car for \$100 and go to Tal al Shehab town. The Syrian regime eyes were everywhere on the road and they were targeting anything that moves. We had to travel at night and with no car lights. On the way, I saw hundreds of cars and hundreds of fleeing families. It was a horrible and jarring sight to see. It was like a flood of displacement and a mass fleeing from the Syrian and Russian killing machine.” Ammar described the poor living conditions he had to endure where he eventually settled, **“In al Rafi area, there were about 300,000 people living with no tents, with no drinking water, with no medical services. They were living with snakes and scorpions. My kids' intestines were infected from drinking polluted water.”** Ammar said that military attacks followed him wherever he went. Every time Syrian regime forces took over the areas nearby, he had to flee again fearing the torture and arrest he might have to face, **“After the Syrian regime progressed in western suburbs of Daraa to close on our displacement destination, we fled for a sixth time to al Mahdama area in Quneitra, and finally we decided to join the convoys that are heading for north Syria. I don't feel safe here and I can't keep living in constant fear.”**

On July 15, another military escalation caused a new displacement wave in the areas of western and northwestern Daraa governorate, as well as Quneitra governorate, forcing 140,000 people to flee towards the border villages with al Golan area as some residents had to flee for a third time in a matter of one month.



A map showing the progression of Syrian regime forces in south Syria and the displacement routes taken by civilians



On July 15, the agreement on evacuating civilian and fighter residents who refused settlements across Daraa and Quneitra governorates to north Syria came into force. Approximately, 10,000 Syrian citizens were forcibly displaced.

On July 22, we recorded that one of the convoys that took off from Quneitra governorate endured violations by Shiite militias near Homs city. The convoy was held hostage for a few hours, and the militias threatened the convoys with weapons as civilians were terrorized. The activist Ammar al Zayed was with the convoys that were held. He told us that Shiite militias stopped the convoys near al al Motahaliq al Janoubi which is located near Homs city, **“They were pointing their guns towards us. They held us for six hours before they let us pass. Afterwards, we proceeded to Morek area in northern Hama suburbs. This is was the agreed point to pass through to north Syria.”**



Furthermore, joint international efforts successfully evacuated about 422 individuals, including 98 civil defense members with their families, who were trapped in south Syria. Those entered Jordan through al Golan. The UNHCR pledged to resettle those individuals in a number of countries. This move was an integral step in the course of protecting humanitarian workers. The civil defense released [a statement](#) clarifying this matter. Nonetheless, SNHR was hoping that these efforts included all the Syrian citizens trapped on the borders.

VII. Civilians in Hawd al Yarmouk Area, Trapped between the Syrian Regime's Terrorism and ISIS's

The majority of Hawd al Yarmouk area is under the control of ISIS except for Heet town which is under the control of factions from the armed opposition and has been living under a siege imposed by ISIS since June 2017. Hawd al Yarmouk area wasn't targeted by the Russian airstrikes as the rest of the south region.

On July 11, the terrorist group ISIS shelled Heet town, which is under the control of armed opposition factions, in what seemed to be an implicit coordination with the Syrian regime and its ally the Russian regime. We recorded that ISIS used heavy artillery and mortar shells to shell the town, killing about four civilians, including one child, and causing major panic in the town that compelled residents to flee as about 1,220 families left Heet town for towns in the northwestern suburbs of Daraa city.

On July 19, Syrian-Russian alliance forces started carrying out attacks on Hawd al Yarmouk area which houses no less than 30,000 civilians. Russian forces carried out hundreds of airstrikes on the towns of Tseel, Sahm al Joulan, and al Shajara. This forced no less than 5,000 civilians to flee the town towards the border plains with al Golan. The residents trapped in Hawd al Yarmouk told us that ISIS prevented them from fleeing towards the Syrian regime's areas of control.

VIII. Most Notable Violations by Russian-Syrian Alliance Forces in the South Region

The continued offensives and airstrikes carried out by the Syrian-Russia alliance have resulted in serious violations of human rights as civilians were deliberately targeted. We've also recorded attacks that targeted numerous vital civilian facilities, most notably hospitals and civil defense centers, as well as schools that were being used as shelters for IDPs.



A. Most notable massacres by Syrian-Russian alliance forces

Wednesday, June 27, 2018, [fixed-wing](#) Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes (the incident is still being investigated to accurately identify the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles in [al Tayba](#) village, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the [killing of 17 civilians](#), who were mostly from the [same family](#), including [four children](#) and three women. The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Thursday, June 28, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces [warplanes](#) fired a number of missiles at the basement of [a residential building](#), used as a shelter, in [al Msaifra](#) town, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the killing of [17 civilians](#), including [five children](#). The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Saturday, June 30, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Sahwat al Qamh, known as al Sahwa village, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the killing of 16 civilians, including five women. The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Saturday, June 30, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at M'arba town, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the killing of 12 civilians, including one woman. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Thursday, July 5, 2018, [fixed-wing](#) Syrian regime/Russian forces [warplanes](#) fired [a number](#) of [missiles](#) at Seyda town, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the killing of [six civilians](#) at once, [four children](#) and [two women](#). The town was under the control of [armed opposition factions](#) at the time of [the incident](#).

Wednesday, July 18, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the residential neighborhoods in Tseel town, northwestern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the killing of five civilians from the same family, including two children. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



B- Attacks on vital civilian facilities

Places of worship

- Mosques

Friday, June 15, 2018, Syrian regime forces and pro-regime militias fired artillery shells at [Osama Bin Zaid Mosque](#) in Kafr Shams town, northern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The mosque building and its furniture were [heavily damaged](#). The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, June 27, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [Abu Bakr al Siddeeq Mosque](#) in [al Ghariya al Sharqiya](#) town, north-eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The mosque building was [partially destroyed](#) and its furniture was heavily damaged as the mosque was rendered out of commission. The town is under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of this writing, while it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Destruction at Abu Bakr al Siddeeq Mosque in the aftermath of an airstrike by Syrian regime/Russian forces warplane in al Ghariya al Sharqiya, Daraa – June 27, 2018

Tuesday evening, July 17, 2018, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a number of shells in parallel with an aerial attack by fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes who fired a number of missiles at [al Imam al Nawai al Qadim Mosque](#) in Nawa city, northwestern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The mosque furniture was [heavily damaged](#) as the mosque was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Vital educational facilities

- Schools

Thursday morning, June 28, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes fired a missile in front of [Nawa 1st School for Girls](#) -for elementary and girls' education- in Nawa city, northwestern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The school building was partially destroyed and its furniture was heavily damaged. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Tuesday evening, July 17, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the [elementary school for boys](#) in Nawa city, northwestern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The school building was partially destroyed and its furniture was heavily damaged as the school was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Vital medical facilities

- Medical facilities (hospitals – dispensaries – medical points – makeshift hospitals)

Sunday, June 24, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [Bosr al Harir](#) Health Center, which is backed by the Union of Medical Care and [Relief Organizations](#) (UOSSM), in Bosr al Harir town, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The center building and its equipment were heavily damaged as the center was rendered [out of commission](#). The town is under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of this writing, while it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, June 26, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes fired [a number of missiles](#) at the [Central Hospital](#) in al Msaifra town, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The hospital building was [heavily destroyed](#) and its equipment was [heavily damaged](#) as the hospital was rendered [out of commission](#). The town is under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of this writing, while it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, June 27, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes fired a number of missiles in parallel with a barrel bomb attack by Syrian regime forces helicopters on al Ihsan Hospital, backed by the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), in [al Ghariya al Sharqiya](#) town, northeastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The hospital building was heavily destroyed as it was rendered out of commission. It should be noted that the hospi-



tal was bombed again by the same forces on the next day, causing more damages on the already-out-of-commission building. The town is under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of this writing, while it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

SAMS released [a statement](#) on June 29, 2018, in condemnation of the [attack on the hospital](#)

Tuesday, July 17, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes (the incident is still being investigated to accurately identify the perpetrator party) fired a number of missiles in parallel with a barrel bomb attack by Syrian regime forces near the Martyr Walid Khattab Makeshift Hospital in Nawa city, northwestern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The hospital building and its equipment were heavily damaged as the hospital was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Vital cultural facilities

- Archeological sites

Sunday morning, July 1, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired [a number of missiles](#) at [Bosra Roman Theatre](#) in Bosra al Sham city, north-eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The theatre's western part was [partially destroyed](#). The city was under the control of [armed opposition factions](#) at the time of the incident.



Damages in Bosra Roman Theatre in the aftermath of an aerial attack by the Syrian regime in Bosra al Sham city, Daraa – July 1, 2018

Infrastructures

Civil defense centers (facilities - vehicles)

Sunday, June 24, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the civil defense in al Hrak city, northeastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The center building and its equipment were heavily damaged as the center was rendered out of commission. The city is under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of this writing, while it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Tuesday, June 26, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian regime/Russian forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [al Msaifra](#) town, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. [The center building](#) was heavily destroyed as it was rendered out of commission. It should be noted that the civil defense uses a former school in al Msaifra town as a center. The town is under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of this writing, while it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

C- Incidents involving barrel bombs

Saturday, June 30, 2018, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on [Ghasm](#) village, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the killing of [six civilians](#) at once, including [one woman](#). The town is under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of this writing, while it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, July 17, 2018, Syrian regime forces helicopters [dropped a number](#) of barrel bombs near [a school sheltering](#) IDPs, from al Hara city, northwestern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The school is located in Ein al Tina village, southern suburbs of Quneitra governorate. [The attack](#) resulted in [the killing](#) of [nine civilians](#) at once, including [five children](#) and [two women](#). The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Muath al Asaad is a media worker SNHR contacted via WhatsApp on July 30. Muath told us that he woke up to the sound of a huge explosion that came from the direction of the school around 09:00. He then headed for the attack site, **“The bombing targeted the village’s school which was housing 400 IDPs from al Hara and Aqraba cities which are located in northwestern suburbs of Daraa. Someone who witnessed the bombing told me that a Syrian regime helicopter dropped four barrel bomb on a group of civilians who were standing in front of the school door. They all died. I saw the hole caused by one of the barrel bombs, it had a depth of about 2 meters.”** Muath described what he saw to us, including the victims and the injuries. He told us that he saw three women’s dead bodies who were killed in the bombing in front of the school door. On the other side of the road, he saw the dead bodies of two women and two youths, and then saw the dead body of a young man that was in pieces near a shop by the school, **“Looking at the victims and the injured was too painful. The bombing also caused amputation cases.”** Muath confirmed that the school is devoid of any military presence for the armed opposition.





Dead bodies in the aftermath of a barrel bomb attack by Syrian regime air force on a school sheltering IDPs in Ein al Tina village, Quneitra – July 17, 2018

IX. Legal Description and Recommendations

Russian-Syrian alliance forces have violated the de-escalation agreement and the Russian-American bilateral agreement, as well as Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2254 which both states that indiscriminate attacks must be ceased. Also, these forces have violated Articles 7 and 8 of Rome Statute through the crime of willful killing which constitutes war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Moreover, Russian-Syrian alliance forces have committed the crime of displacement against civilian residents in a systematic, organized, and widespread manner which constitutes a blatant violation of the Geneva Conventions and constitutes a crime against humanity according to Article 7 of the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute. Those forces had no measures in place to provide shelter, healthcare, or food for the displaced civilians.

The US has violated the Russian-US agreement by failing to intervene to deter Russian forces in their attacks on the south Syria region, as well as failing to take any actual steps towards protecting civilians in the southern region.

Recommendations

United States of America

- The US administration should act upon its responsibilities as per the south Syria agreement and shoulder the repercussions of what happened as a result of the US's shocking violation of the agreement.
- Compensate thousands of victims who were awfully harmed as a result of the US administration abandoning the south Syria agreement.



Security Council

- Adopt a Resolution on approximately 7 million IDPs in Syria addressing the process of forced displacement and preventing displacement from turning into a permanent state. The Security Council should also apply pressure on the Syrian regime to compel it to stop displacement and passing laws that aim to seize IDPs' possessions and estates.

UN General Assembly

- Hold the ruling Syrian regime fully responsible for displacing one-third of the Syrian people, including legal and materials responsibilities. Also, ensure that victims are fully compensated for the grave losses they had to endure, including returning properties to their rightful owners.

International community

- In light of the Security Council's division and utter inability, action should be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people. This would manifest in protecting the Syrian people from the daily killing and lifting the siege, as well as raising the support with respect to relief efforts. Additionally, steps should be taken in order to exercise universal jurisdiction on these crimes before national tribunals as part of fair trials for all those who were involved.

- SNHR has repeatedly called, as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP), for the implementation of the 'Responsibility to Protect (R2P)' norm in tens of studies and reports after all political initiatives, through the Arab League agreement and then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan and the Cessation of Hostilities and Astana agreements that followed, have been to no avail. Therefore, after all of this, action should be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and the 'Responsibility to Protect' norm, which was established by the UN General Assembly, should be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.

- Renew the pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

- Works towards achieving justice and accountability in Syria through the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, and use the principle of universal jurisdiction.

OHCHR

- Release a report documenting the violations in south Syria and hold the parties responsible before the Syrian people in that region.



Commission of Inquiry

- Release a special report on the blatant violations that took place in the south Syrian region similar to the report on Aleppo's eastern neighborhoods and use what was included in this report.

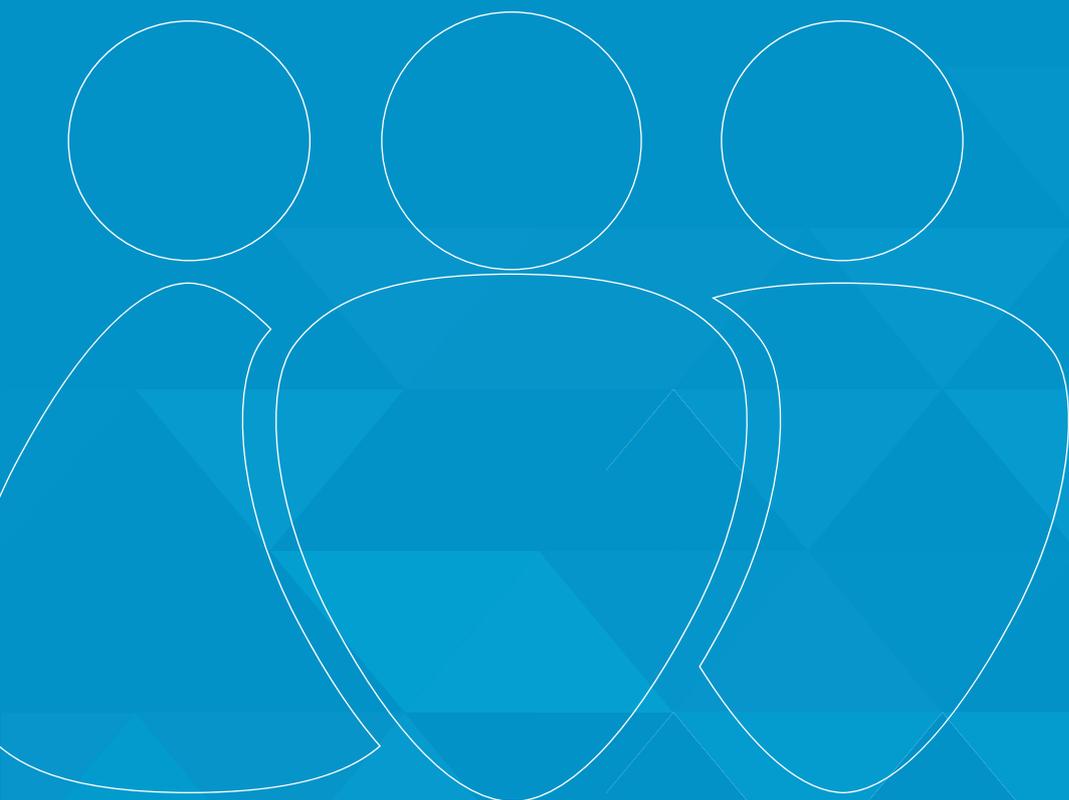
UN special envoy to Syria

- Condemn the perpetrators of crimes and massacres who were primarily responsible for dooming de-escalation agreements, effectively shattering and ending the entire political process and hold the Syrian-Russian alliance fully responsible for this.
- Disclose to the Syrian people Russia's intentions to completely take control of the Syrian lands by force and its explicit desire to rehabilitate the present Syrian regime, which means formulating a political solution that suits its interests.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

We would like to express our most heartfelt gratitude and condolences to all the residents and local activists who contributed effectively to this report.





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