

# The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in February 2020

The Suffering of IDPs in Northwest Syria Continues, as Syrian-Russian Alliance Forces Target Their Camps

# SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

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 February 2020, and catalogues the record of civilian victims whom we documented killed by the main perpetrator parties 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 the US-led coalition, 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<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> "Syrian Network for Human Rights Methodology", Syrian Network for Human Rights, <[http://sn4hr.org/public\\_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR\\_Methodology\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR_Methodology_en.pdf)>



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. February Outline

February saw the continuation of military operations by Syrian-Russian alliance forces in northwest Syria, with these operations extending to the suburbs of Aleppo and Idlib. The SNHR documented the deaths of 197 civilians during this month by these forces; these operations were also accompanied by an advance by Syrian Regime forces that extended to include cities and towns in the region, such as Kafr Hamra, Hraitan and Anadan in the suburbs of Aleppo, and Kafranbel, Saraqeb, Mardikh, Kafr Sijna, and Ma'aret Harama in the suburbs of Idlib, so that Syrian Regime forces' control extended to approximately 25 percent of the land area that had been outside its control at the beginning of the month. This campaign was accompanied by major destruction to infrastructure, and we documented dozens of attacks on vital civilian facilities during this period, the most prominent of which was a ground attack on Idlib city by Syrian Regime forces using shells and missiles, some of which were loaded with cluster munitions, causing damage to four educational facilities. We issued [a statement](#) about the incident.

During this month, we documented 110 incidents of attacks by Syrian-Russian alliance forces on vital facilities in northwest Syria, 25 of which were on places of worship, 22 on vital educational facilities, and 19 on medical facilities.

On February 27, Turkey launched Operation Spring Shield in northwest Syria following a Russian air attack on Turkish forces in Balyoun village, in the suburbs of Idlib governorate, killing 33 Turkish military personnel. In conjunction with this operation, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoan stated that his country would not close its borders to migrants because the European Union has not fulfilled its obligations. In the wake of this decision, thousands went to the Turkish-Greek borders, with most of those who did so still stuck there under terrible humanitarian conditions, since Greece did not allow them to enter its territory, while the Greek Coast Guard forced dozens of refugees who set out to sea in boats to return to the Turkish coast.

Assassinations are still going on across Syria, especially in Daraa governorate in the south, due to the insecurity in the area. We have recorded the continuation of bombings in the areas of Tal Abyad in the northern suburbs of Raqqa and Ras al Ein in the western suburbs of Hasaka, which are under the control of the National Army forces, without being able to determine the perpetrators, with these bombings killing and injuring a number of civilians.



In February, Syrian Regime forces continued to pursue and arrest individuals who had settled their security situation in areas that have signed settlement agreements with the Syrian regime; these arrests have been concentrated in the governorate of Damascus Suburbs, with most occurring during mass campaigns of raids and arrests, some of which targeted former workers in humanitarian organizations. We also documented arrests which took place in areas that the Syrian regime forces had recently taken control of in the suburbs of Aleppo and Idlib governorates, targeting civilians who had remained in their homes and refused to be displaced.

Meanwhile, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces continued enforcing the group's policies of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance throughout the month of February, targeting activists and members of civil society groups who oppose their policies. These arrests were concentrated in the governorates of Deir Ez-Zour and Hasaka. Also in February, SNHR documented Syrian Democratic Forces carrying out arrests targeting civilians with the aim of forced conscription.

In addition to these incidents, February also saw Hay'at Tahrir al Sham arresting activists working with civil society groups, as well as media activists and other civilians, with most of these arrests occurring due to the publication of reports on social media accounts criticizing the HTS's management of areas under its control.

Factions of the Armed Opposition also continued carrying out arrests and kidnappings in February, most of which occurred on a mass scale, in many cases targeting several members of the same families in the territories under their control; these incidents were concentrated in areas under their control in Aleppo and Raqqa governorates.

The Syrian regime has continued to use cluster munitions since its campaign began in northwest Syria, and we have published [a report](#) outlining what we have been able to document of these incidents. During this month, we recorded several incidents that are still undergoing verification. The Syrian regime also continued to use barrel bombs as part of its usual policy during its military advance on the ground up until February 14, when factions of the Armed Opposition managed to shoot down a Syrian regime helicopter in Idlib suburbs, which led to an almost complete cessation of attacks using barrel bombs.

Northwestern Syria, for the third month in a row, continues to face a humanitarian catastrophe resulting from the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians who are living in atrocious and deteriorating humanitarian conditions, with the displaced people unable to secure any livelihood, safety or shelter and being subjected to bombing even whilst fleeing bombardment on the displacement routes. Also, eight camps and shelter centers were attacked during the month of February 2020.



### III. The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in February

This report outlines the most notable human rights violations that were documented by the SNHR in February 2020 at the hands of the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria.

#### Record of the Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in February 2020



## **A. Extrajudicial killing:**

In February 2020, SNHR documented the deaths of 276 civilians, including 66 children and 34 women (adult female), the largest percent of whom were killed by Syrian-Russian alliance forces; among the victims were six medical personnel and two media workers. We also documented the deaths of 18 individuals due to torture, and at least 10 massacres. We issued a report on the first of this month detailing the civilian victims documented killed in February at the hands of the perpetrator parties in Syria.

The death toll of civilian victims was distributed according to the perpetrator parties as follows:

### **A. The main parties:**

- **Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):** 104 civilians, including 25 children and eight women.
- **Russian forces:** 106, including 29 children and 30 women.
- **ISIS (the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State'):** One.
- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):** Five, including one child.

### **B. Other parties:**

We documented the deaths of 60 civilians, including 11 children and five women, by other parties, distributed as follows:

- Landmines of unknown origin: Two civilians.
- Fires of unknown source: 39 civilians, including five children.
- Jordanian border guards: One child.
- Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified: 13 civilians, including two children and four women.
- Killings by unknown persons: Four civilians, including two children and one woman.
- Drowning: One child.

## **B. Arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance:**

In February 2020, SNHR documented at least 193 cases of arbitrary arrests, including one child and five 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 Damascus Suburbs and Deir Ez-Zour governorates. We issued a report on the second of this month detailing the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearances which we documented in February 2020 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:** 97, including one child and three women.
- **Extremist Islamist groups:**
  - o Hay'at Tahrir al Sham: 14.
- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** 24, including two women.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 48.

### **C. Attacks on vital civilian facilities:**

SNHR documented at least 114 incidents of attacks on vital civilian facilities in February, 110 of which were carried out at the hands of Syria-Russian alliance forces, concentrated in Idlib and Aleppo governorates.

Among these attacks, we documented 22 on schools, 19 on medical facilities and 25 others on places of worship.

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

#### A. The main parties:

**Syrian Regime forces:** 65.

**Russian forces:** 45.

**Syrian Democratic Forces:** One.

#### B. Other parties:

Three attacks committed by other parties, distributed as follows:

- **Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified:** Three.



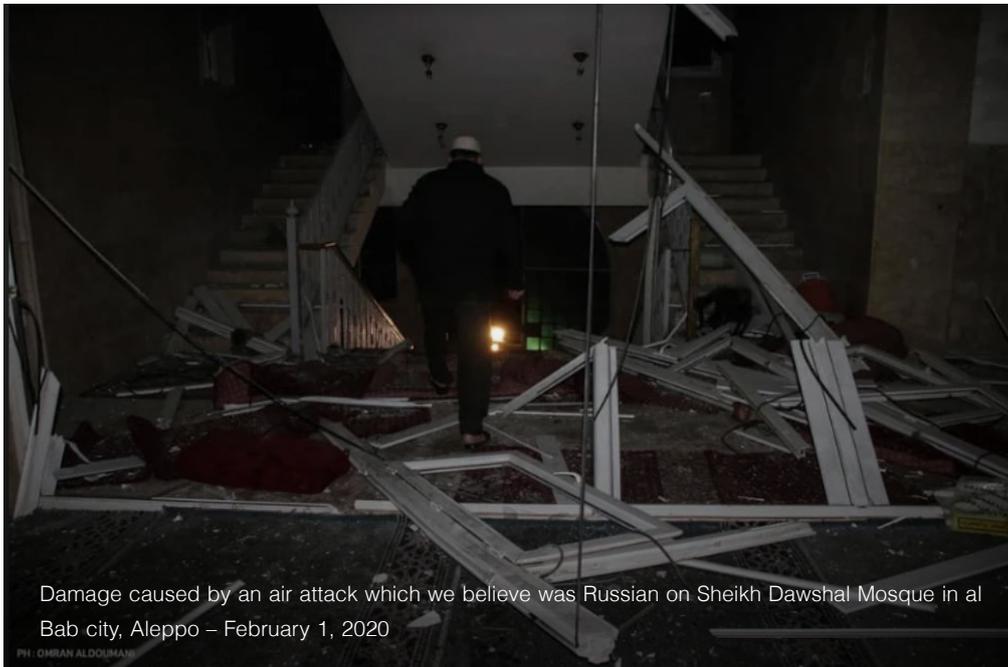
The record of attacks documented in February on vital civilian facilities is distributed according to the perpetrator party as follows:

Attacked Facility	Perpetrator Party			
	Syrian Regime forces	Russian forces	Syrian Democratic Forces	Other parties
				Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified
Places of Worship				
Mosques	12	13	-	-
Vital Educational Facilities				
Schools	14	6	1	1
Nurseries	1	1	-	-
Vital Medical Facilities				
Medical Facilities	8	11	-	-
Ambulances	-	2	-	-
Communal Facilities				
Gardens	1	-	-	-
Markets	8	1	-	1
Playgrounds and stadiums	2	-	-	-
Infrastructure				
Civil Defense Centers	1	5	-	-
Water facilities and related resources	-	1	-	-
Official Headquarters	6	2	-	1
Bakeries	1	2	-	-
Industrial facilities	4	-	-	-
IDP Camps				
IDP camps	7	1	-	-
Total	65	45	1	3



The most notable attacks on vital civilian facilities that we were able to document in February:

On Saturday, February 1, 2020, at around 23:30, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired four missiles that landed in the middle of al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. One of the missiles fell on the dome of [Sheikh Dawshal Mosque](#) in the city, [partially destroying the mosque building](#) and [causing a fire](#) that [burnt its furniture](#), as well as causing significant material damage to its cladding. Another missile fell near [al Kabir Mosque](#), causing minor material damage to its building and furniture. We note that this was the first time al Bab city had been subjected to aerial bombardment by Syrian-Russian alliance forces since it came under the control of the Armed Opposition factions supported by Turkish forces in February 2017. The city was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Damage caused by an air attack which we believe was Russian on Sheikh Dawshal Mosque in al Bab city, Aleppo – February 1, 2020

On Saturday, February 1, 2020, at around 10:40, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, launched two missile strikes on al Huda Surgical Hospital, which is supported by the SKT Organization, in [Hour](#) village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The missiles fell in the middle of the hospital's yard, [partially destroying the hospital](#) building, and causing significant [material damage](#) to its equipment. The hospital, which was established in 2014, provides services to nearly 250,000 people, treating around 6,000 people per month, and providing 13,000 free medical services per month. Hour 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 caused by an air attack which we believe was Russian on al Huda Surgical Hospital in Hour village, Aleppo - February 1, 2020

On Monday, February 3, 2020, at around 04:30, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at a compound containing three schools next to each other in Binnesh city in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, namely, Binnesh High School for girls, Mustafa Farhat School, and al Reefiyah School. The missiles directly targeted Binnesh High School for girls, [severely destroying the school building](#), and [causing moderate material damage to its furniture](#), in addition to inflicting moderate material damage to the two other school buildings, Binnesh 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 Tuesday, February 4, 2020, Syrian Democratic Forces simultaneously used heavy artillery and missile launchers to shell the center of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The shelling targeted al Ittihad al Araby School - while an educational course was underway inside the school - resulting in the death of one of the students participating in the course, and injuring eight others, in addition to causing the [partial destruction of the school building](#), and moderate [material damage](#) to its furniture. Afrin city was under the control of Armed Opposition factions supported by Turkish forces at the time of the incident.





Damage caused by an SDF ground attack on al Ittihad al Araby School in the center of Afrin city, Aleppo – February 4, 2020

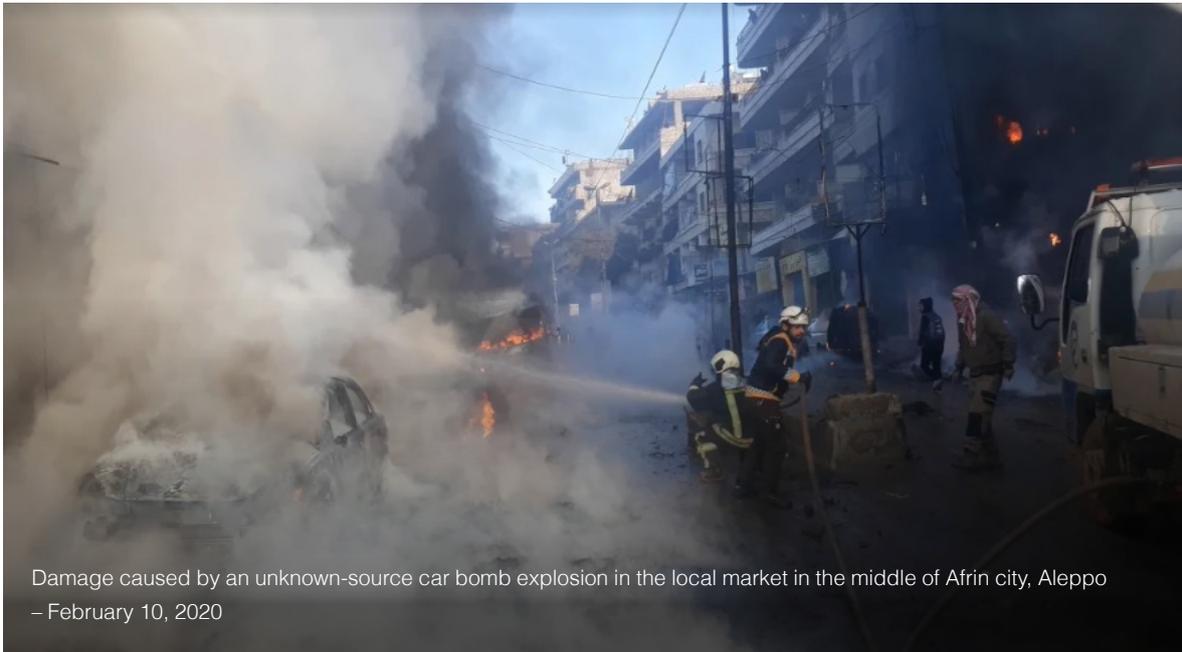
On Thursday, February 6, 2020, at around 12:25, Syrian Regime artillery forces fired a shell at Anadan Dispensary, which is supported by the Independent Doctors Organization (IDA), in [Anadan](#) city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, [partially destroying the dispensary's perimeter wall](#), and [causing moderate material damage to its equipment and furniture](#). Anadan city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Photo showing Anadan Dispensary in Anadan city, Aleppo, before and after it was targeted by Syrian regime's ground attack - February 6, 2020

On Monday, February 10, 2020, a car bomb of unknown provenance exploded in the local market on Rajo Street in the middle of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, causing a massacre, as well as [partially destroying a number of shops](#), and causing significant [material damage](#) to the market's facilities. SNHR is still trying to establish contact with witnesses and survivors of the incident to obtain more details. Afrin city was under the control of Armed Opposition factions supported by Turkish forces at the time of the incident.





Damage caused by an unknown-source car bomb explosion in the local market in the middle of Afrin city, Aleppo  
– February 10, 2020

On Monday, February 10, 2020, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes used heavy machine guns to strafe two IPD camps (a camp for widows and al Sheikh Idris Camp) located in the eastern outskirts of Kafr Orouq village in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [injuring a number of IDPs](#), and [causing severe material damage to a number of tents](#) in the [two camps](#). 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 Tuesday, February 11, 2020, at around 12:10, fixed-wing Syrian regime (MiG-23) warplanes fired a number of missiles at Idlib city, two of which fell in an area crowded with civilians in the industrial zone to the east of the city, with [the impact site of one missile](#) being approximately 50 meters from [the other one](#), resulting in [a massacre, in addition to partially destroying a number of industrial shops](#) and [other facilities in the area](#). Two other missiles also landed on the main market, known as al Sagha Market, in al Jalaa Street in the city center, [partially destroying a number of shops](#) and [buildings](#) in the area, and causing significant material damage to the market facilities. Idlib city was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





On Tuesday, February 11, 2020, at around 10:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes used heavy machine guns to strafe the Kafr Ta'al Dispensary in [Kafr Ta'al](#) village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, [partially destroying the dispensary building](#), and causing moderate material damage to its equipment and furniture. Kafr Ta'al 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 Monday, February 17, 2020, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at al Kenanah Hospital in the south of Darat Ezza city in western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, [partially destroying the hospital building](#), and [causing significant](#) material damage to [its furniture](#) and [equipment](#). The attack also targeted the neighboring al Fardous Hospital – which is supported by the Syria Relief and Development Organization – located adjacent to al Kenanah Hospital, injuring the hospital guard, in addition to partially destroying the hospital building, and causing significant material damage to its equipment and furniture. Darat Ezza 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 Tuesday, February 18, 2020, Syrian Regime forces used artillery to fire a number of shells on the vegetable market in Darat Ezza city in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, resulting in casualties, and causing significant material damage to several shops and the market facilities. Darat Ezza 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, February 21, 2020, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles on [al Kabir Historical Mosque](#) in Sarmin city in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, almost completely destroying the mosque building and furniture, putting it out of service. The 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 Tuesday, February 25, 2020, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired missiles on two adjacent refuge centers sheltering IDPs in the southeastern outskirts of Ma'aret Misreen town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, resulting in casualties, [in addition to partially destroying the centers' buildings](#) and perimeter walls. We note that the IDPs were sheltering in two [school buildings](#), namely, the Munib Kmaisheh School and the [Zuhair Radwan Basic School](#). Ma'aret Misreen town 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 an air attack by the Syrian regime on a center sheltering IDPs in Ma'aret Misreen town, Idlib – February 25, 2020

On Tuesday, February 25, 2020, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired a missile that landed in front of Idlib Central Hospital in Idlib city, known as al Muhafaza Hospital and supported by Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS). The bombardment injured four medical personnel, including a doctor, [in addition to causing severe material damage to the hospital building, equipment, and furniture](#). We note that the hospital is headquartered in the building in Idlib city that formerly housed the local Governorate offices. Idlib 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) issued [a statement](#) on its official website condemning the attack.





On Tuesday, February 25, 2020, Syrian Regime forces used artillery to fire a number of shells at al Yarmouk School in Kafrantin village located near Darat Ezza city in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, [partially destroying](#) the [school building](#), and [causing moderate](#) material damage to its furniture. 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.

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

SNHR documented at least one ground attack using cluster munitions in February by Syrian Regime forces, resulting in the death of one civilian, and injured five others.

The Syrian Regime's air force, including helicopters and fixed-wing warplanes, also dropped at least 121 barrel bombs on both governorates of Aleppo and Idlib, which resulted in the deaths of eight civilians, including three children, and perpetrated at least six attacks on vital civilian facilities, including one on a school, two on medical facilities, and one on a place of worship.

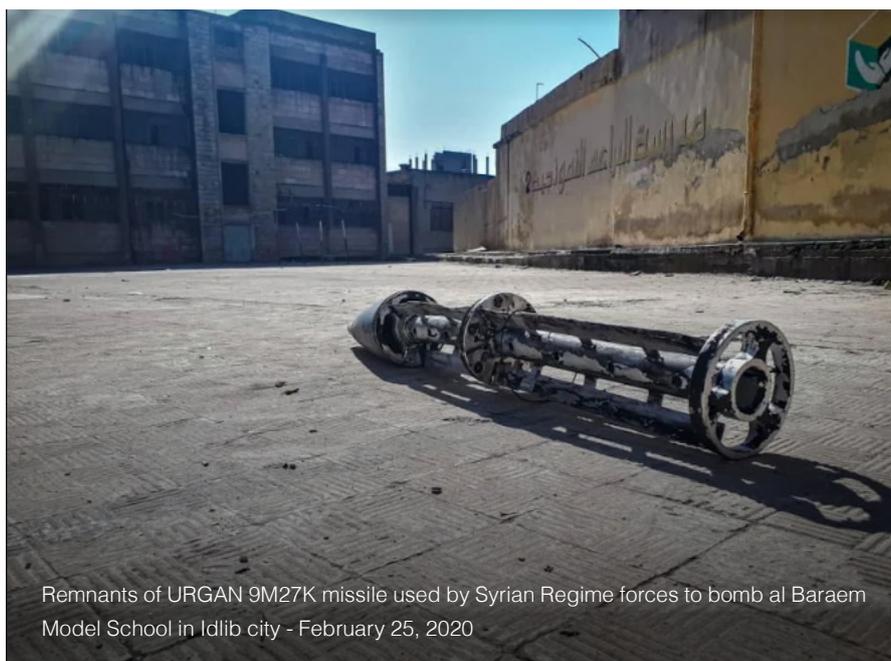
The following are the most notable indiscriminate attacks and attacks using outlawed weapons that we were able to document in February:

On Sunday, February 9, 2020, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on the outskirts of al Sheikh Ali village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, resulting in the deaths of three civilians, and injuring others. 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 Monday, February 10, 2020, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on Ebeen Sam'an village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, resulting in the deaths of four civilians, including a father and his two girls – IDPs from Saraqeb city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate - and injuring others. 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 Tuesday, February 25, 2020, the Syrian regime used artillery and missile launchers to fire several shells and missiles, targeting Idlib city, the center of the governorate. Among these missiles, we were able to verify the presence of at least one missile loaded with [cluster munitions](#). The cluster missiles fell on al Thawra School, known as al Baraem Model School, resulting in the death of a teacher, and injuring five other people. The city was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham and Armed Opposition factions of the National Army at the time of the incident.



Remnants of URGAN 9M27K missile used by Syrian Regime forces to bomb al Baraem Model School in Idlib city - February 25, 2020

#### **IV. Attachments**

[276 Civilians, including Six Medical Personnel and Two Media Workers, Documented Killed in Syria in February 2020](#)

[At least 193 Cases of Arbitrary Arrests Documented in Syria in February 2020](#)



## 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 US-led 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 US-led coalition 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.
- Factions of the Armed Opposition violated UN Security Council Resolution 2139 through carrying out attacks that are considered to violate customary international humanitarian law, causing civilian casualties or accidental injuries.
- 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:**

### **UN 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, empowering the Constitutional Committee 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 83,000 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 83,000 people forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime.



## **The Coalition (US-led coalition 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.

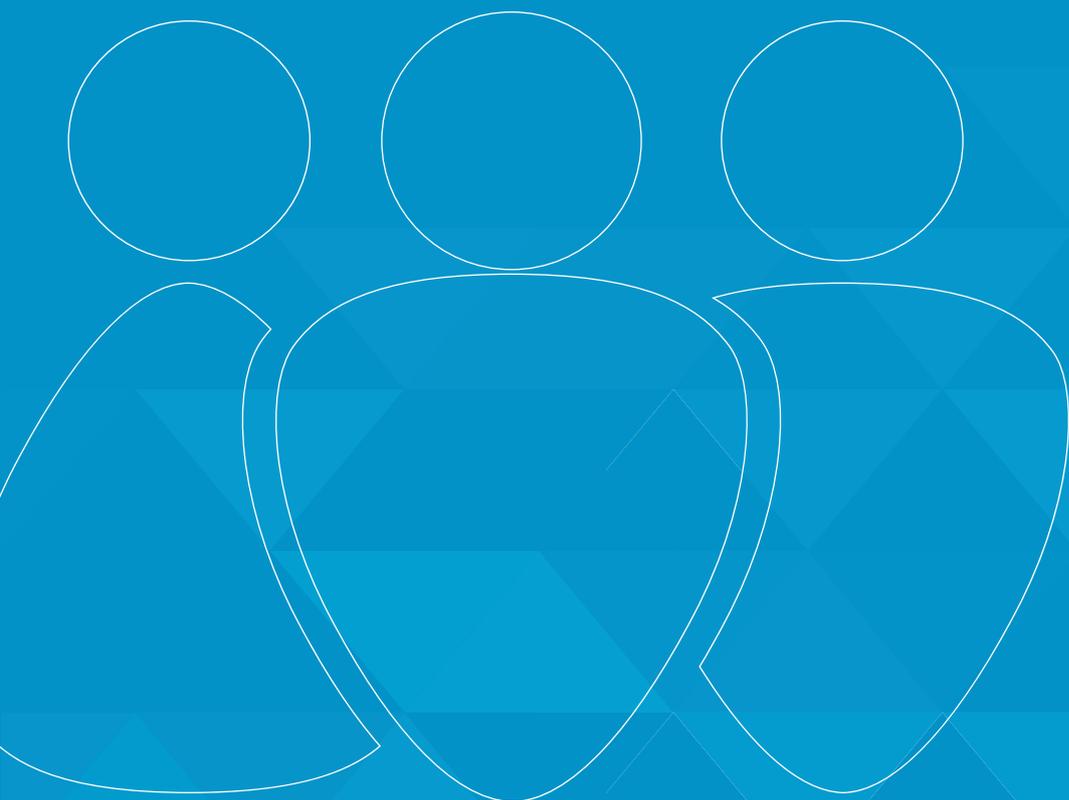
## **Humanitarian Organizations:**

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

## **Acknowledgments**

We thank all family members, relatives and friends of the victims, eyewitnesses and local activists whose contributions have enriched this report.





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