

The Annual Report of the Most Notable Violations of Human Rights in Syria in 2018

The Crushing of the Society
and Dismantling of the State

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Tuesday, January 15, 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.



Contents

- I. Introduction and Methodology
- II. Executive Summary
- III. Comparison between the Main Patterns of Human Rights Violations in 2017 and 2018
- IV. Major Events in 2018
- V. Most Prominent Political and Military Events in 2018
- VI. Shifts in Areas of Control in 2018
- VII. Report Details
- VIII. Recommendations
- IX. References

I. Introduction and Methodology

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) is a human rights organization founded in June 2011. SNHR is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organization whose primary objectives are to document the violations taking place in Syria and to release studies, researches, and reports on regular basis in order to expose the perpetrators of violations as a first step towards holding them accountable and ensuring victims' rights.

It is worth noting that the [High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (OHCHR) has relied on SNHR as one of the most prominent and credible resources in all of its analytical statistics on the victims of the conflict. In addition, a large number of Arab and international news agencies use SNHR as a source, along with many international human rights organizations.

In 2018, the SNHR continued its work, issuing nearly 137 reports on several categories of the most notable human rights violations committed by the main parties to the conflict in Syria, such as extrajudicial killings, arrest, torture and forced displacement, the use of prohibited munitions and other instances of highly destructive munitions being deployed. These reports relied on nearly 310 accounts from injured people and other survivors, paramedics, and "central signal" operators¹, all of which were collected through speaking directly with eyewitnesses, rather than being cited from any open sources.

Find more detailed reading on the methodology adopted by the SNHR [at this link](#)

¹ A network that works on picking up radar signals and tracking calls between the pilot and the airbase from which he took off. These observatories announce the news of warplanes taking off from military airbases and track their movement, and can identify the warplanes that took off from Hmeimim Airbase, which is a Russian military facility, or from airbases in Hama and Homs suburbs which are operated by the Syrian regime.



Furthermore, all the attacks included in SNHR's reports targeted civilian areas where no military presence or weapons arsenals were found before or during the attacks. Also, we could find no record of any of the perpetrator parties alerting civilians prior to the attacks as required by international humanitarian law.

SNHR has analyzed videos and pictures documented by our team, posted online, or sent to us by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media. These pictures and videos show, amongst other things, the locations of attacks, the dead bodies, the injured, and the immense destruction left by these attacks. Other videos show remnants of weapons, cluster munitions, and incendiary munitions. We also included pictures of victims who died due to torture, along with photographs of medical personnel and media workers amongst other victims killed in attacks by the parties to the conflict. We have retained copies of all the videos and pictures included in previous reports, and in this report in a secret online database, as well as retaining backup copies on hard drives. We always ensure that all this data is stored together with its original source material.

This report only represents the bare minimum of violations which we were able to document, showing only a microcosm of the magnitude and severity of the violations that have taken place in Syria. It also doesn't cover the immense social, economic, and psychological ramifications of these events on the survivors and communities in Syria or on refugees and others.

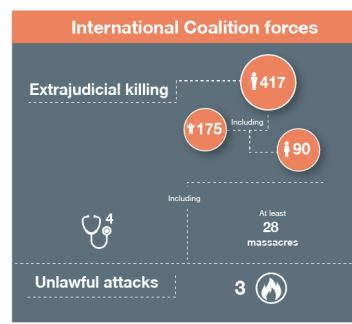
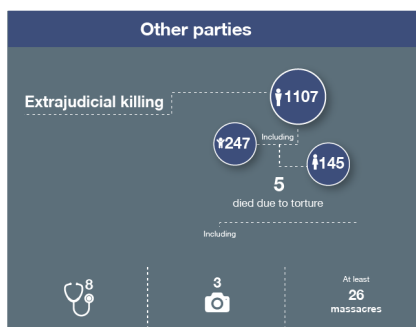
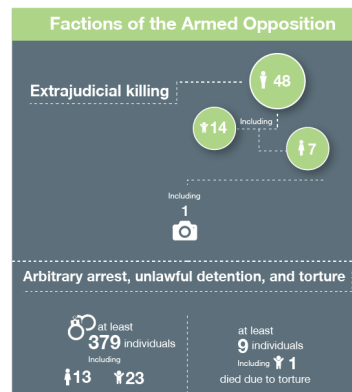
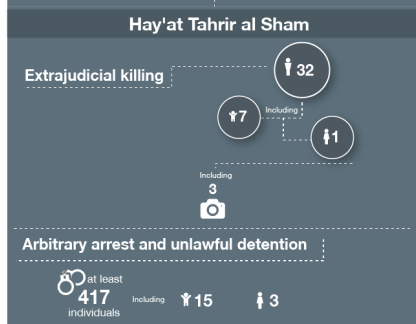
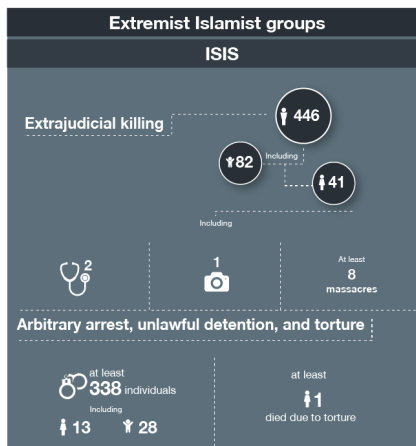
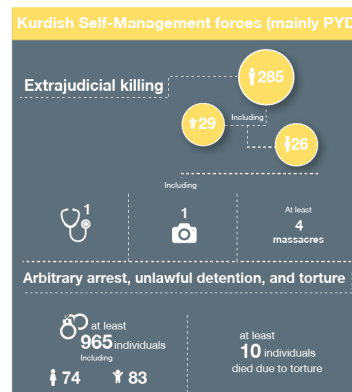
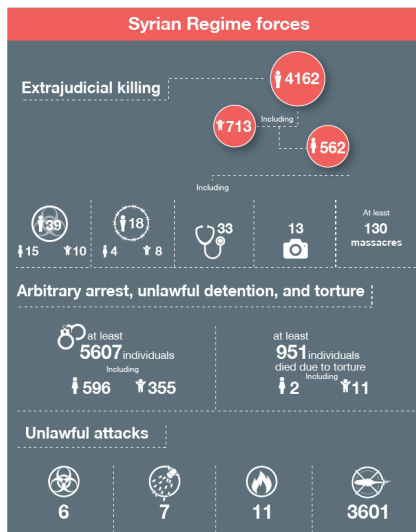
International humanitarian law and customary international law, in parallel with international human rights law, are the applicable sets of laws in the Syrian case. All parties to the conflict are bound by these sets of laws.

II. Executive Summary

This report outlines the most notable violations of human rights by the main parties to the conflict in Syria from January 1, 2018, until December 31, 2018



Most Notable Violations of Human Rights by the Main Parties to the Conflict in Syria in 2018



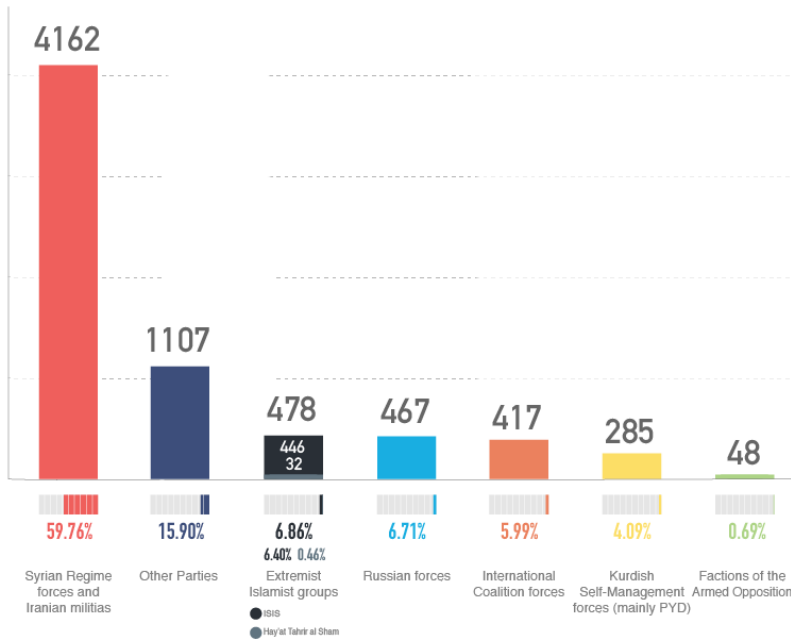
Nearly 870 thousand forcibly displaced persons as a result of the military operations of the parties to the conflict including 134 thousand were forcibly displaced as a result of agreements and truces against the international humanitarian law



1- Extrajudicial killing:

SNHR documented the deaths of 6,964 civilians, including 1,436 children and 923 women (adult female) in 2018, distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:

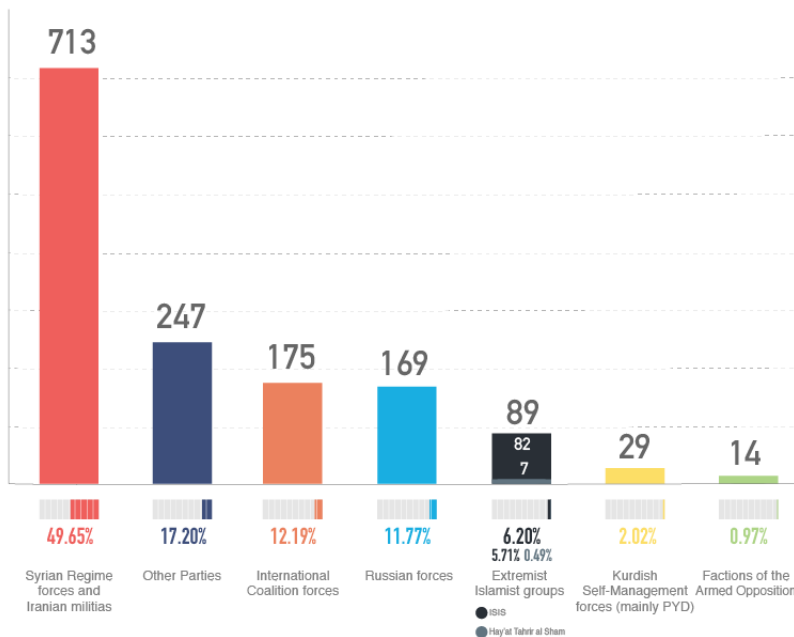
Distributed as follows:



6964
civilians
were killed
at the hands of
the main parties to
the conflict in Syria in
2018

As documented by SNHR

Distributed as follows:

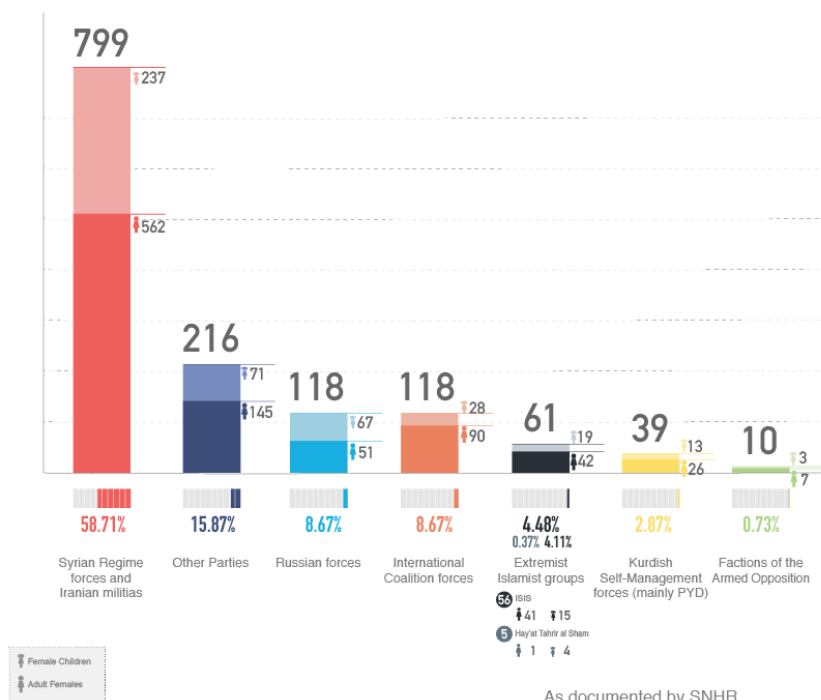


1436
children
were killed
at the hands of
the main parties to
the conflict in Syria in
2018

As documented by SNHR

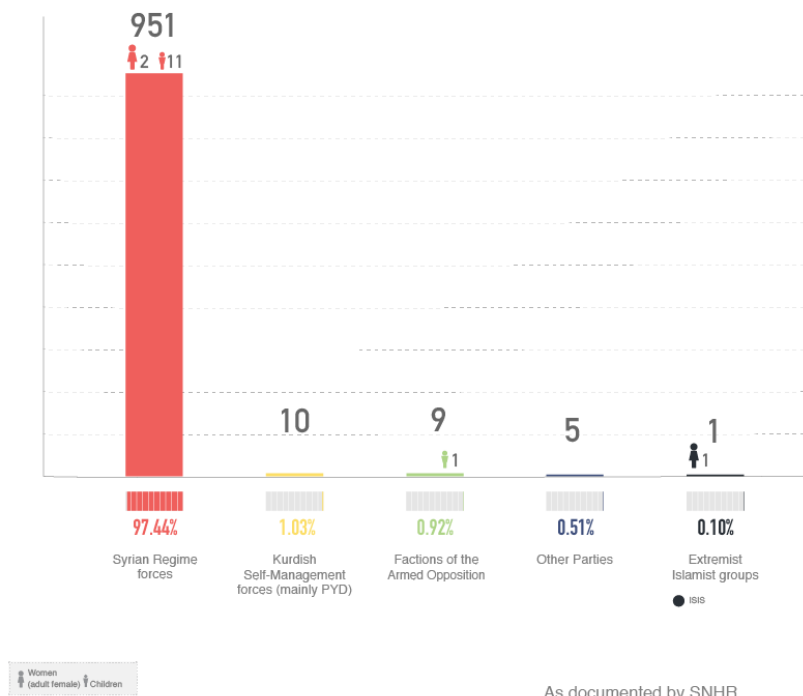


Distributed as follows:



1361
females
were killed
at the hands of
the main parties to
the conflict in Syria in
2018

Distributed as follows:



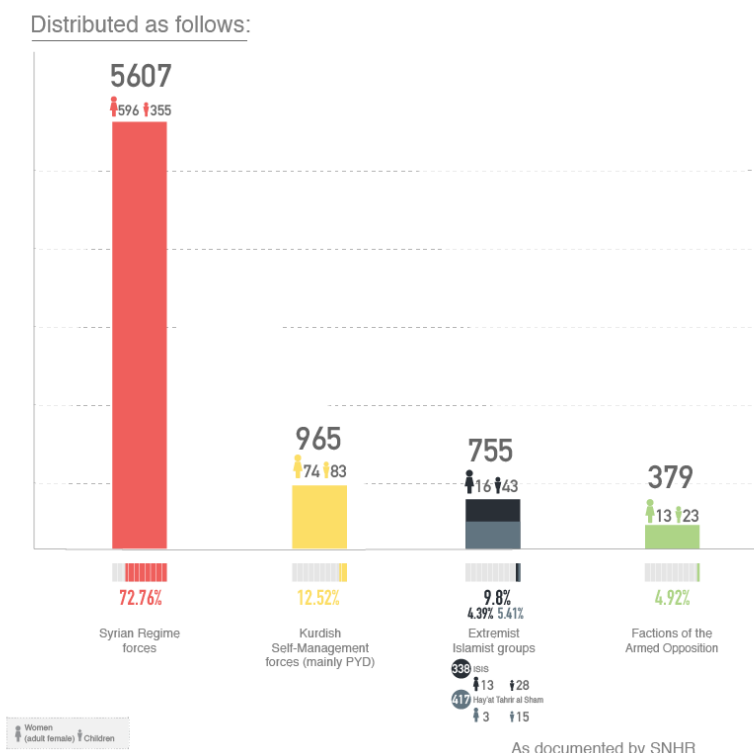
976
individuals
died due to torture
at the hands of
the main parties to
the conflict in Syria in
2018



- The Syrian regime (security, army, local militias, and foreign militias): 4,162 civilians, including 713 children and 562 women, in addition to at least 130 massacres.
- Russian forces: 467 civilians, including 169 children and 51 women, in addition to at least 27 massacres.
- Extremist Islamist groups: 478 civilians, including 89 children and 42 women, divided into:
 - ISIS (the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State'): 446 civilians, including 82 children and 41 women. Also, ISIS were responsible for at least eight massacres.
 - Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (mainly Fateh al Sham Front): 32 civilians, including seven children and one woman.
- Factions of the Armed Opposition: 48 civilians, including 14 children and seven women.
- Kurdish Self-Management forces (mainly Democratic Union Party forces – a branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party): 285 civilians, including 29 children and 26 women. Also, Kurdish Self-Management forces were responsible for at least four massacres.
- International Coalition forces: 417 civilians, including 175 children and 90 women. Also, International Coalition forces were responsible for at least 28 massacres.
- Other parties: 1,107 civilians, including 247 children and 145 women. Also, other parties were responsible for at least 26 massacres.

2- Arbitrary arrest and enforced-disappearance

SNHR documented at least 7,706 cases of arbitrary arrest in 2018, including 504 children and 699 women (adult female), distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:



At least
7706
cases of
arbitrary arrest
at the hands of
the main parties to
the conflict in Syria in
2018



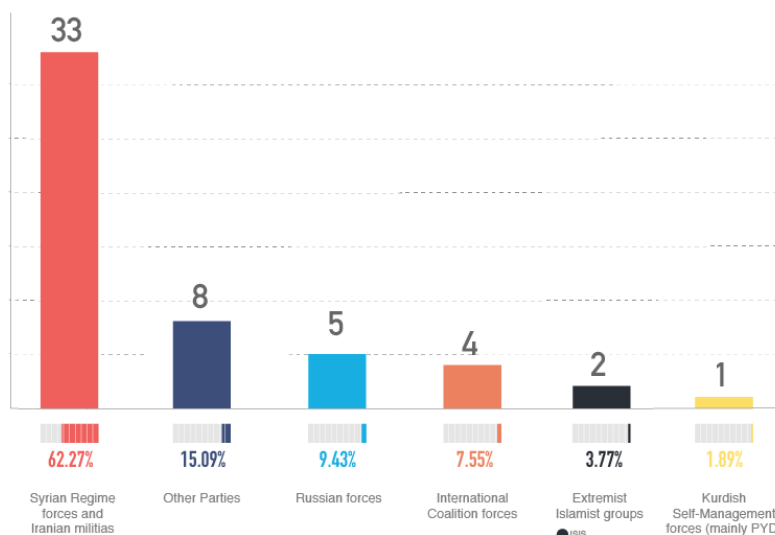
- Syrian regime forces: 5,607 civilians, including 355 children and 596 women.
- Extremist Islamist groups: 755 individuals, including 43 children and 16 women
 - ISIS: 338 individuals, including 28 children and 13 women.
 - Hay'at Tahrir al Sham: 417 individuals, including 15 children and three women.
- Armed Opposition factions: 379 individuals, including 23 children and 13 women.
- Self-Management forces: 965 individuals, including 83 children and 74 women.

3- Targeting medical personnel

SNHR has documented the death of 53 medical personnel, distributed by the perpetrator part as follows:



Distributed as follows:



53
medical personnel
were killed
at the hands of
the main parties to
the conflict in Syria in
2018

As documented by SNHR

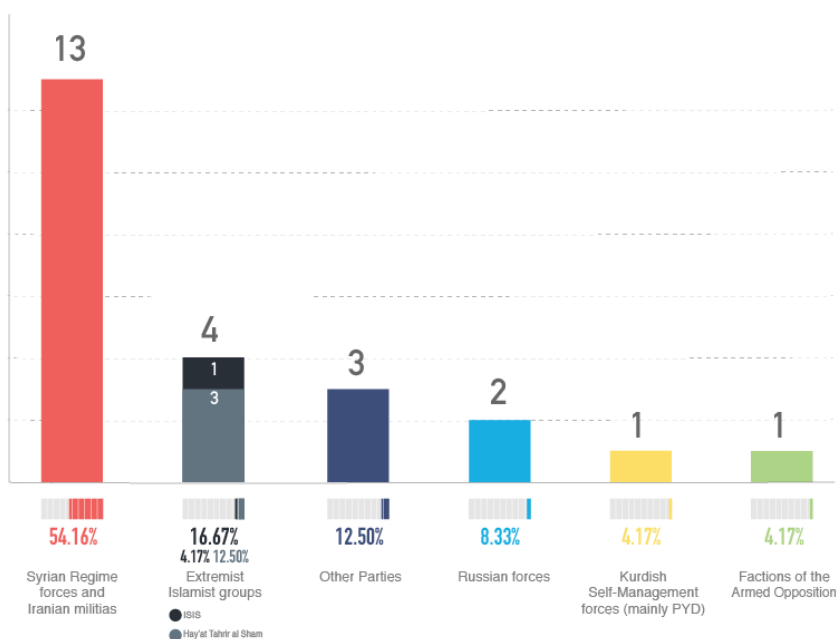
- Syrian regime forces: 33
- Russian forces: five
- Extremist Islamist groups:
 - o ISIS: two
- Self-Management forces: one
- International Coalition forces: four
- Other parties: eight



4- Targeting media workers

SNHR has documented the death of 24 media workers, distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:

Distributed as follows:



24
media workers
were killed
at the hands of
the main parties to
the conflict in Syria in
2018

As documented by SNHR

- Syrian regime forces: 13
- Russian forces: two
- Extremist Islamist groups:
 - ISIS: one
 - Hay'at Tahrir al Sham: three
- Factions of the Armed Opposition: one
- Self-Management forces: one
- Other parties: three

5- Unlawful attacks

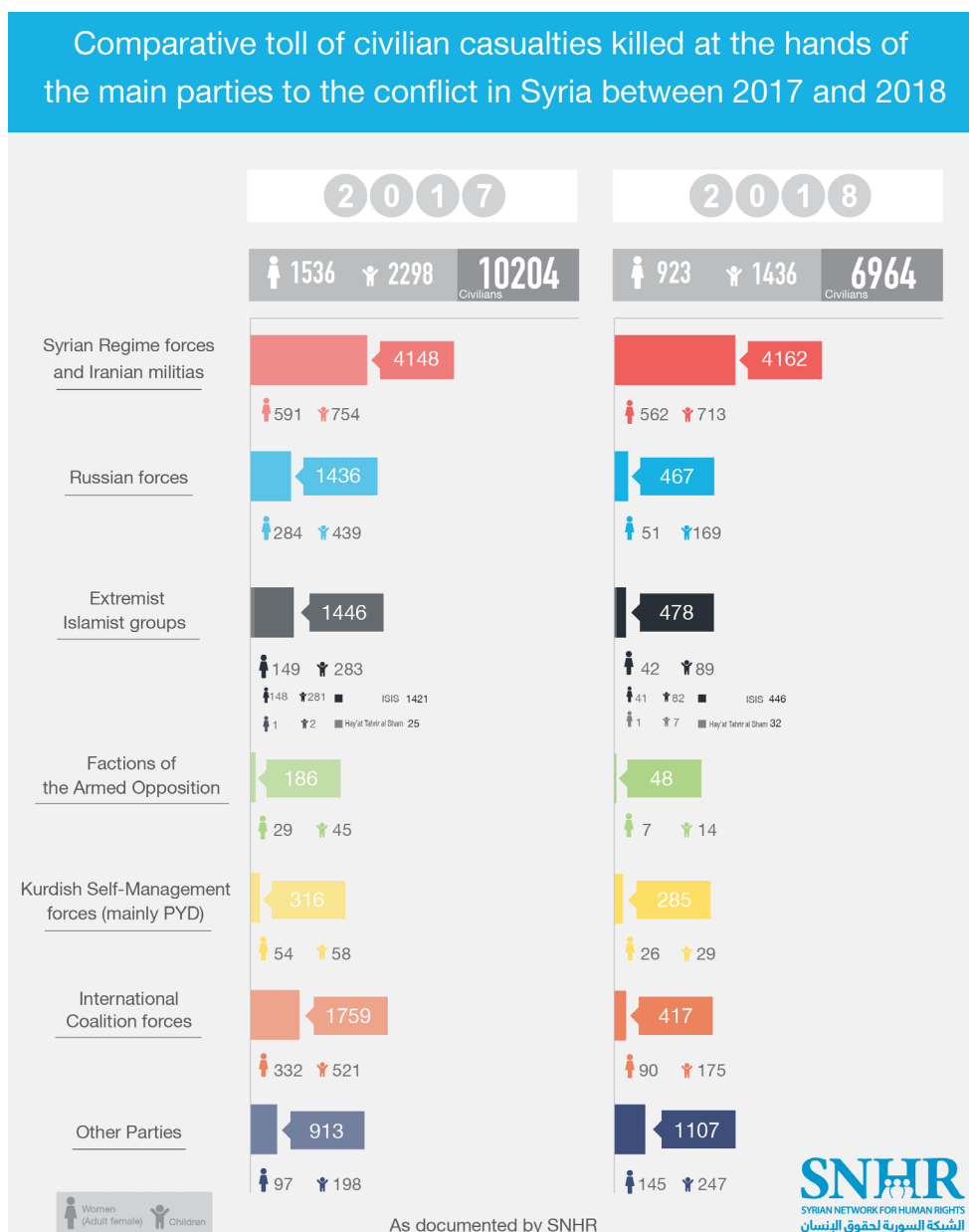
- Chemical Weapons: we recorded six attacks with chemical weapons by Syrian Regime forces.



- Cluster Munitions: we recorded 13 attacks with cluster munitions, distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:
 - Syrian Regime forces: seven
 - Russian forces: six
- Incendiary Weapons: we recorded 28 attacks with incendiary weapons, distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:
 - Syrian Regime forces: 11
 - Russian forces: 14
 - International Coalition forces: three
- Barrel bombs: we recorded at least 3,601 barrel bombs dropped by the Syrian regime

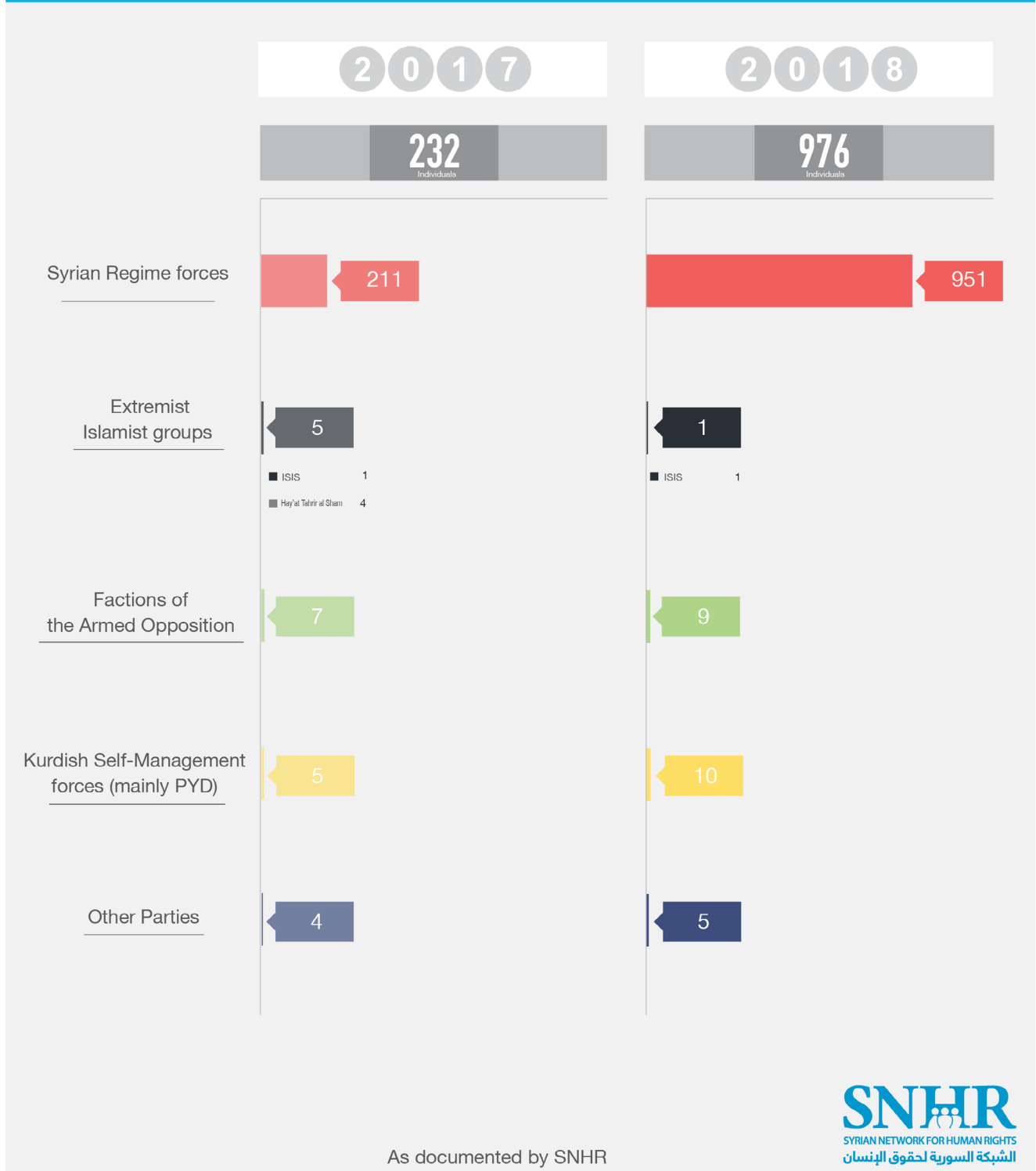
III. Comparison between Patterns of Human Rights Violations in 2017 and 2018

Comparative toll of civilian casualties killed at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syria between 2017 and 2018



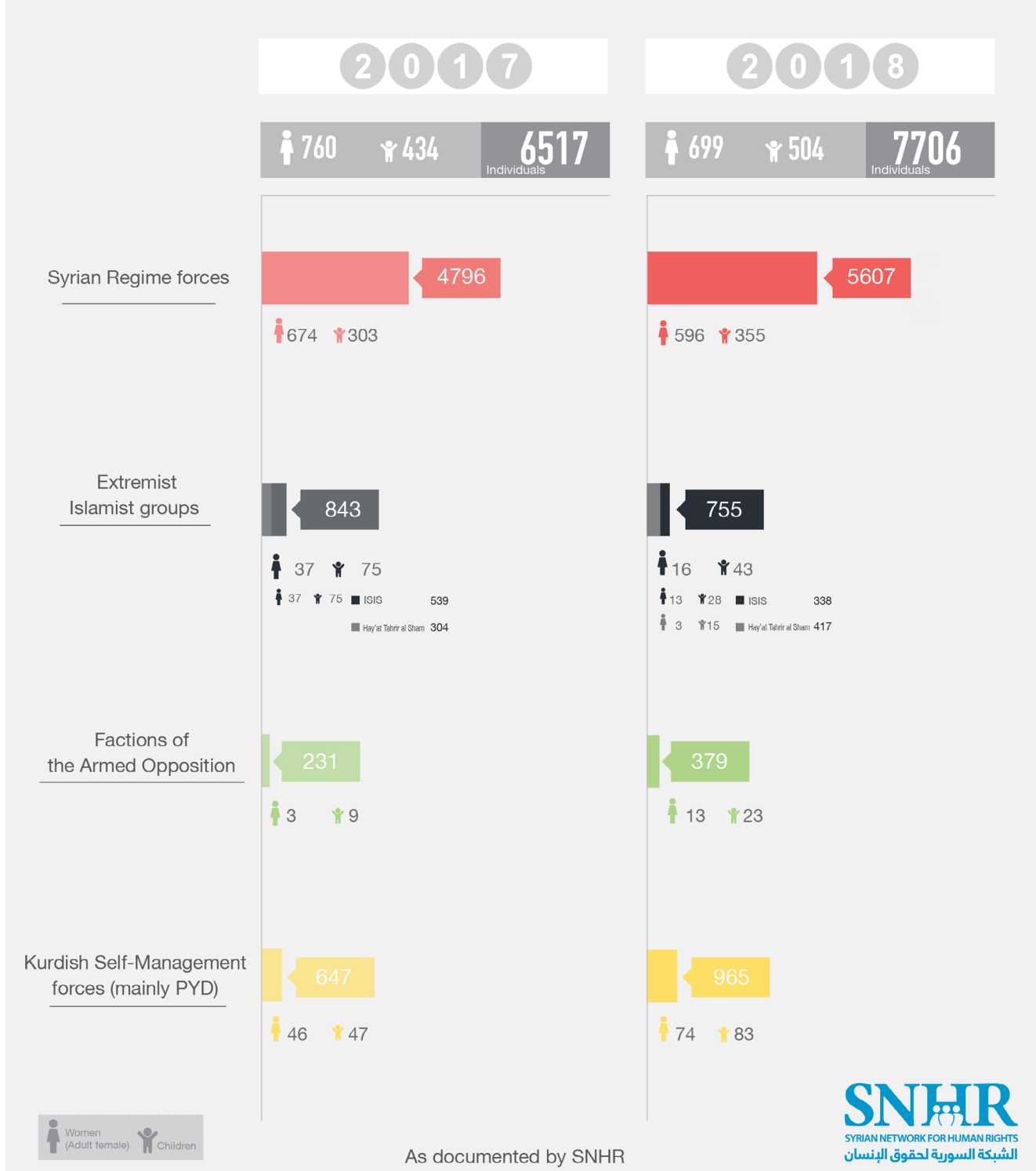
Comparative toll of casualties who died due to torture at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syria between 2017 and 2018

Comparative toll of casualties who died due to torture at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syrian between 2017 and 2018



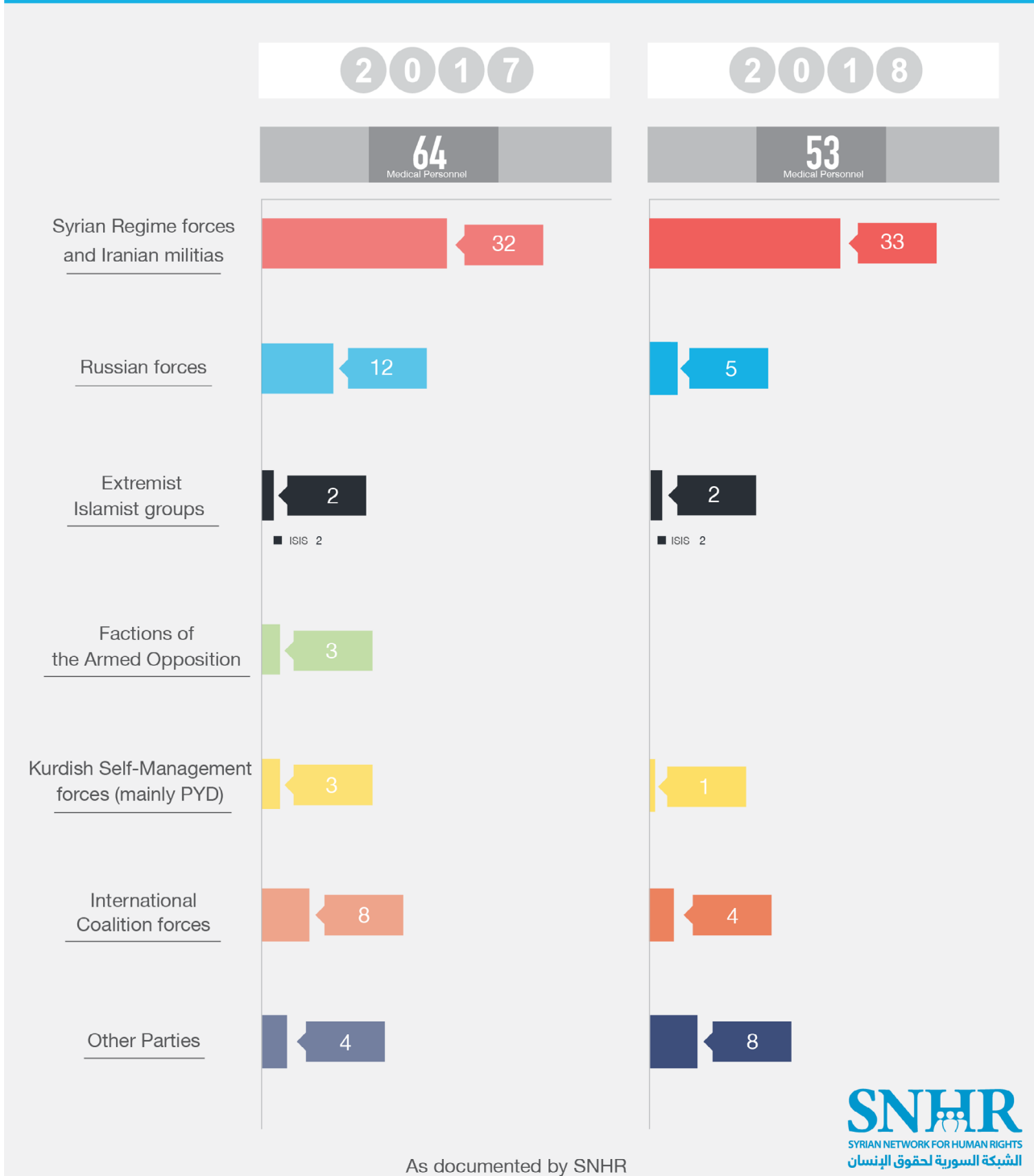
Comparative record of cases of arbitrary arrest at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syria between 2017 and 2018

Comparative record of cases of arbitrary arrest at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syria between 2017 and 2018

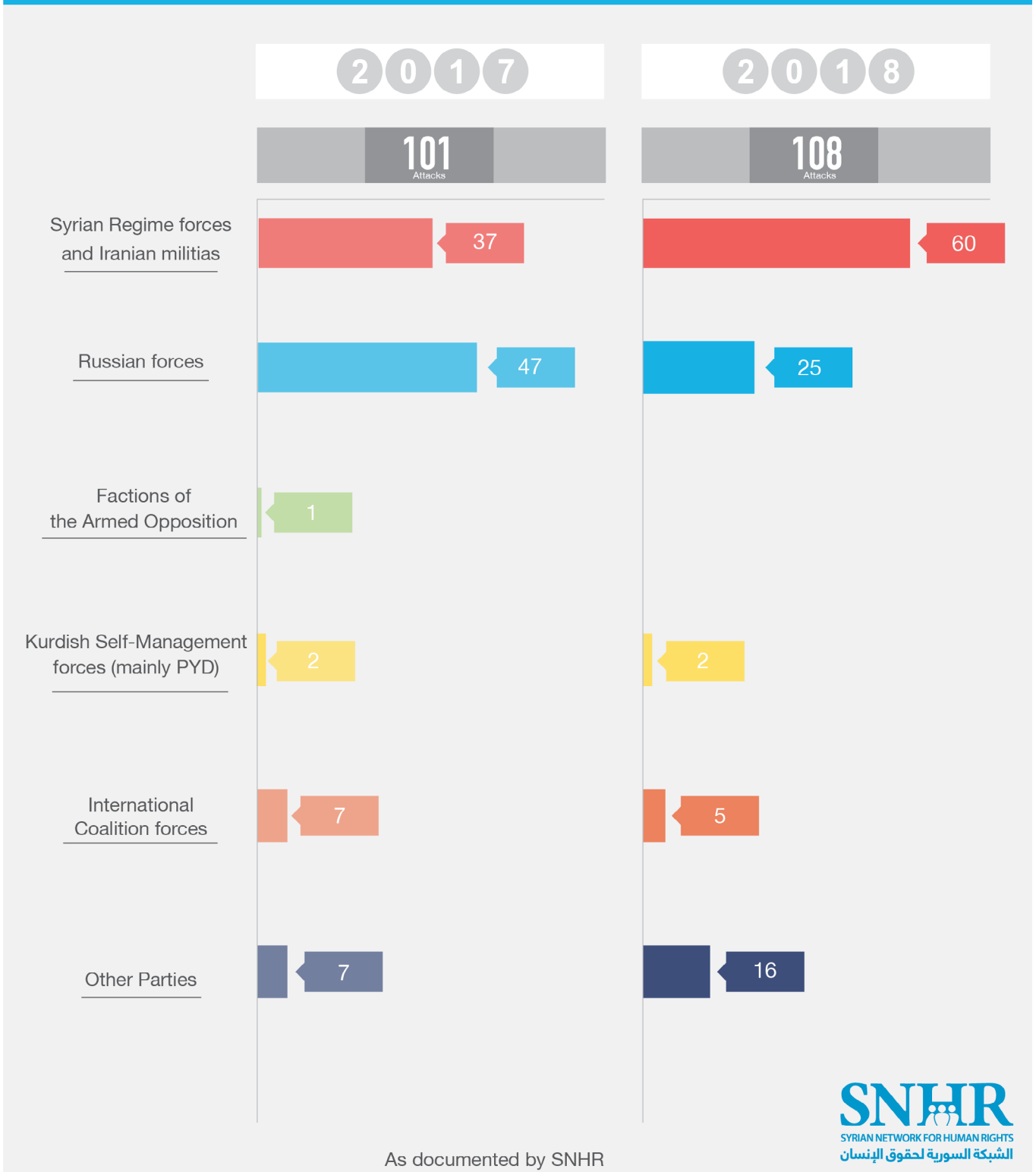


Comparative toll of medical personnel killed, and record of attacks on their related medical facilities at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syria between 2017 and 2018

Comparative toll of medical personnel killed at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syria between 2017 and 2018

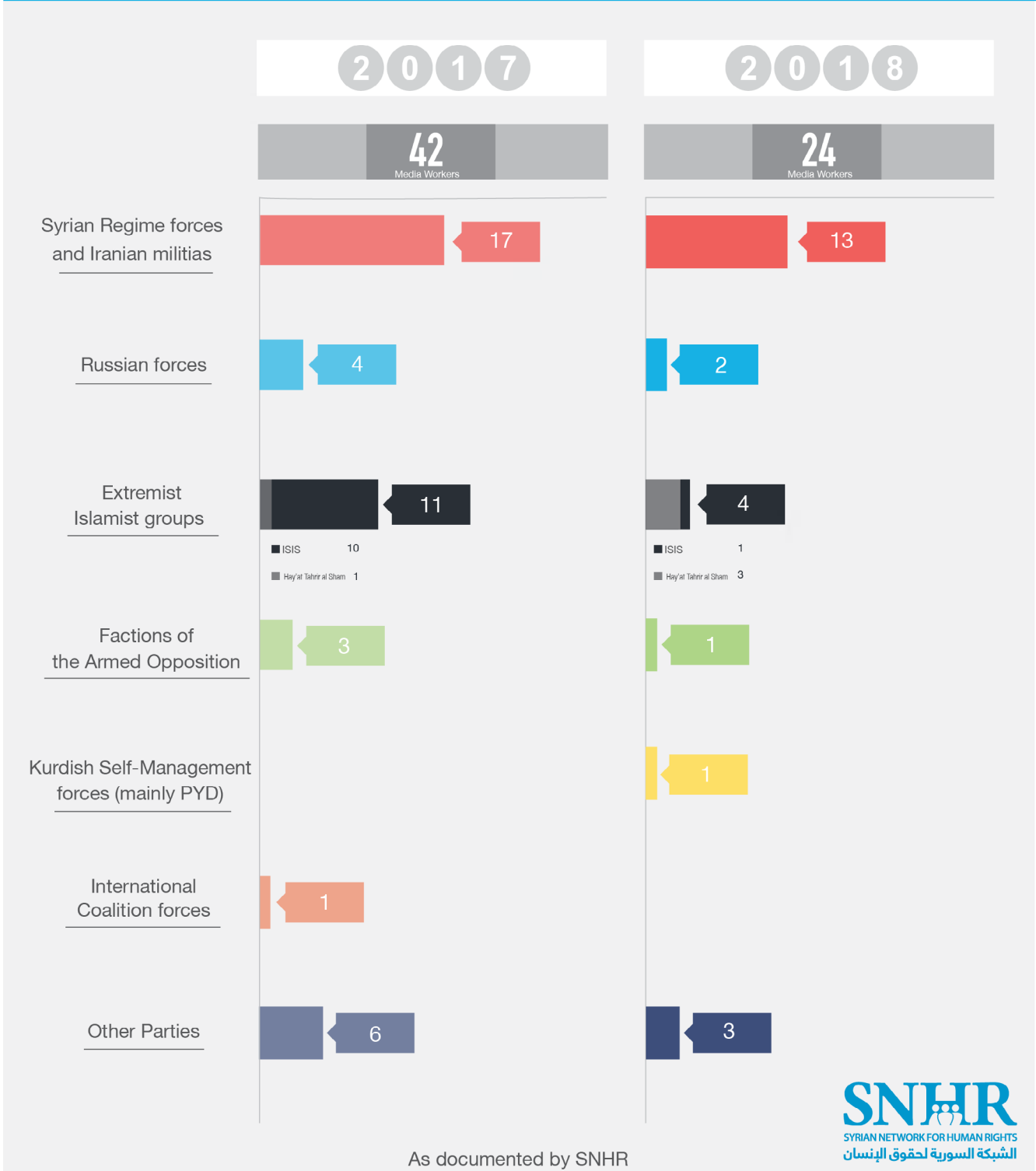


Comparative record of attacks on medical facilities by the main parties to the conflict in Syria between 2017 and 2018

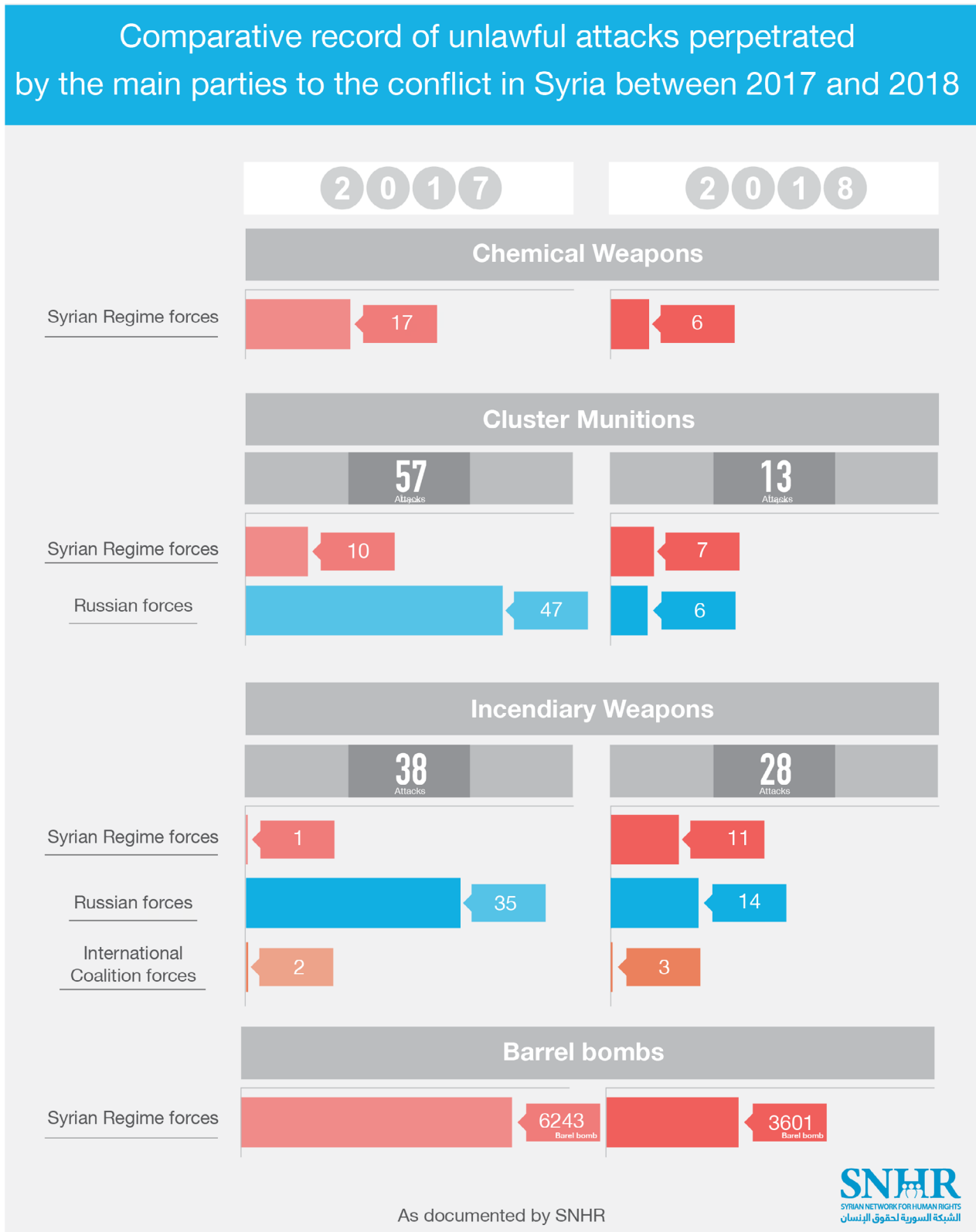


Comparative toll of media workers killed at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syrian between 2017 and 2018

Comparative toll of media workers killed at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syrian between 2017 and 2018



Comparative record of unlawful attacks perpetrated by the main parties to the conflict in Syria between 2017 and 2018



IV. Major Events in 2018

2018 saw a near collapse of the de-escalation agreement that resulted from the fourth round of the Astana talks, which approved four areas of de-escalation (Idlib governorate and its environs, northern Homs governorate, the Eastern Ghouta in Damascus Suburbs and parts of Daraa and Quneitra governorates) and agreed upon maps, as well as providing for the cessation of military operations, the delivery of food assistance, and the return of displaced persons. The first indications of the collapse of the agreement began emerging after September 2017, just four months after the agreement initially entered into force, when the Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance launched a large-scale military campaign on the border of the fourth de-escalation zone (Idlib region), which ended with these forces controlling 45 percent of this area. In 2018, this collapse was further reinforced through the regime seizing control of three areas that had been covered by the de-escalation agreement agreed upon earlier by the Syrian regime and the Iranian militias. The regime's seizing of control in these areas was achieved through full invasion and the forced displacement of most of their residents.

Syrian regime forces, in cooperation with their Russian and Iranian allies, continuing to pursue their policy of singling out areas one by one; [in February 2018, they again used this strategy](#) when [they began escalating their military operations](#) to seize control over the Eastern Ghouta area in Damascus Suburbs governorate. To that end, the Syrian-Russian alliance forces used the heaviest aerial bombardments since the beginning of the popular uprising, carpet-bombing towns in Eastern Ghouta with various types of weapons and high-explosive munitions. Thousands of people were forced to spend several months living in basements and primitive shelters to avoid the ferocious bombardment. In addition to all this, the Syrian Regime forces used chemical weapons several times during their battle for control of Eastern Ghouta, with the last such deployment being in [an attack on Douma city in April 2018](#), which killed 39 civilians and forced thousands of other residents of Douma city to accept the settlement with the Syrian regime and leave from the last cities of the Eastern Ghouta.

At end of April 2018, Syrian Regime forces moved to the second de-escalation zone (the northern suburbs of Homs and southern suburbs of Hama) where the ferocious bombardment didn't last long before the area was subject to a similar agreement as that of the Eastern Ghouta, with at least 35 thousand civilians being displaced from the area to the northern Syria in fear of the Syrian-Iranian alliance forces.



In the middle of the year, the Syrian Regime forces, backed by the Russian air force, began carrying out intensive air raids, incursions and other steps to seize control of [the third de-escalation zone](#) in the southern region of Syrian, which was also covered by the Russian-American agreement. Within 45 days, the Syrian Regime reimposed control over the entire Daraa and Quneitra governorates, with thousands of residents from these areas forcibly displaced to northern Syria.

As of early August, the SNHR monitored the deployment of military columns to the borders of the fourth and final de-escalation zone (which included Idlib governorate, and parts Aleppo, Hama and Latakia governorates). This mobilization was a clear indication of the intention of the Syrian-Iranian alliance to launch a large-scale offensive to control the Idlib region. We documented a number of air strikes and heavy artillery attacks carried out by the Syrian Regime forces on the southern villages of Idlib before these ceased following the Sochi Agreement, which came into effect on September 17, 2018.

The agreement did not succeed in stopping the artillery bombardment, despite its success – at least temporarily - in halting the flight of warplanes, which stopped the aerial bombardment and related fatalities. Despite this, however, Syrian Regime forces continued to subject villages and towns adjacent to the line of contact to almost daily shelling. SNHR has previously documented the most notable violations of the Sochi agreement in [a separate report](#).

Meanwhile, the Idlib region suffered from a significant increase in the rates of violations committed by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, which controls several areas in the region, with the terror group's members storming several villages, and arresting dozens of people, including local activists, aid workers and mosque preachers. These violations emerged apparently prior to the Turkish-Russian agreement on September 17. In addition, the violations undermined security and stability, and generated a state of panic in a number of villages and districts in the region. We documented in [a previously released report](#) how Hay'at Tahrir al Sham exploited the lull in fighting resulting from the agreement to increase its violations in Idlib region.

In areas not covered by the de-escalation agreement such as Deir Ez-Zour region, however, Syrian Regime forces and Syrian Kurdish-dominated Democratic forces shared control with a limited presence of ISIS. These areas remained relatively calm until September 11, when the Syrian Democratic forces announced the resumption of their battle against ISIS in areas still under its control, [besieging thousands of civilians in Hajin District](#), and launching heavy artillery and missile launcher attacks supported by intensive air strikes from International Coalition warplanes.



Finally, the areas under the control of Syrian Regime forces expanded in 2018 to include about 60 percent of the total land area of Syria, amid continued instances of detention and torture. Indeed, it seems that the pace of arrests has increased with every advance by the Syrian regime on the ground. We monitored an escalation in arrests by Syrian Regime forces of citizens presumed to have been subjected to security settlement measures throughout the period covered by the report; despite these agreements, the Syrian Regime forces arrested these individuals, most of whose fate remains unknown, meaning that they are now among the ranks of the forcibly disappeared.

Years after the Syrian regime first began its policy of deliberately concealing the fate of tens of thousands of detainees, seeking to inflict as much pain, distress and humiliation on their families as possible, at the start of the popular movement for democracy in Syria in March 2011, the Syrian regime has revealed the fate of some of the Syrian citizens, who the regime previously forcibly disappeared, through its civil registry constituencies, where these disappeared persons were registered in the civil registry as dead. The SNHR released [two reports](#) on this alarming phenomenon and an analysis of the documented cases.

Indiscriminate attacks and prohibited weapons

Syrian-Russian forces continued to use cluster munitions against civilians in Syria, although the rate of use of this type of munitions significantly declined in 2018 following extensive battles by Syrian-Russian forces to recapture most of the areas formerly under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition in the Eastern Ghouta and southern Syria. Yet, the greatest threat to international peace and security came during the first half of 2018 when the country witnessed [repeated use of chemical weapons in the governorates of Idlib and Damascus Suburbs](#), with Syrian Regime forces using both ground forces' artillery shells and barrel bombs loaded with toxic materials. The Douma attack on April 7 was one of the deadliest in recent years, killing 39 civilians. In 2018, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) issued four reports, the most recent of which was a phased report that conclusively proved the use of poison gas in Douma city on April 7.

The Syrian-Russian alliance also continued to use incendiary weapons in agricultural and populated areas far from the front lines. This use escalated in the context of the alliance's military operations against the Eastern Ghouta and the Idlib region. We also recorded three attacks with incendiary weapons launched by International Coalition forces on the eastern villages of Deir Ez-Zour.



Meanwhile, the helicopters of the Syrian regime and the fixed-wing warplanes did not stop dropping [barrel bombs](#), completely ignoring Security Council Resolution 2139, in light of the Security Council itself ignoring and failing to condemn the Syrian regime for using this barbaric weapon. Hundreds of barrel bombs fell on areas outside the control of Syrian Regime forces, targeting civilian populations and vital civilian facilities; this type of munitions continued to be used in 2018, despite the fact that its use declined by nearly 50 percent compared to that observed by the SNHR in 2017.

Continuous violations against children and women

[Children in Syria continue to be](#) at risk of murder, arrest and torture, with many suffering from psychological disorders due to trauma and the loss of close relatives. Some of those who survived mass murder by bombing, siege or torture became involved in the armed conflict, which was most readily apparent with extremist organizations and local militias affiliated with the Syrian regime, as well as some of the Armed Opposition factions in varying degrees. The Kurdish Democratic Union forces also continued their policy of forced conscription of children.

In some areas, the percentage of school enrollment dropped to zero percent. One of the main reasons for this decline was the forced displacement of half of the Syrian people, the difficulty of finding employment opportunities, and the deliberate bombing of schools, which was mainly perpetrated by the Syrian-Russian coalition forces.

As in previous years, we recorded in 2018 that the [Syrian females continued to be subjected to various patterns of violations](#) which were exercised against the Syrian society, as well as suffering from additional psychological, social and physical burdens; the high toll of murder and the consequent disappearance of many of the menfolk from Syrian society resulted in an additional burden on women, with the percentage of female-headed households increasing sharply meaning that women are forced to assume new roles and responsibilities, in addition to their normal roles.

Sexual violence continued to be widespread in 2018, particularly by the Syrian regime and its pro-Iranian militias. We documented cases of women being harassed, being forced to undress and being subjected to every form of sexual violence from verbal sexual harassment up to the worst levels of sexual violence, including rape, and numerous violations involving sexual violence of a sectarian character.



The year of public direct coordination between the Syrian regime and ISIS in the north and south of Syria:

In 2018, increasingly clear indicators emerged of what had been apparent in previous years suggesting regular direct and premeditated coordination between the Syrian regime and ISIS in the north and south of the country. This was evident in battles in the [eastern suburbs of Hama and eastern south suburbs of Idlib](#) in early 2018. According to the narrative of alleged hostility between the two parties, they should have engaged in conflict during these battles in areas where their forces were in contact; what actually happened, however, was that Syrian Regime forces actively facilitated the passage of columns of ISIS terrorists across areas of the regime's control, with the regime enabling the ISIS forces to travel to the front line of areas under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham or factions of the Armed Opposition. We have repeatedly observed the same scenario, also seen in attacks in Suwayda governorate on July 25, 2018, where in the months prior to these attacks, Syrian Regime forces had transferred elements of ISIS from the area of Yarmouk Camp in the south of Damascus to eastern desert areas in the east of Suwayda governorate, after which the Syrian regime forces vacated the positions where they had been stationed in the eastern suburbs of Suwayda along the lines of contact with elements of ISIS who had been transferred there previously, facilitating subsequent incursions and terrorist attacks launched by the organization on local areas.

Homelessness and forced displacement

Homelessness and forced displacement on a staggering scale has represented one of the greatest tragedies suffered by the Syrian people since the outbreak of the popular movement for democracy in March 2011; this terrible phenomenon has been growing and worsening year after year. 2018 was another year in which massive waves of displaced persons were forced to leave their homes and lands by military operations launched by parties to the conflict, particularly the Syrian-Russian alliance forces, which were responsible for the vast majority of displacements.

The hostilities that took place in the Afrin area during the first three months of 2018 between the Democratic Union Party forces, a branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party in Syria, and factions of the Armed Opposition, supported by the Turkish army, resulted in the displacement of most of the residents. We recorded that many houses and property were robbed by members of the opposition factions, and recorded also that a number of houses were seized on the grounds that their owners were affiliates with the Democratic Union Party forces.



The SNHR estimates that some 670,000 people were forcibly displaced in 2018, of whom 134,000 were forcibly displaced as a result of agreements and truces against international humanitarian law.

Deliberate practices impede return of IDPs and refugees

After taking over most of the areas previously under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition, the Syrian-Iranian alliance and its militias began to carry out brutal reprisals against the residents of these areas, including arrests and expropriations of property on a massive scale. In 2018, the SNHR recorded at least 687 arrests of persons subjected to security settlement procedures, some of whom were forcibly disappeared.

Also, in 2018, the SNHR recorded at least 157 arrests against persons in the Syrian diaspora who returned to Syria from other countries. The primary purpose of these arrests was forcible conscription into the regime military.

In addition to the danger of arrest, enforced disappearance and looting of property by Syrian and Iranian regime forces, another major obstacle to the return of refugees and displaced people is the extensive destruction caused by airstrikes by Syrian and Russian warplanes, which have reduced many communities to rubble. As a result, the Syrian regime began to introduce new urban planning schemes that may bring with it a significant change in the demographic nature of the affected areas, thereby further undermining the right of return of indigenous residents.

Due to all these reasons, we have not observed any actual significant return by the people of Darayya city, and the old Homs neighborhoods controlled by the Syrian Regime forces since May 2014, despite the passage of several years. The main reason for this is the people's well-justified terror of the Syrian regime and fear of arrest and torture. The little that we've been able to document of any return by residents has been very limited, with local authorities working to rehabilitate the infrastructure and service in some areas, but not others.

In 2018, the SNHR also noted an expansion of dredging operations and property demolitions in the neighborhoods of al Qaboun and Teshreen in the east of Damascus city, in addition to similar destruction in the al Laja area of Daraa governorate. Act No. 10 issued by the Syrian regime in April 2018 has been enforced, giving the regime control of the properties of those Syrian citizens previously displaced and essentially dispossessed by regime forces and military and security operations.

In Raqqa governorate, especially the area under the control of the Syrian Democratic forces, the effects of massive destruction continue to dominate the city in particular; even after nearly a year-and-a-half since the withdrawal of ISIS from the city, the reconstruction and rehabilitation have been minimal, with only a few hospitals, schools and bridges restored.



Whilst we estimate that perhaps 35 percent of the previous population has returned, we were unable to document any significant return in 2018. It should be noted that amongst the abstracts deterring people from returning are the many landmines planted by ISIS, the mass graves of the group's victims still being discovered in the city, and the arrests by the Syrian Democratic forces of residents still traumatized by their experience under ISIS. The International Coalition forces bear primary responsibility for the continuing instability in the city, whether they have made little effort to help achieve political and economic stability.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, says:

“Since 2011, the Syrian regime has perpetrated various forms of brutal violence against society, including the arrest and torture of tens of thousands, and the killing of hundreds of thousands of others, along with the displacement of half of the Syrian people, which has been an intentional and deliberate goal of this ruling authority in order to crush society, punish it and subject it to the rule of the family, forever. Consequently, there is a complete termination of any opportunity or even any idea of a new popular movement due to the high cost paid by the community for demanding freedom, dignity and political pluralistic transition. However, the ruling family hasn't cared about the material or human cost in order to achieve this brutal goal, even if this causes the dismantling of the entire Syrian state”

V. Most Prominent Political and Military Events in 2018

Political events

- On Tuesday, January 23, representatives from 30 countries met in Paris to launch the [‘International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons’](#)
- On Thursday, January 25, [the ninth round of the Geneva Conference was held](#) in Vienna, with the United States, Britain, France, Jordan and Saudi Arabia drawing up a document that issued recommendations to the UN Special Envoy to Syria Stephan de Mistura. The document entitled “Practical Approach” aimed at [reviving the political process](#) in Geneva on Syria on the basis of resolution 2254.
- On Tuesday, January 30, [‘The Syrian National Dialogue Conference’](#) was [held in Sochi city](#) in Russia, attended by 1,600 Syrian people of various political orientations. This concluded with an agreement to form a constitutional committee composed of representatives of the Syrian regime and the opposition to reform the constitution in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254.
- On Saturday, February 24, [the UN Security Council unanimously adopted](#) Resolution 2401, which stipulated a 30-day truce throughout Syrian territory and unconditional humanitarian assistance. This decision came after the violent military campaign launched by the Syrian Regime forces on the Eastern Ghouta,



- On Monday, April 2, the Syrian regime issued Act No. 10 of 2018, allowing for the establishment of organizational zones throughout Syria, specializing in reconstruction.
- On Wednesday, April 4, [the Turkish capital Ankara witnessed a tripartite summit](#) of heads of state from Russia, Iran and Turkey to discuss the situation in Syria.
- On Tuesday, April 10, the UN Security Council held [an emergency session](#) after the Syrian regime's forces carried out a chemical attack. The United States launched a draft resolution to form [a commission of inquiry into the use of chemical weapons](#). Russia rejected the draft resolution and used its veto for the twelfth time since the beginning of the popular movement in Syria, and for the sixth time in relation to the chemical weapons issue.
- On Wednesday, April 25, [the second conference](#) on “[Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region](#)” was held in Brussels. The event, hosted by the European Union and the United Nations, was [attended by delegates representing 85 countries](#) and representatives of various United Nations organizations and institutions, with the objective of [raising funds](#) for millions of civilians affected by the war in Syria, as well as to show support for the peace process in the country.
- On Monday, May 14, [the ninth round of Astana talks](#) on Syria was launched in the Kazakh capital, with the participation of all parties. The concluding statement stated that the guarantors of the Astana negotiations agreed to continue work on the de-escalation zones and to protect them, as well as to safeguard the cease-fire in Syria, with emphasis on maintaining the unity of Syrian territory and ensuring the safe access of aid.
- On Thursday, May 31, [the United States of America](#) included Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on the list of terrorist organizations, asserting that the amendment of the name of the “al Nusra Front” to “Hay'at Tahrir al Sham” does not deceive them.
- On Thursday, June 28, the [Russian Ambassador to the United Nations, Vasily Nebenzya, declared](#) that the de-escalation zones were not established as long-term entities, but were established for a limited period to enable people to live in acceptable conditions. He further claimed that there were 15,000 terrorists from extremist Islamist organizations in Daraa governorate.
- On Monday, July 16, the capital of Finland, Helsinki city, saw [a meeting](#) between US President “Donald Trump” and Russian President “Vladimir Putin”. The summit came in the wake of Syrian Regime forces taking control of most of Daraa governorate. The Russian President said in the final statement that the situation in the Golan must return to what it was under the 1974 Convention, and that conditions must be created to return to Security Council Resolution 338 to reach a fair settlement between Syria and Israel.



- On Monday, July 30, [the tenth round of the Astana talks](#) on Syria began in the Russian city of Sochi. The final communiqué addressed several points, including the constitutional committee and the refugee issue.
- On Friday, September 7, [the Tehran summit was held](#), which brought together [Russian President Vladimir Putin](#), [Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan](#) and [Iranian President Hassan Rouhani](#). During the summit, the Iranian and Russian leaders stressed the need for the Syrian regime to regain control over Idlib governorate, while the Turkish President called on for a cease-fire in the Idlib region.
- On Monday, September 17, [a meeting was held](#) between the Turkish and [Russian](#) Presidents in the Russian city of Sochi for the purpose of reaching a truce agreement on the Idlib region. Several items were agreed upon, including the establishment of a demilitarized zone 15-20 km deep within the de-escalation zone, and the removal of all heavy weapons from it by October 10, 2018, along with the removal of all “terrorist” groups from the area by October 15, 2018, and the enabling of passage via the M4 (Aleppo - Latakia) and M5 (Aleppo - Hama) roads by the end of 2018. The two leaders also agreed on the establishment of 29 observation points (10 of which are Russian, 12 Turkish and 7 Iranian) to observe the cease-fire at the boundaries of the demilitarized zone in Idlib.
- On Monday, October 15, [the Nasib border crossing was reopened](#) between Syria and [Jordan](#) after Syrian Regime forces seized control of the crossing following the southern Syria agreement in July 2018. The crossing was completely closed for nearly three years after factions of the Armed Opposition took control of it.
- On Saturday, October 27, [a four-party summit](#) was held in Istanbul, Turkey, which included the leaders of [Russia](#), Germany, France and Turkey, to discuss the situation in Syria.
- On Wednesday, November 28, [the 11th round of Astana Talks](#) began. The UN special envoy to Syria, Stéphane de Mistura, said: “Russia, Turkey and Iran failed to make any concrete progress in setting up a Syrian constitutional committee at a meeting in the Kazakh capital Astana.”
- On Wednesday, December 19, US President Donald Trump announced, via [his personal account](#) on the social networking platform ‘Twitter’, his willingness to withdraw US military forces from Syria. This was followed by an official statement issued by the White House confirming the withdrawal of US troops stationed in northeastern Syria in an area extending over the entire area north of the Euphrates River to the Iraqi border to the east and the Turkish north.

The military events

- On Wednesday, January 3, the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces announced



that they had taken control of al Mhimiyda villages and the lands of al Zeer and al Majid to the north-east of al Mayadeen in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour following clashes with elements of ISIS.

- On Saturday, January 20, factions of the Euphrates Shield (an alliance of a number of factions of the Armed Opposition and Turkish forces) announced the start of the Olive Branch operation against the Kurdish-majority Syrian Democratic forces to control the Afrin area.
 - On Monday, January 22, the Syrian regime managed to take full control of the Abu al Thu-hour Military Airbase in the south-eastern suburbs of Idlib following several months of fighting in the south-eastern suburbs of Idlib and the southern suburbs of Aleppo and eastern suburbs of Hama, assisted by Iranian militias and Russian forces.
 - On Saturday, February 3, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced the shooting down of a Russian fixed-wing Su-25 warplane by an anti-aircraft shoulder-fired missile in al Sawamea village in the eastern suburbs of Idlib. On the same day, the Russian Defense Ministry also announced the bombing of the area where the plane fell, stating that they killed 30 people who they described as “terrorists”.
 - On Saturday, February 10, an Israeli warplane crashed after targeting Iranian targets in Syria, as a result of Syrian regime ground-based anti-aircraft fire.
 - On Monday, April 9, Israeli fighter jets launched airstrikes targeting the T4 military airbase in the eastern suburbs of Homs, with the airbase being targeted by eight missiles. The Russian Defense Ministry announced that the Russian army had shot down five of them.
- On Saturday, April 14, US, British and French forces carried out an air and sea attack on three targets inside Syria, namely the Scientific Research Center in the Barza neighborhood near the Capital Damascus, and two chemical weapons production and storage facilities in Shenshar, west of Homs governorate. The attacks came in response to the Syrian regime’s use of chemical weapons in the city of Douma on April 7.
- On Monday, May 28, the National Front for Liberation (FNL) was formed, consisting of the most prominent Armed Opposition factions in the Idlib de-escalation zone. This formation included Failaq al Sham, Free Idlib Army, the 1st Coastal Division, 2nd Coastal Division, 1st Infantry Division, 2nd Army, Elite Army, Jaish al Nasr, the Martyrs of Islam Brigade’s Daraya battalion, al Hurriya Brigade and the 23rd Brigade.
 - On Monday, June 4, the General Command of the Syrian Democratic Forces announced the start of military operations to take control of the town of al Dshaisha in suburbs of Hasaka city, which was under the control of ISIS, as part of the second phase of the “Al Jazeera Storm” military campaign with the support of the International Coalition forces. On June 17, they took control over it.



- On Wednesday, July 25, ISIS announced through its media outlets that it was responsible for a number of [attacks in Suwayda city](#), stating that its members had managed to kill 100 people in a series of bombings in the city.
- On Tuesday, September 11, the Syrian Kurdish-led Democratic forces announced the resumption of their battles against ISIS in the areas still under ISIS's control in the far east of Syria in Deir Ez-Zour governorate, and launched heavy artillery and missile launcher attacks supported by intensive air strikes by the International Coalition forces.
- On Friday, November 9, the Syrian Regime forces tried to break into areas controlled by factions of the Armed Opposition in the Idlib de-escalation zone along the axis of al Zallaqiyat despite the Sochi agreement.
- On Thursday, November 29, Israeli forces launched attacks using long-range missiles targeting military sites of the Syrian regime and Iranian militias near the capital, Damascus, in the area of al Kiswa, in Damascus Suburbs governorate, and in the suburbs of Quneitra governorate.
- On Saturday, December 15, the Syrian Democratic forces took control over Hajin city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour following battles with ISIS for almost three months.
- On Thursday, December 27, the Syrian Democratic Forces took control over Abu Hasan village in Hajin area, and besieged ISIS bases in Al Sousa town, al Bagouz village and the neighborhoods of al Sh'afa city.

The most notable local agreements

- On Tuesday, March 13, an agreement was signed between the Armed Opposition factions controlling al Qadam neighborhood south of Damascus, and the Syrian regime. The agreement provided for the departure of the opposition fighters and civilians to the north of Syria and the settlement of those who wanted to remain in the neighborhood.
- On Wednesday, March 21, Russian-sponsored negotiations took place between the Syrian regime and factions of the Armed Opposition, which were controlling Harasta city. The negotiations led to an agreement stipulating that the fighters and civilians would leave to Idlib governorate, and settle the situation of those who wanted to remain in the city.
- On Friday, March 23, an agreement was signed between the Syrian regime and Armed Opposition factions under Russian sponsorship, including the towns of the central sector of the Eastern Ghouta (Irbeen, Zamlaka, Ein Tarma and Hazza) in the Damascus countryside. The agreement stipulated that the fighters and civilians would leave to Idlib governorate, and settle the situation of those who wanted to stay in the city.
- On Sunday, April 8, an agreement was signed between the Syrian regime and factions of the Armed Opposition who were controlling Douma city in Damascus Suburbs governorate. The agreement provided for the departure of the fighters, and civilians willing to leave to the north of Syria, and the settlement of those who wanted to stay.



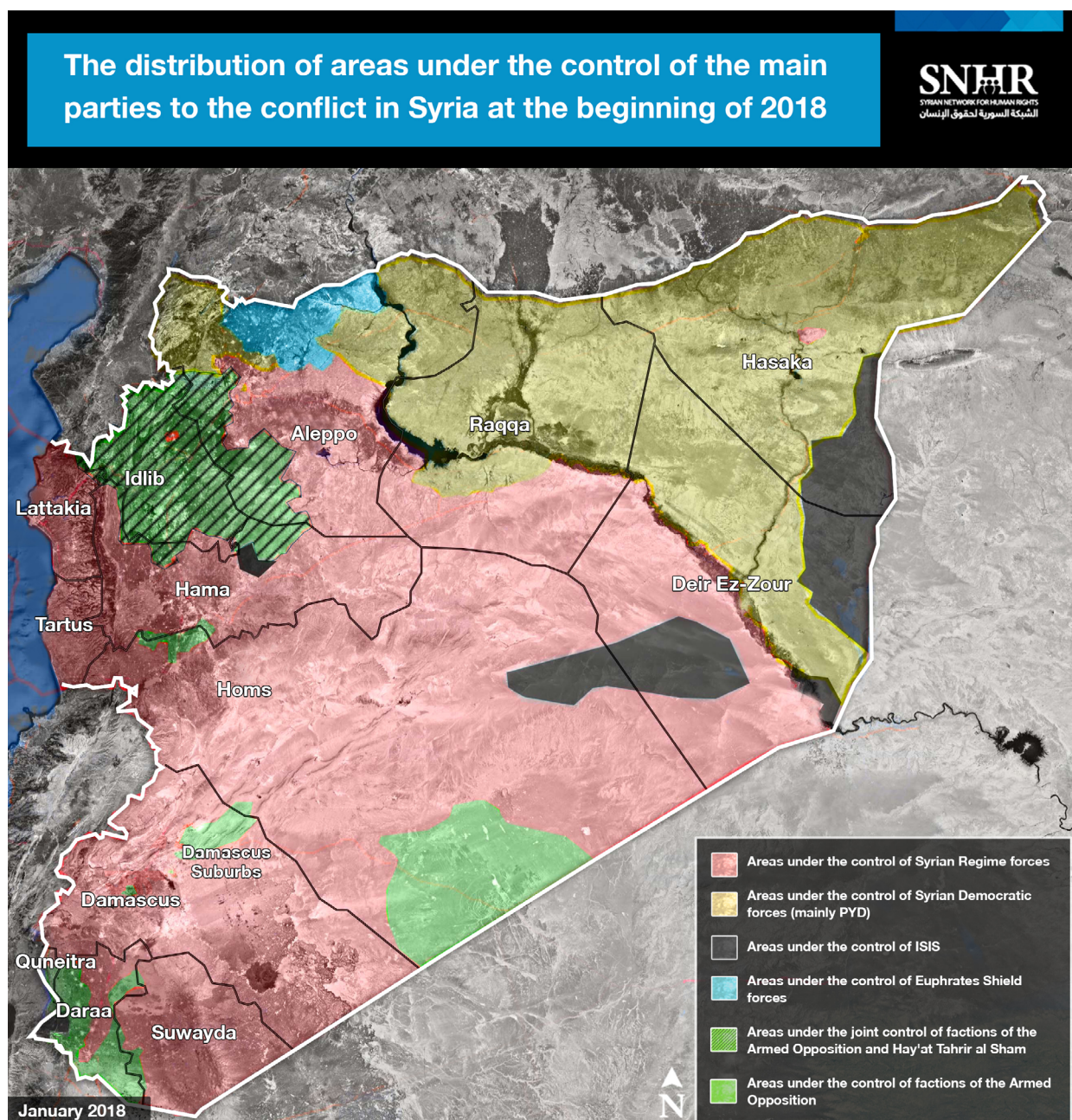
- On Thursday, April 19, an agreement was signed between the Syrian regime and Armed Opposition factions under Russian auspices, including the town of Dmair in eastern Qalamoun; this was extended on April 21 to include the eastern towns of Qalamoun (Rhaiba, Jeiroud, Naseriya) and settle the situation of residents who wanted to stay in of these areas.
- On April 30, an agreement was signed between Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, which was in control of al Reija neighborhood in al Yarmouk Camp, and the Syrian regime. The agreement included terms that provided for the release of 85 abductees from the town of Eshtarbak in Jisr al Shoghour, who had been abducted earlier by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, and the evacuation of the towns of Fu'a and Kafrayya in the suburbs of Idlib in addition to an agreement covering the Four Cities (which was expanded) in exchange for the evacuation of the elements of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham and their families to the north of Syria, with the evacuation of the towns of Kafrayya and Fu'a taking place on July 19.
- On Wednesday, May 2, an agreement was signed between the Armed Opposition factions, in the northern suburbs of Homs and the southern suburbs of Hama, and the Syrian regime. The agreement provided for the departure of the fighters and civilians to the north of Syria and the settlement of residents who wanted to remain in these areas.
- On Thursday, May 3, an agreement was signed between factions of the Armed Opposition and the Syrian regime to evacuate residents of the towns of southern Damascus, namely Babbila, Yalda, and Beit Sahem, to the north of Syria and to settle the situation of those who wanted to remain in these towns.
- On Friday, July 6, an agreement was announced between factions of the Armed Opposition and the Russian forces covering the rest of the eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate and neighborhoods in Daraa city. The agreement included clauses stipulating the cessation of hostilities and the non-entry of the Syrian Regime forces into areas covered by the agreement, including Nasib border crossing with Jordan.
- On Saturday, July 14, the Daraa Agreement was signed, which included the north-western suburbs of Daraa (al Jaidour region). The terms of the agreement included a ceasefire in Inkhel, Jasem, Namar, al Harra, Zemreen, Kafr Shams, Kafr Nasej, al Qeniya, Mhajja, al Fqea, al Sanamayn, al Qita and al Delli, and the withdrawal of the Syrian Regime forces to their military barracks in the area, along with the evacuation of those fighters and civilians who wanted to leave to the north of Syria.
- On Thursday, July 19, Quneitra was subjected to an agreement similar to the Daraa Agreement following an unprecedented military escalation witnessed in the villages of Nabea al Sakhr, Ein al Tina, and al Hajja, in the suburbs of Quneitra.



- From Saturday to Tuesday, July 28-31, an agreement was signed for the Yarmouk Basin (the towns of Abdin, al Shajra, Beit Ara, Koya and M'araba) between the Syrian regime and ISIS, which provided for hundreds of members of the terror group to be transferred to the Syrian Badia or desert area in the eastern suburbs of Suwayda. On May 20, al Yarmouk Camp saw a similar agreement that resulted in the departure of ISIS, which was in control of the camp, the neighborhoods of al Tadamun and al Hajar al Aswad, to the Syrian Badia.

VI. Shifts in Areas of Control in 2018

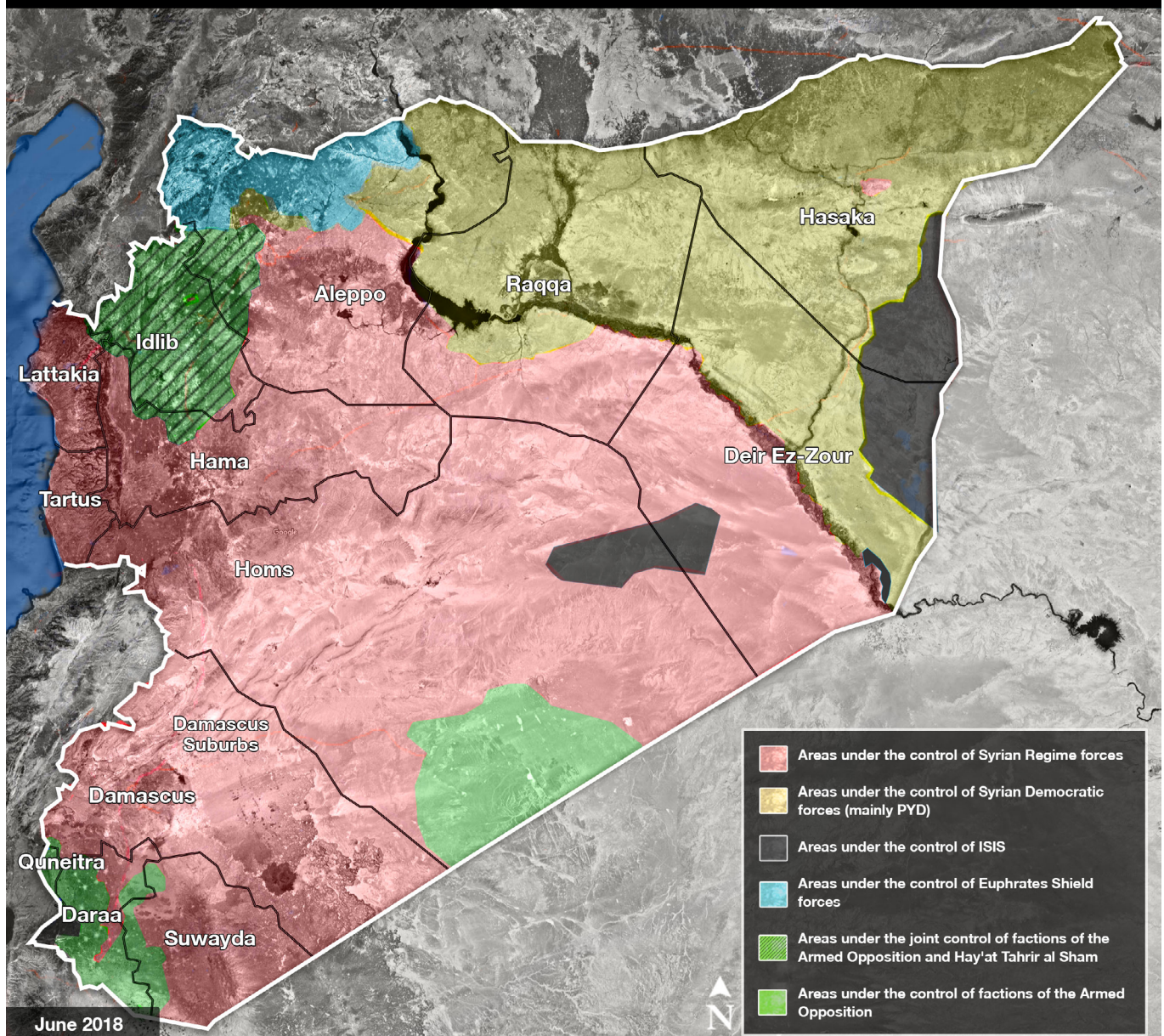
At the beginning of 2018, the Syrian Regime forces controlled about 53 percent of the Syrian territory, while the Syrian Democratic forces controlled approximately 27 percent, and ISIS's control had diminished to less than 3 percent, with the rest of the territory of Syria being shared by both Factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.



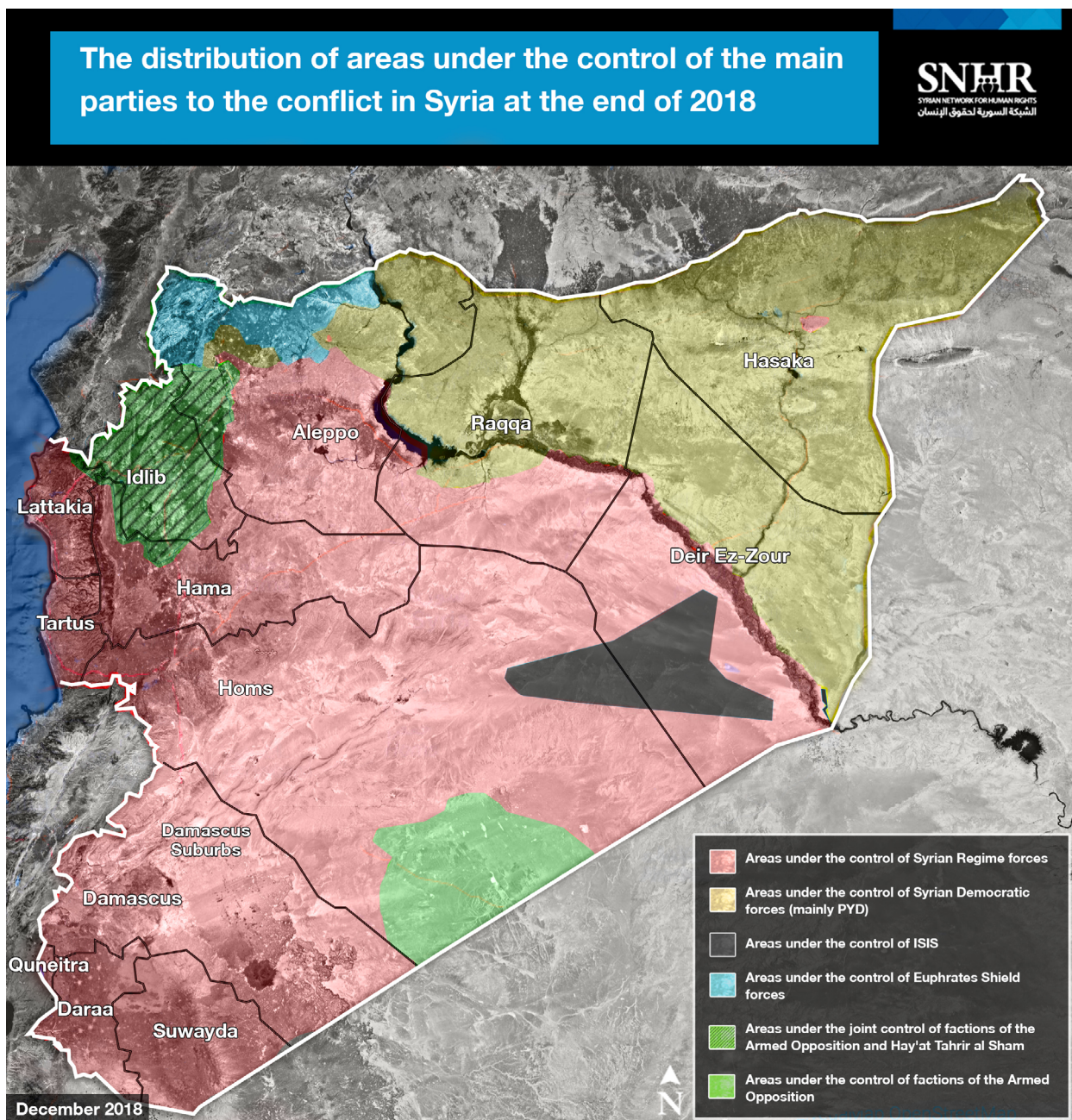
In mid-2018, the Syrian regime, with the support of Iranian militias and Russian forces, managed to take control of two areas of the de-escalation zones, which were under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition, the Eastern Ghouta in Damascus Suburbs governorate and the northern Homs suburbs. Thus, the area controlled by the Syrian Regime forces expanded to approximately 58 percent. The areas held by the Syrian Democratic Forces witnessed a slight decrease after the Euphrates Shield forces (an alliance between several factions of the Armed Opposition and the Turkish forces) took control of Afrin region in March 2018, but expanded at the expense of ISIS in some villages of the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour.

The distribution of areas under the control of the main parties to the conflict in Syria in mid-2018

SNHR
 SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
 الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان



In the second half of 2018, the Syrian Regime forces, with the support of Iranian militias and Russian forces, completed their control over the third area of de-escalation zone in southern Syria (parts of the governorates of Daraa and Quneitra) and thus extended their control to nearly 60 percent of Syrian territory, while Syrian Democratic forces advanced in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, and surrounded Hajin area, expanding their control to about 29 percent of the territory, while the control of ISIS decreased to nearly 1 percent of the Syrian territory, after its elements were stationed in three areas, which are al Sousa town and the al Bagouz village and parts of al Sh'afa city, in addition to its presence in the Badia. As for the Armed Opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, they still control around 10 percent of the Syrian territory, concentrated in Idlib de-escalation zone (parts of the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib and Latakia), in addition to al Rukban camp area on the Syrian-Jordanian border, which is located near the International Coalition Forces' al Tanf military base.



VII. Report details

A: The Syrian regime (security, army, local militias, and foreign militias):

I. Violations related to the treatment of civilians and hors de combat fighters

A: Massacres and other acts of unlawful killings:

From the beginning of 2018 on January 1, 2018, to the end of 2018 at the time of compiling this report, the SNHR documented the death of 4,162 civilians, including 713 children and 562 women (adult females), as well 130 massacres, at the hands of Syrian Regime forces. The percentage of women and children among the total number of civilian victims is 31 per cent. This is a clear indication that Syrian Regime forces have intentionally targeted civilians through indiscriminate shelling and executions.

In 2017, Syrian Regime forces killed 4,148 civilians, including 754 children and 591 women (adult females), and committed 129 massacres according to the SNHR archive.

On Saturday, January 6, 2018, at around 14:00, fixed-wing Syrian Regime forces warplanes fired missiles at a residential neighborhood in the town of [Hamouriya](#) in the Eastern Ghouta in eastern Damascus Suburbs governorate, which resulted in [the death](#) of [17 civilians](#), including [six children](#) and six women, as well as the injury of 25 others. The town, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces at the time of compiling this report.



A child killed in an airstrike by a fixed-wing Syrian Regime forces air attack on Hamouria town, Damascus Suburbs – 6/Jan/2018



On Thursday, February 22, 2018, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to fire missiles on Douma city in the Eastern Ghouta in eastern Damascus Suburbs governorate, resulting in the deaths of 13 civilians, including one child and three women, and the injury of 20 others. The town, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces at the time of compiling this report.

On Monday, April 16, 2018, Syrian Regime forces stationed at the Military Engineering College in al Meshrfa village used missile launchers to fire [missiles](#) at [al Za'farana](#) village in Homs governorate's northern suburbs, resulting in the deaths of seven civilians, including one woman. The village, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces at the time of compiling this report

On Sunday, June 10, 2018, a (Su-22) fixed-wing Syrian Regime warplanes fired missiles around al Noor Children's Hospital to the west of [Taftanaz town](#) in Idlib governorate's northern suburbs, resulting in [the deaths](#) of [12 civilians](#), including [four children](#) and [two women](#). The town, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces at the time of compiling the report.



Dead bodies of victims killed in the aftermath of a fixed-wing Syrian Regime airstrike on Taftanaz town, Idlib – 10/June/2018



On Tuesday, July 17, 2018, between approximately 08:30 to 09:00, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped four barrel bombs on Ein al Tina village in Quneitra governorate's southern suburbs. The barrel bombs fell in front of the Secondary school, resulting in the deaths of seven civilians (five children and two women), and the injury of at least 20 other civilians, in addition to partially destroying the school building and neighboring shops. The village was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident – it's under the control of Syrian Regime forces at the time of preparation of the report.

On Friday, October 26, 2018, Syrian Regime artillery forces targeted with a number of shells on [the civilians' houses](#) in the southeast outskirts [of al Ruffa village](#) in Idlib governorate's eastern suburbs, which resulted in the deaths of four civilians (three children and their father). [Other shells fell in the center of the village, resulting in the death of two women](#) and injuring others. The village, which is under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, is located within the demilitarized zone agreed upon between Russia and Turkey in the Sochi agreement related to Idlib governorate.

On Friday, November 2, 2018, Syrian Regime artillery forces, stationed at l'jaz village in eastern suburbs of Idlib, fired nearly 16 shells which fell consecutively on many locations along the main road running through the center of Jarjanaz town in Idlib governorate's eastern suburbs. The bombardment resulted in the deaths of eight civilians, including at least two children, and injured at least 13 others. The town was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

B: Arbitrary Arrest and Unlawful Detention:

Most of the raids and arbitrary arrests carried out by the Syrian Regime forces in 2018 were concentrated in the areas subject to agreements between the main parties, under which many of the residents of these areas were subjected to security settlement procedures, in Damascus Suburbs and Daraa governorates, the northern suburbs of Homs governorate, the southern suburbs of Hama governorate, and the suburbs of Damascus and Quneitra governorates. These arrests targeted individuals who had made security settlements and who were formerly working for factions of the Armed Opposition, as well as media activists, humanitarian workers, or local councils' members. These arrests were characterized by a vengeful character, with those detained often subsequently being forcibly disappeared. These arrests accounted for approximately 60 percent of the total amount of arrests carried out by Syrian Regime forces last year. We also recorded arrests by Syrian Regime forces of civilians returning from northern Syria to their areas of origin after having been forcibly



displaced under the Displacement Agreements. In addition to these arrests, we also documented the arrest of people following their return from neighboring countries, despite their supposedly being protected by the laws of amnesty and offers of reconciliation deals announced by the Syrian Regime.

Since the beginning of 2018, Syrian Regime forces have used arbitrary arrests mainly for the sake of military conscription, with individuals detained through raids and random arrests in residential neighborhoods, at street markets and in universities, as well as while passing through regime checkpoints, with these arrests particularly targeting youths and adult males in the 18-48 age group, including students and government employees.

In 2018, the Syrian Regime also continued its policy of hunting down civilians who were active in the popular movement towards democracy. We also documented Syrian Regime forces carrying out raids and coordinated arrests of entire families with close ties to members of factions of the Armed Opposition. These arrests were particularly concentrated in the cities of Hama, Latakia and Homs, and did not exclude women and children.

The SNHR documented the arrest of 5,607 people, including 355 children and 596 women (adult females), in 2018, an increase of almost a quarter on the previous year, 2017, which saw the arrest of 4,796 people, including 303 children and 674 women (adult females).

[Sabah Mohammad al Sheikh al Kilani](#), aged 60, from al Dmair city in the east of Damascus Suburbs governorate, was arrested by Syrian Regime forces on Monday, October 8, 2018, in al Dmair city. Her fate remains unknown to SNHR, as well as to her family.

[Mufid Abu Nabbout](#), from Daraa city, was born in 1975, is a Philosophy graduate. On Sunday, November 18, 2018, having previously agreed to the settlement agreement, he was arrested by Syrian Regime forces at the Criminal Security building in al Kashif neighborhood east Daraa city. He was taken to an undisclosed location, and his fate remains unknown to SNHR, as well as to his family.

Nawal Mustafa al Omar, from Idlib city, was born in 1976. On Tuesday, November 20, 2018, she was arrested by Syrian Regime forces at a checkpoint at Tayha village in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, while she was heading from Idlib city to Damascus city. She was taken to an undisclosed location, with her fate remaining unknown to SNHR as well as to her family.



Amjad Zaher al Jamous, a pediatrician, from Daraa city, was born in 1989. On Wednesday, August 22, 2018, he was arrested by Syrian Regime forces in Damascus International Airport after returning from Saudi Arabia. His fate remains unknown to the SNHR.

Ali al Jad'i, a former volunteer at the Syrian Civil Defense organization, from al Dmaina village in the southern suburbs of Hama governorate, was arrested by Syrian Regime forces on Thursday, October 4, 2018, in al Tloul al Humr in the southern suburbs of Hama governorate. He had previously agreed to the settlement agreement. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.

On Wednesday, September 5, 2018, Syrian Regime forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in al Dmair city in the Eastern Ghouta in the east of Damascus Suburbs governorate. We documented the arrest of 25 civilians, all of whom had previously agreed to the settlement agreement. Their fate remains unknown to the SNHR.

On Monday, October 15, 2018, Syrian Regime forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Busr al Harir town in the eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. We documented the arrest of 20 civilians, all of whom had previously agreed to the settlement agreement, for the purpose of military conscription. Their fate remains unknown to the SNHR.

C. Torture inside Detention Centers:

The Syrian regime has committed a variety of crimes, ranging from detention without arrest warrants, with detainees denied any chance to contact a lawyer, to extremely brutal conditions of detention, and to systematic torture of detainees. The Victims Documentation Team records, on average, at least one detainee killed due to torture on a daily basis. The SNHR publishes eight monthly reports every month, one of which is a report on the documented death toll due to torture during that month.

Since the beginning of May, we began to receive reports of families discovering the fate of loved ones who were previously forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime, while the families of the disappeared were on routine visits to their local Civil Registry Secretariat offices for unrelated regular procedures. The Syrian regime revealed the fate of at least 836 of these cases, all of whom were documented as deceased. The regime did not inform the families of the cause of death, did not hand over the victims' bodies to their families, and didn't announce the death at the time of the incident. The regime had previously denied the existence of enforced disappearances in its detention centers. We have detailed the circumstances and details of forcibly disappeared individuals being subsequently registered as dead in the civil registry records in two [separate reports](#). The families we met have confirmed that their loved ones died either as a result of torture, of medical neglect, or of execution.



In 2018, the SNHR recorded the deaths of at least 951 individuals due to torture by Syrian Regime forces, including 11 children and two women (adult female); this was more than four times the total documented the previous year, 2017, when SNHR recorded the deaths of 211 persons, including one child, and two women (adult female) due to torture by Syrian Regime forces.

[Abdul Ghafour Khalasi](#), an anesthesiologist and one of the founders of al Zarzour Hospital in Aleppo city, was arrested by Syrian Regime forces with his brother Yousef on Wednesday, November 28, 2012 from their home on Damascus International Airport Road to the east of Damascus. On Tuesday, August 7, 2018, we received information confirming that they had been registered as dead in the Civil Registry office. We consider it most probable that they died due to torture in a regime detention center.

Abdul Ghafur's brother, [Yousef Khalasi](#), born in 1963, who had a degree from the Faculty of Islamic Law, was formerly a preacher at al Ferdous neighborhood Mosque and al Shariah School.

[Mahmoud Hayo](#), a lawyer and member of Aleppo City Council, from al Myassar neighborhood east of Aleppo city, was born in 1984. He was arrested by Syrian Regime forces on Friday, September 1, 2017, in Aleppo city. On Friday, April 6, 2018, we received information confirming his death due to torture in a detention center.

[Layla Shwekani](#), born in 1990, graduated with a degree in Information Architecture from the Arab International University, formerly known as the European University, in 2012. Despite having US citizenship, Layla, who was originally from Damascus, returned to Syria in 2015 to work in the field of humanitarian activism before being detained by Syrian Regime forces in February 2016.

On Monday December 26, 2016, she was transferred from Adra Central Prison to an undisclosed location. We received information stating that she was registered as dead in Civil Registry Department records on Wednesday, December 28, 2016. We believe that she was sentenced to death and executed in Sydnaya military prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate.

[Sa'd Mahmoud Balwat](#), a media activist, from Bab Qebli west of Hama city, was born in 1983. On Monday, June 6, 2011, he was arrested by Syrian Regime forces from his workplace in Hama city, and was among those forcibly disappeared. On Sunday, June 3, 2018, while his family was visiting the Civil Registry Department in Hama city, they discovered that Sa'd had been registered as having died in 2013.



D. Sexual Violence:

We recorded at least 12 incidents of sexual violence against women in 2018, most of which took place in the Syrian regime's detention centers or during raids in cities and towns that were controlled by Syrian Regime forces in 2018, or within collective shelters where women were forced to undress, then subjected to sexual harassment under the pretext of inspection. During these investigations, women detainees reported being subjected to verbal sexual violence and accused of having sex with members of the Armed Opposition. Female detainees are also subjected to sexual extortion in return for meeting some of their needs, such as obtaining new clothes, allowing their families to visit or being allowed to make phone calls.

Women are extremely reluctant to reveal to us whether they have been subjected to sexual violence. In the culture of Syrian society, such admissions continue to be viewed as a source of shame for the victim rather than the perpetrator; for this reason, most women prefer not to admit to such incidents in fear of being ostracized by their families or wider society or even subjected to death threats.

E. Violations of Children's Rights:

Indiscriminate or deliberate bombardment, especially on residential areas, does not discriminate between children, men or women, with the large number of children killed indicating that residential areas are deliberately targeted with indiscriminate bombardment, with no effort to differentiate between children and adults or any sense of proportionality in the type of attacks.

In 2018, Syrian Regime forces killed at least 713 children; the most brutal and vicious of the killings documented was the killing of 11 children under torture in a regime detention center, where the perpetrators failed to show any mercy or to take into account their child victims' particularly vulnerable nature.

Children in Syria have been subjected to cumulative physical, emotional and psychological devastation caused by daily bombardment and destruction, which has severely damaged or destroyed at least 1,179 schools since March 2011, putting more than 3 million children in Syria out of the educational process. Children's vaccination rates have also declined. The psychological ramifications and dimensions of all this trauma for Syria's children in the near or long-term future is now almost impossible to predict.

You can learn more about this issue in our latest report, "[No Stability in Syria and the Region without the Stability for its Children.](#)" in which we documented the violations against children in Syria since March 2011.



On Wednesday, February 7, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian Regime warplanes fired a number of missiles at [Hamouriya](#) town of Eastern Ghouta in eastern Damascus Suburbs governorate, which resulted in [the deaths](#) of [11 civilians](#), including [eight children](#) and [one woman](#). The town, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces up to the time of the preparation of this report.

On Wednesday, April 11, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian Regime warplanes fired two missiles at [Qastoun](#) village in western suburbs of Hama governorate, which resulted in the deaths of six civilians (four children and two women, all from the same family). The village was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.



The bodies of victims killed in an airstrike by fixed-wing Syrian Regime warplanes on Qastoun village, Hama – April 11, 2018.

II. Violations Concerning the Conduct of Hostilities:

A. Unlawful Attacks

1. Artillery and aerial attacks:

Syrian Regime forces have indiscriminately deployed barrel bombs, Scud missiles and other weapons of indiscriminate bombardment throughout the north and south of the country. 87 percent of these attacks were characterized by excessive randomness, which failed to distinguish between combatants and civilians, while the remaining 13 percent targeted the headquarters of fighters or military centers. Most of these attacks failed to take into account the principle of proportionality that should be enforced when the military headquarters is surrounded by non-military buildings.



The Syrian regime's documented use of barrel bombs in 2018 amounted to at least 3,601 barrel bombs, compared to at least 6,243 barrels bombs dropped by the Syrian Regime air force in 2017.

On Friday, February 23, 2018, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on the 'Point 140' ambulance center serving the medical rehabilitation facility in al Ash'ari town in the Eastern Ghouta east of Damascus Suburbs governorate. This resulted in the deaths of three medical personnel and great destruction to the center's building, putting it out of service. The town, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces up to the time of the preparation of the report.

On Friday, March 9, 2018, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Misraba town in the Eastern Ghouta east of Damascus Suburbs governorate, resulting in the deaths of nine civilians, most of whom came from the same family, including eight women. The town, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces up to the time of the preparation of the report.

2. Sniper attacks:

The regime's use of snipers within cities has the advantage that the sniper can lurk out of victims' sight while observing them closely through the scope of his weapon, and is fully aware of victims' identities before killing them. This is similar to executions, since the murderer in this case knows exactly the characteristics of his victim and deliberately kills him or her, although Syrian Regime snipers target people without caring about their victims' identities or distinguishing between men, women or children, or even disabled people, and certainly without knowing the religion of the victim.

In 2018, we recorded the deaths of 29 civilians, including one child, and two women, who were shot dead by government snipers. This is a lower figure than we recorded in 2017, when 77 civilians, including 13 children, and seven women were documented as having been shot dead by government snipers.

On Saturday, January 27, 2018, we recorded the death of Halima Qasem al Basha in al Rastan city, when he was shot dead by a sniper affiliated with Syrian Regime forces.



On Saturday, September 29, 2018, we recorded the death of Rawaha Jad'an al Hafal in al Zebiyah village, who was shot dead by a sniper affiliated with the Syrian Regime forces stationed in al Mayadeen city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate.

B. Individuals and objects under specific protection

1. Hospitals and health sector workers

Syrian Regime forces have continued to target hospitals, medical facilities, and pharmacies, in addition to repeatedly targeting medical workers, whether through direct killing, torture in prisons, or abduction and restriction. Operations targeting Civil Defense teams, who work to rescue the wounded in areas controlled by Armed Opposition factions have increased. All of these factors have driven medical personnel, particularly medical specialists, to flee out of fear of being killed, tortured, or forcibly disappeared, which in turn further overwhelmed the few who decided to stay as we monitored cases where veterinarians, dentists, and nurses found themselves forced to conduct surgical operations that require specialists. All of these factors have increasingly worsened the already critical medical situation in general.

In 2018, we recorded the deaths of at least 33 medical personnel at the hands of Syrian Regime forces. We also recorded at least 60 attacks on hospitals and medical facilities. This is an increase on the same figures in 2017, when we documented the deaths of 32 medical personnel, and at least 37 attacks on hospitals and medical facilities.

We have noticed that Syrian Regime forces deliberately target some medical facilities in a repeated manner with the clear objective of inflicting as much damage as possible to these facilities and denying their services to civilians. We documented that several vital civilian facilities, which were the last in their respective areas, such as the last hospital or school, were deliberately targeted and put out of service by bombardment by Syrian Regime and allied forces on all of these facilities. Attacks of this nature took place in a number of areas.

Most notable victims among medical personnel

Kholoud al Sheikh Hasan, a nurse, from Irbeen city in Eastern Ghouta, worked in Jisreen Hospital of the Medical Office of Jisreen town. On Tuesday, February 6, 2018, she was killed in a missile attack by fixed-wing Syrian Regime warplanes on Saqba city in the Eastern Ghouta in the east of Damascus Suburbs governorate.



[Jamal Samih Hamid](#), a paramedic, from al Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees, was killed on Friday, April 20, 2018, by a surface-to-surface missile launched by Syrian Regime forces in an attack using a missile launcher that targeted an area near Palestine Hospital in al Yarmouk Camp while he was aiding people injured in a previous attack.

Maysoun Ibrahim al Harbat, a midwife who worked for the Union of Syrian Medical Relief Organizations ([UOSSM](#)), was killed along with her daughter on Thursday, June 21, 2018, at around 17:00, in an attack by Syrian Regime forces, who used a missile launcher to target al Hrak city in the northeastern suburbs of Daraa governorate.

Most notable attacks on medical facilities

On Monday, January 8, 2018, at around 15:00, Syrian Regime artillery forces fired a shell at an area adjacent to al Zahraa Hospital, known as the Maternity Hospital, in the center of [Saqba](#) city in the Eastern Ghouta in the east of Damascus Suburbs governorate, causing moderate material damage to the hospital building. The city, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces up to the time of the preparation of the report.

On Sunday, April 29, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian Regime warplanes fired two missiles at an area near [al Za'farana](#) field hospital in al Za'farana village, northern suburbs of Homs governorate, which caused moderate material damage to the upper floor of the hospital building, as well as to its cladding. The village, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces up to the time of the preparation of the report.

On Saturday, September 8, 2018, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped two barrel bombs in front of the entrance to Nabd al Hayat Hospital (formerly Sham Surgical Hospital), an underground facility supported by the Syrian Relief and Development Organization (SRD), in the south of Hass village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. [The attack caused severe damage to the hospital building and its equipment](#), in addition to setting the [hospital's electric generators](#) on fire. The village was under the control of Armed Opposition faction at the time of the incident.





Damages inflicted in bombardment by Syrian Regime helicopters of the Nabd al Hayat Hospital in Hass village, Idlib - September 8, 2018

2. Workers in the religious field and cultural properties

Syrian Regime forces didn't exclude places of worship, such as mosques, churches, and others, from their daily bombardment. In some cases, these locations were deliberately targeted. We also recorded cases where Syrian regime forces used places of worship as military bases from which they carried out attacks on nearby areas. We recorded at least 67 attacks on places of worship by Syrian Regime forces in 2018. It should be noted that one of our eight special monthly report is dedicated to documenting attacks on vital civilian facilities, including the targeting of places of worship.

On Wednesday, January 31, 2018, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs near [al Omrai al Kabir Mosque](#) in the center of [Kafr Amim](#) village near Saraqeb city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The attack caused moderate material damage to the mosque building and furnishings. The village was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Tuesday, February 27, 2018, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to shell Um Habiba Mosque, known as the Abu al Rahj mosque, Douma city in the Eastern Ghouta, east of the Damascus Suburbs governorate. The attack [partially destroyed](#) the [mosque building](#), as well as causing [extensive damage](#) to its furnishings, putting it out of service. We note that the mosque had been damaged ten days earlier on Saturday, February 17, in shelling by the same forces using 'Feel' missiles. The city, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces up to the time of the preparation of the report.





Material Damage to the Um Habiba Mosque inflicted in bombardment by Syrian Regime forces using a missile launcher, Douma city, Damascus Suburbs – February 27, 2018

On Monday, April 30, 2018, fixed-wing Syrian Regime warplanes fired two missiles near Omar Bib [al Khattab Mosque](#), known as [al Omari Mosque](#), in the center of al Rastan city, northern suburbs of Homs governorate. This caused partial destruction to the hospital building, as well as moderately damaging its cladding and interior fixtures and fittings. The city, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces up to the time of the preparation of the report.

3. Media Workers:

As it has done since 2011, the Syrian government continued its customary strategy of targeting media workers and journalists. The types of violations perpetrated by the government against media workers vary and include violations such as killing and arrest. Syrian Regime forces killed 13 media workers in 2018 alone, an increase on the 17 media workers killed at the hands of Syrian Regime forces the previous year, 2017.

[Hazem Abdul Aziz Abdul Wahed](#)

On Tuesday, January 9, 2018, Hazem was killed by a shrapnel wound to his head sustained in an attack by fixed-wing Syrian Regime warplanes which fired a missile at an area near his home in Saqba city in the Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus Suburbs governorate. The city, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Regime forces up to the time of the preparation of the report.



Hazem, a photographer with the [Nabd Foundation](#), from Harran al Awamid town, east of the Damascus Suburbs governorate, was born in 1986. He held a secondary school diploma and was married with three children.

[Niraz Saeed Manad](#)

On Monday, July 16, 2018, we received information conforming Niraz's death due to torture in a Syrian Regime detention center. We note that he was arrested on Friday, October 2, 2015, by Syrian Regime forces in Damascus city.

[Niraz](#), a photographer born in 1991, originally came from Olem village in Palestine. He lived with his wife in al Yarmouk Camp south of Damascus, and had attained a secondary school diploma. Niraz won several photography awards, most notably the UNRWA award for Best Journal Picture of the Year 2014 for his photograph entitled 'Three Kings', as well as several international awards for "Letters from Yarmouk".

C. Use of Prohibited Weapons

1. Chemical Weapons:

According to SNHR's archive, the Syrian regime was responsible for six chemical weapons attacks since the beginning of 2018 up to the time of this writing, compared to 17 such attacks in 2017. These attacks mean that the Syrian regime has violated all the relevant Security Council resolutions, namely Resolutions 2118, 2209, and 2235.

The Syrian regime's chemical weapons attacks in 2018 resulted in the deaths of 39 civilians, including 10 children, and 15 women. All of these victims were killed in the chemical attack on Douma city in Damascus Suburbs governorate on April 7, 2018.

On Sunday, February 4, 2018, at approximately 21:20, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped [two barrel bombs containing poison gas](#) targeting civilian homes in the eastern neighborhood of Saraqeb city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in eight civilians suffering severe suffocation. When Civil Defense members arrived at the site to treat those affected, three of these rescue workers also suffered from the effects of suffocation caused by the gas. All those affected were taken to field hospitals for treatment. The city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the attack. We have previously issued [a report](#), in which we documented the details of the attack.





The remnants of two barrel bombs - alleged to have been containing poison gas - after an air attack carried out by government helicopters - Saraqeb - February 4, 2018

According to data from worldweatheronline, the temperature in Saraqeb city was about 15 degrees at 9 pm on the day of the attack, while the wind speed was 2 miles per hour.

A map showing the location of the chemical attack



The location where two barrel bombs loaded with a poison gas landed in al Sharqi neighborhood, Saraqeb city, eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate – February 4, 2018



On Monday, March 5, 2018, between 21:00 and 22:00, Syrian Regime helicopter dropped a barrel bomb containing poison gas on residential neighborhoods in the southeast of Hamouriya town. [Twenty-five civilians suffered shortness](#) of breath and nausea as [a result of the gas](#), including two Civil Defense volunteers. The town was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the attack. We have previously issued [a report](#), in which we documented the details of the attack.

According to data from **worldweatheronline**, the temperature in and around Damascus city, at the closest time to the attack, which was about an hour beforehand, was nearly 17 degrees, while the wind speed was six miles per hour.

The majority of residents of the Eastern Ghouta region, including the people of the town of Hamouriya, were hiding in the basements of the buildings at the time of the attack due to fear of the heavy regime air raids, which intensified the impact of the gas due to its being concentrated heavily in the basements and lower floors. In our database, we have retained a video showing a yellow cylinder recovered from the scene which looks very similar to the munitions whose use we documented in previous attacks of this nature. The clip shows a yellow-colored gas leaking out of the cylinder nozzle.



Two members of the Civil Defense suffered minor effects while they were rescuing the victims of a chemical attack launched by a Syrian Regime helicopter on Hamouriya town, Damascus Suburbs on March 3, 2018



On Saturday, April 7, 2018, the Syrian regime launched two chemical attacks in the north of Douma city. It is most likely that helicopters were responsible for carrying out the attacks which used barrel bombs loaded with poison gas. The distance between the two attack sites is estimated at 300 meters.

We encountered some difficulty in determining the precise timing of the attacks because most of the people and witnesses were hiding in basements due to the continuous heavy bombardment at the time. Through cross-referencing our work with most of the accounts from survivors, we can say that the first attack occurred roughly between 3 pm and 4 pm, while the second attack, according to our estimates, occurred at around 8 pm. The city, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition on the day of the attack, is under the control of the Syrian Regime forces at the time of the preparation of this report. The SNHR team recorded the deaths of 39 civilians, including 10 children, and 15 women (adult female) as a result of the second attack, which also resulted in approximately 550 people suffering various respiratory symptoms.



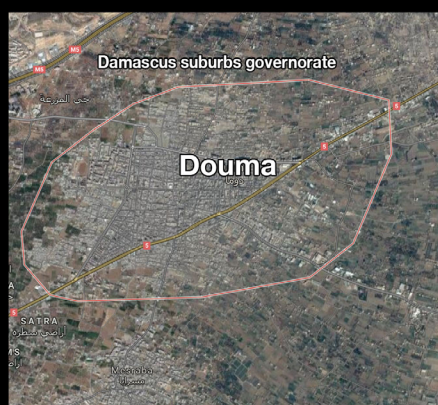
An injured child wearing an oxygen mask following the chemical attack launched by the Syrian regime on Douma city – April 7, 2018

According to data from worldweatheronline, the temperature in Damascus city on April 7th was nearly 24 degrees, while the wind speed average was six miles per hour. We previously issued [a report](#), in which we documented the two attacks.



Visual analysis shows one of the two chemical attacks' location

Impact location for a poison gas-loaded cylinder in the aftermath of an attack by Syrian regime helicopters on Douma city, Damascus suburbs – April 7, 2018



📍 The construction site where the majority of the victims of the chemical attacks were killed, as a supposedly poison gas-loaded cylinder was founded inside. The Russian Military Police visited the same construction



A map showing one of the two chemical attacks' location



2. Cluster Munitions

SNHR documented at least seven attacks using cluster munitions by Syrian Regime forces between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2018, slightly fewer than the 2017 figure when we documented at least 10 attacks with cluster munitions by Syrian Regime forces.

On the night of Tuesday, December 2, 2018, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to fire a number of missiles [loaded with cluster munitions](#), indiscriminately targeting Jarjanaz town in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The attack caused moderate damage to a number of houses, in addition to injuring many civilians. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the attack.



Remnants of cluster munitions found in Jarjanaz town, Idlib, following an attack by Syrian Regime forces using a missile launcher – January 2, 2018

On Friday, June 22, 2018, at around 17:00, Syrian Regime forces fired [surface-to-surface](#) missiles packed with cluster munitions in an attack targeting the center of al Msaifra town in the eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in [material loss](#).

3. Incendiary Weapons

We recorded 11 incendiary weapons attacks launched by Syrian Regime forces in 2018, a significantly higher number than the one such attack documented in 2017.

On Friday, March 2, 2018, at around 22:45, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to fire several missiles loaded with incendiary munitions, targeting the center of Misraba town in the Eastern Ghouta, east of the Damascus Suburbs governorate. The attack set nearly 10 houses [on fire](#). The town, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition on the day of the attack, is under the control of the Syrian Regime forces at the time of the preparation of the report.



On Tuesday, March 20, 2018, Syrian Regime forces, stationed in Latakia suburbs, used a missile launcher to fire several missiles [packed with incendiary munitions](#), targeting Bdama town in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate. The attack caused moderate damage to civilians' homes. The town was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on the day of the attack.

D. Siege

Syrian Regime forces were able to regain control of the areas which they had besieged in recent years, such as the northern suburbs of Homs, the southern suburbs of Hama and the Eastern Ghouta area of Damascus Suburbs governorate. In order to achieve this, however, regime forces had to intensify the severity of the siege simultaneously with an increase in the bombardment and destruction of these areas, which resulted in increased suffering for civilians.

In October 2018, Syrian Regime forces closed the Damascus-Baghdad road, which is the only road leading to al Rukban Camp on the Syrian-Jordanian border. This led to the cessation of the smuggling of food and medicine to the camp. This brutal blockade led to a terrible scarcity of food, and an additional increase in the prices of food supplies which almost doubled as a result, increasing by nearly 100 percent. As a result, symptoms of malnutrition started to appear among many people in the camp, inflicting further suffering in addition to greater deterioration of the already critical health situation there.

The policy of starvation and siege imposed by the Syrian Regime resulted in the deaths of 18 civilians, including eight children and four women (adult female) in 2018, slightly down from the 34 civilian deaths recorded in 2017, which included 14 children and nine women.

• Violations perpetrated by the active Shiite militias in Syria

The first indications of Shiite militias and factions fighting for the Syrian government in Syria began to emerge in late 2011 when rebels arrested fighters from Jaysh al Mahdi, which is headed by the prominent Iraqi Shiite leader Muqtada al Sadr, with reports emerging that he was recruiting and sending fighters to Syria. The major development regarding Shiite factions' presence in Syria came in the summer of 2012, however, when Liwa Abu al-Fadhal al-Abbas appeared in the country, with these militias issuing more and more calls for other Shiites to head for Syria to fight, supposedly to protect the Shiite shrines generally and al Sayeda Zaynab shrine in particular. All of this went hand-in-hand with a massive sectarian propaganda campaign launched by various media outlets that ranged from features in daily newspapers to TV programmes and social media coverage.



In April 2013, the Lebanese group Hezbollah publicly stated that they would be entering the conflict in al Qsair city and its suburbs. The following months saw another notable development with regard to the Shiite factions' presence in Syria, where more and more Shiite groups were emerging, often as affiliates of their mother factions in Iraq. This highlighted the importance of the strong sense of allegiance felt by most of the Shiite political and military forces in Iraq in favor of the Syrian regime. This also applies to the Iraqi government which facilitated the flow of fighters into Syria, with many indications pointing towards its direct involvement in the conflict in Syria. Militias from Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba and Liwa al Quds were also seen to be involved in the conflict, not to mention the heavy involvement of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). While the majority of the Shiite fighters supporting the Syrian regime on a sectarian basis have been Iraqis and Lebanese, we have also documented the existence, and the deaths, of fighters descending from various nationalities: Afghanis, Pakistanis, Yemenis, and even African nationalities.

In 2018, the participation of Shiite militias along with Syrian Regime forces took place in the battle to regain the Eastern Ghouta, where we recorded the participation of forces from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, from the militias of Abu al Fadhal al Abbas, Zo al Faqar, and Liwa Imam Hussein.

Conclusions

Syrian regime forces have perpetrated various crimes that constitute crimes against humanity, ranging from extrajudicial killing to sexual violence, torture, and others, with all these crimes being perpetrated in a systematic and widespread manner. In addition, Syrian regime forces have been responsible for war crimes such as siege, indiscriminate shelling, and destruction of buildings and facilities. Not only did the Syrian regime breach international humanitarian law and customary law, but it also violated Security Council resolutions – particularly resolutions 2118, 2209, and 2235, which address the use of poison gases, as well as resolutions 2139 and 2042 which are concerned with releasing detainees. All of these issues have yet to be addressed with any form of accountability in light of a legitimacy afforded through Russian-Chinese protection and western silence.



B. Russian forces

A. Extrajudicial killing

2018 marked the third anniversary of the Russian intervention in Syria that commenced on September 30, 2015. In 2018, Russian forces concentrated their attacks on Idlib, Hama and Daraa governorates. We recorded hundreds of attacks in which Russian forces deliberately targeted civilians and vital civilian facilities.

We recorded the death of 467 civilians, including 169 children, 51 women (adult female) killed by Russian forces in 2018, as well as 27 massacres were committed. While in 2017, 1,436 civilians were killed, including 439 children, 284 women (adult female) by Russian forces, and 83 massacres committed.

On Monday, January 29, 2018, fixed-wing warplanes (Su-25), which we believe were Russian, raided with machine-gun, using small-size missiles, on the [new potato market “formerly Always factory”](#) north of [Sarageb](#) city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [which resulted](#) in the death of [11 civilians](#), as well as the [injury of nearly 10 others](#). 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 Thursday, February 1, 2018, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired two missiles on al Shamalia neighborhood of [Kafr Nbouda](#) town in the northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate, which resulted in the death of [eight civilians](#) at once, including [two children](#) and [one woman](#). The town was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.

On the evening of Wednesday, May 9, 2018, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired one missile at a cave shelter in Kafr Zita village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [which resulted](#) in the deaths of [eight civilians](#), all from [one family](#), including [five children](#) and [two women](#). The village was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.

On Friday, August 10, 2018, between 18:31 and 18:52, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, carried out three raids in which at least 8 high-explosive missiles targeted a residential complex northwest of Urm al Kubra village. The bombardment resulted in the death of 36 civilians, including 20 children and seven women (adult female), as well as the injury of at least 45 others, in addition to the complete destruction of at least 25 residential buildings.



A visual analysis showing the area subjected to the attacks

A residential area in Urm al Kubra village, western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, that was targeted by fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian, resulting in a massacre on August 10, 2018

SNHR
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان



B. Targeting medical personnel and their related facilities

We documented the death of five medical personnel in attacks, which we believe were Russian, between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2018, in addition to 25 attacks on medical facilities in the same period of time. In contrast, we have recorded the death of 12 medical personnel and nearly 47 attacks on medical facilities in 2017.

Most notable victims among medical personnel

[Ahmad Abdul Karim al Shehada](#), a general practitioner, from Jarjanaz town in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was an emergency doctor in the hospital of al Ghadfa village in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, married with children. He was killed along with some members of his family on Sunday, January 7, 2018, following an attack by fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, on al Fa'loul farm located east of Jarjanaz town.

[Mohammad Mahmoud al Hosrum](#), a dentist, from al Tah village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was married with children. He was killed along with some members of his family on Thursday, March 22, 2018, at around 16:10, in an attack by fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, on the old popular market and the surrounding area to the south of Harim city in the northwestern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in a massacre.

Most notable attacks on medical facilities

On Monday, March 12, 2018, at around 08:00, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a missile at the Kafr Zita Specialist Hospital in the western neighborhood of Kafr Zita city, in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, which caused extensive destruction to the hospital, mainly to its women's and children's sections, as well as [causing extensive material damage to the hospital's equipment](#) putting it out of service. We note that the hospital had been damaged by a missile fired by the same warplanes the previous day. 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.



Destruction in Kafr Zita Specialist Hospital inflicted in an attack by fixed-wing warplanes that we believe were Russian – Kafr Zita, Hama – March 12, 2018



On Saturday, September 8, 2018, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles near Khan Sheikhoun Ambulance Center in Khan Sheikhoun city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which caused [moderate material damage](#) to the center's building and to an [ambulance](#) belonging to the center. We note the attack was followed by Syrian Regime helicopters dropping several barrel bombs around the same center. 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.

C. Targeting Media workers

We documented the death of two media workers in attacks that we believe were Russian between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2018. By contrast, four media workers were killed by Russian forces in 2017.

[Fuad Mohammad al Hussien](#)

On Tuesday, February 6, 2018, Fuad was killed by a shrapnel wound to his head following an attack by fixed-wing warplanes, that we believe were Russian, when a missile landed near him in his village of Termala in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.

Fuad, a correspondent for Event news agency, was born in 1986, and held a diploma from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Arabic Language Department, married with two children.

D. Use of prohibited weapons

1. Cluster munitions

Russian forces have used cluster munitions, particularly in aerial bombardment. The number of documented attacks using these munitions in 2018 was at least six, mostly in Idlib, a lower figure than 2017 when 47 such attacks were documented, mostly in Idlib, Hama and Aleppo governorates.

On Monday, January 15, 2018, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a missile near loaded with [cluster munitions](#) that landed near the main water tank in the southern outskirts of al Ghadfa village in the suburbs of Ma'aret An-Nu'man in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, without any damage recorded. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the day of the incident.



On Monday, March 26, 2018, fixed-wing warplanes, that we believe were Russian, fired an RBK-500 bomb loaded with ShOAB-0.5 cluster submunitions that targeted al Ahrash area, a military zone on the outskirts of the villages of Abdin and al Naqeir in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorates. No casualties were recorded. The area is under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition.



A small ShOAB-0.5 cluster submunition found in the aftermath of an air attack that we believe was Russian on the outskirts of Abdin and al Naqeir villages, Idlib – March 26, 2018

2. Incendiary Weapons

SNHR documented at least 14 attacks using incendiary munitions by forces that we believe were Russian between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2018. Most of these attacks took place in Idlib governorate. In 2017, Russian forces used incendiary munitions in at least 35 such attacks, the majority of which took place in Hama and Idlib suburbs.

These weapons were used on residential and agricultural areas. SNHR didn't record any instances of these weapons being used on the battlefronts in fighting with factions of the Armed Opposition, with these munitions being deployed only in populated areas.

On Wednesday, January 3, 2018, fixed-wing warplanes, that we believe were Russian, used incendiary weapons to target the [local council's bakery](#), adjacent to the local council's garage, in the northern neighborhood of Sarqeb city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The attack resulted in a fire in the bakery, as well as moderate damage to its building and equipment. We note that the bakery is located in a part of a bus terminal building used by passengers, which was formerly known as the New Idlib garages. The city was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Fires inflicted in an incendiary submunitions attack by fixed-wing warplanes that we believe were Russian on Saraqeb city, Idlib – January 3, 2018

On Tuesday, January 30, 2018, fixed-wing warplanes, that we believe were Russian, used incendiary weapons to target agricultural lands near Ma'r Htat village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [which set fires in the site of the attack](#). The area is under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition.

Conclusions

Russian forces have, beyond any doubt, violated Security Council resolution 2139 as well as resolution 2254 through indiscriminate bombardment. Additionally, Russian forces have violated a number of rules of international humanitarian law, committing hundreds of crimes that constitute war crimes through indiscriminate, disproportionate bombardment, particularly given the use of excessive power in these attacks.

C. Extremist Islamist groups

1- ISIS (the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State')

A. Extrajudicial killing

SNHR has documented that ISIS killed 446 civilians in 2018, including 82 children and 41 women (adult female), and committed at least eight massacres. This marked a reduction on the 2017 figures, when ISIS was documented as having killed 1,421 civilians, including 281 children and 148 women, and committed at least 19 massacres.



On Wednesday, October 17, 2018, ISIS shot five civilians dead in a mass execution in al Sh'afa city, in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, on the pretext that they had maintained contact with the Kurdish-majority Syrian Democratic forces, and provided the International Coalition forces with the coordinates of ISIS' headquarters. Al Sh'afa was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

B. Arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

In 2018, ISIS targeted civilians, during its attacks on areas beyond its control, with mass kidnappings and took them as hostages, mainly in the suburbs of Suwayda and Deir Ez-Zour governorates, as well as arresting civilians who tried to flee its areas of control to escape combat operations. The loss of ISIS for its control over most of its areas has turned detainees and abductees ISIS has into forced disappeared persons following its evacuation of detention centers and taking detainees to undisclosed locations or subjecting them to mass liquidations.

In 2018, SNHR documented the arrest of at least 338 individuals by ISIS, including 28 children and 13 women (adult female). This was smaller than the 2017 total, when the group was documented as having arrested at least 539 individuals, including 75 children and 37 women.

On Wednesday, July 25, 2018, gunmen affiliated with ISIS abducted 29 civilians, including 10 women, from Shbeki village in the east of Suwayda governorate, and took them to an undisclosed location. We were able to document the death of two detainees in ISIS custody, Muhannad Zoqan Abu Ammar, who died on Thursday, August 2, 2018, and Tharwat Fadel Abu Ammar, who died on Tuesday, October 2. We also recorded the death of 60-year-old Zahia Fawwaz al Jba'i in ISIS custody due to medical negligence. On Thursday, November 8, 2018, Syrian Regime forces carried out an operation, whose details remain unclear, in which the rest of the abductees were freed.

On Saturday, November 24, 2018, gunmen affiliated with ISIS arrested nine civilians, who are originally from Ghranij town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, from the town, and took them to an undisclosed location.

ISIS uses various torture methods during its interrogations of detainees in order to extract information from them or to exact revenge, as well as to spread fear and intimidate other detainees and civilians in areas under its control. Torture levels vary according to the charges against the detainee, with the most severe torture reserved for activists, military captives,



and foreign abductees. The most notable torture methods ISIS has reportedly used in its detention centers include 'the Biter', electrocution, flogging, waterboarding, 'the Shabeh' (or 'Ghost'), gas asphyxiation, starvation and sleep deprivation), along with other forms of harsh psychological torture such as shooting bullets around a detainee's body, and forcing him or her to watch footage of gruesome murders perpetrated by the group. SNHR previously issued a report on [the most notable torture methods used by ISIS](#).

SNHR documented that one woman died due to torture at the hands of ISIS in 2018, the same number as 2017 when one individual also died due to torture at the group's hands.

C. Targeting medical personnel and their related facilities

According to SNHR's documentation in 2018, two medical personnel were killed by ISIS, which was the same number of medical personnel documented killed by the group in 2017.

[Suzanne Fattoum](#), a 29-year-old pediatric dentist who graduated from the Faculty of Dentistry at Tishreen University in Latakia, died on Tuesday, January 16, 2018, in ISIS missile bombardment when the group used a missile launcher to fire a missile at the village of al Se'in on the outskirts of Salamiya city in the eastern suburbs of Hama Governorate.

[Mahmoud Ismail Matar al Naser al Assaf](#), a dentist, from Mouhasan city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was 40 years old and married with three children. On Friday, April 6, 2018, he died in an explosion by a landmine planted by ISIS on the Deir Ez-Zour – Raqqa road in al Jazarat area in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate.

D. Targeting media workers

In 2018, SNHR recorded the death of one media worker at the hands of ISIS, a reduction on the 2017 figure when the group killed 10 media workers.

[Ehab Ballan](#)

On Friday, April 20, 2018, the Syrian Arab News Agency ([SANA](#)) and media outlets loyal to Syrian Regime forces mourned the death of Ehab who was killed by ISIS gunfire while he was working on media coverage of clashes between the group and Syrian Regime forces in the southern Damascus area. The Chechen President, Ramzan Kadyrov, also mourned Ehab on [his account](#) on the social networking site 'Vkontakte'. We note that Ehab worked as a correspondent for Chechnya's Grozny radio and television network.



E. Restrictions on residents

On January 20, 2014, ISIS issued a statement listing instructions concerning the lives and privacy of people in relation to their livelihood and freedom of movement in the city, as well as their clothing. This statement, which was circulated to all areas under the group's control, also led to the imposition of specific curricula in educational institutions.

In 2018, as the presence of ISIS diminished in the easternmost regions of Syria, and the group's military situation grew more precarious, its policies changed to stop the population from leaving the areas under its control.

Since September 2018, the SNHR has documented ISIS preventing residents in areas under the group's control from leaving, in villages and towns extending from the Hajin city to al Bagouz town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour. On October 11, 2018, we recorded an attack by ISIS on the Camp of Badia of Hajin established by the Syrian Democratic Forces, to which people displaced from Hajin district had fled. ISIS burned down the displaced families' tents and forced hundreds of displaced persons to return to areas under its control.

2- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (a coalition of Fateh al Sham Front organization and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition)

Hay'at Tahrir al Sham came into existence on January 28, 2017. The group is primarily composed of Fateh al Sham Front (formerly al Nusra Front) and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition (Kataeb Nour al Din Zenki, Jaish al Sunna, and other groups that broke away from Armed Opposition factions and joined this formation such as Mujahedoun Ashidaa, Katibat Soqour al Ezz, Katibat Osoud al Rahman, and Lewa Ahrar al Jabal) in addition to Ansar al Din faction, which is considered one of the extremist Islamist factions.

A. Extrajudicial killing

In 2018, we recorded that Hay'at Tahrir al Sham killed 32 civilians, including seven children and one woman (adult female), an increase on the 2017 figure when they killed 25 civilians, including two children and one woman (adult female).

On Friday, October 5, 2018, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham affiliates surrounded Kafr Halab village in the western suburbs of Aleppo, before breaking into it, and carrying out a raid and arrest campaign that targeted a number of affiliates of the Syrian Liberation Front, which had control over the village at the time of the attack, before heading for the home of one of the SLF's commanders, Raed al Abdo. A number of residents informed us that his house was attacked and one of his relatives was shot at, which led to clashes between Hay'at Tahrir al Sham and the Syrian Liberation Front, during which Hay'at Tahrir al Sham gunmen used heavy machine guns, which resulted in the death of a civilian (Mutaz Assaf) and two female children from Raed al Abdo's family (Amal and [Ela Assaf](#)) inside their home.



B. Arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

Since its establishment on January 28, 2017, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham has launched attacks on factions of the Armed Opposition that criticize its policies and refuse to join the group. Hay'at Tahrir al Sham also continues to carry out raids on areas not under its control in Idlib governorate. The group has relied on arbitrary arrests, security pursuits, and summons to Sharia courts.

Since the start of September 2018, we documented a marked escalation of the rate of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham violations in Idlib region, with the group carrying out raids on a number of villages and arresting dozens of individuals, including local activists, relief workers and mosque preachers (Khatib). It seems to us that this escalation by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham took place in anticipation of the Turkish-Russian agreement, with the group hoping to make as many gains as possible on the ground. Following the agreement which came into force on September 17, local residents took advantage of the return of a semblance of normality as rates of bombardment and killing fell to secure particularly some basic essentials. Hay'at Tahrir al Sham's violations, however, undermined this fragile state of security and stability which society had desperately needed, and caused panic in a number of villages and local areas.

SNHR documented that Hay'at Tahrir al Sham arrested nearly 417 individuals, including 15 children and three women, in 2018 – mainly in the areas under its control in Idlib governorate, as well as in suburbs of Hama and Aleppo governorates which are both under the group's control. This was an increase on the previous year's figure, with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham arresting 304 individuals in 2017.

[Jum'a al Omari](#), a media activist, from Kafr Hamra village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested on Monday, October 29, 2018, by gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham in Termanein village in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. His fate remains unknown to the SNHR.

[Yasir Abdul Rahman al Salim](#), a lawyer and an activist in the popular uprising, a resident of Kafranbel city in the southern Idlib suburbs, was born in 1970 in al Demas town west of Damascus Suburbs governorate. On Sunday, September 21, 2018, he was arrested by gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham following a raid on his place of residence in Kafranbel city. His fate remains unknown.

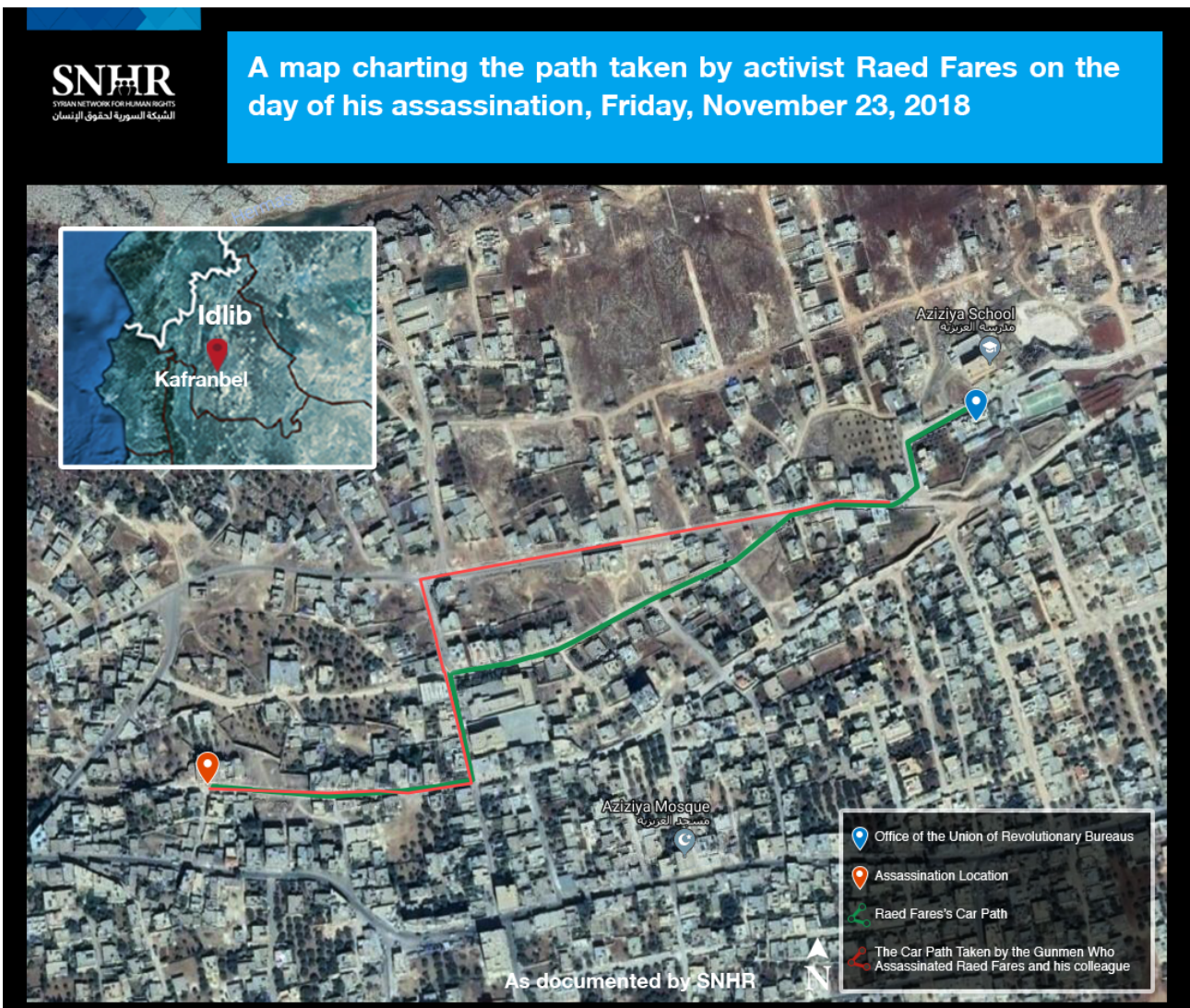


D. Targeting media workers

We documented the deaths of three media workers at the hands of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham in 2018, an increase on the previous year's figure, with the group responsible for the death of one media worker in 2017 according to SNHR's records.

On Friday, November 23, 2018, at around 12:00 Damascus time/10:00 GMT, as people were performing the Friday Prayer, Raed Fares was in his car with his fellow media activists Hamoud Jneed and Ali al Dandoush, driving from the URB towards Kafranbel's main market, on their way to the home of a relative of Raed's. They were pursued by gunmen in another vehicle; when Raed stopped his car in front of his relative's house, the gunmen assassinated him and his colleague Hamoud. We believe that Hay'at Tahrir al Sham was most likely behind this assassination, and we have issued an [extensive report](#) on this incident.

A map showing the cars' route taken by both Raed Fares with his colleague, and the gunmen



[Raed](#), the director of 'Radio Fresh', was a prominent activist in the popular uprising for democracy. He was born in Kafranbel city in southern Idlib governorate in 1972. Raed was married and a father of three children.

[Hamoud](#) was a media activist from Kafranbel city, who was a crew member with Radio Fresh. Born in 1980, he was a married father of four children, including a daughter with special needs. He had been actively involved in filming the demonstrations, as well as documenting the Syrian regime's bombardment of the city with many photos and videos. He also produced a number of reports for Radio Fresh.

Conclusions

Extremist Islamist organizations have violated many basic rights such as the right to life. They have also practiced numerous violations such as torture and enforced disappearance, all amounting to crimes against humanity, as well as numerous war crimes through indiscriminate shelling, displacement, looting, abduction, and torture.

D. Factions of the Armed Opposition

A. Extrajudicial killing

Many of the Armed Opposition factions that oppose the Syrian government have perpetrated a number of violations, including indiscriminate shelling – particularly use of mortar shells against Syrian Regime-controlled areas. Also, incidents of infighting between the Armed Opposition factions themselves or clashes between factions of the Armed Opposition and extremist Islamist groups have put civilians' lives in danger and resulted in the deaths of a large number of civilian residents. In 2018, we recorded that 48 civilians, including 14 children and seven women (adult female), were killed at the hands of factions of the Armed Opposition, far fewer than the 186 civilians documented killed at the hands of factions of the Armed Opposition in 2017, including 45 children and 29 women.

On October 5, 2018, we recorded the death of the child Mary Abdul Raouf Mustafa a result of a gunshot wound from crossfire during clashes between two groups affiliated with factions of the Armed Opposition, 'Ahrar al Sham' and 'Liwa al Ahfad', in al Sukkariyya village in the suburbs of al Bab city, in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate.



B. Arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

Arbitrary arrests by factions of the Armed Opposition were concentrated, in 2018, in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, and targeted media activists and doctors, as well as civil society organizations' workers. Most of these arrests took the form of abductions from the streets.

In 2018, SNHR documented that factions of the Armed Opposition arrested 379 individuals, including 23 children and 13 women (adult female), a marked increase in the arrest rate compared to the previous year, 2017, when we documented the arrest of 231 individuals, including nine children and three women by factions of the Armed Opposition.

[Abdul Rahman Ebo](#), an architecture graduate of Aleppo University, from Karzila village just outside Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was born in 1961. On Saturday, October 20, 2018, he was arrested by gunmen affiliated with factions of the Armed Opposition following a raid on his place of residence in Villa Street neighborhood in the center of Afrin city. His fate remains unknown to the SNHR.

Laila Ismail Qabalan, from Holilo village near Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was born in 1982. On Saturday, October 13, 2018, she was arrested by gunmen affiliated with factions of the Armed Opposition in a raid on her home in Holilo village. Her fate remains unknown to the SNHR.

In addition, we recorded the deaths of at least nine individuals, including one child, as a result of torture in prisons administered by factions of the Armed Opposition in 2018 a slight increase on the number documented for 2017, which was seven individuals.

The child [Abdullah Nabil al Nasr Askar](#), from Jasem city in Daraa governorate's northern suburbs, was born in 2002. Factions of the Armed Opposition arrested him on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, from Jasim city, where he was taken to the city's police station; his dead body was handed over to his family on the same day showing signs of torture.

[Ahmad Mohammad Sheikho](#), deputy to the president of Sheikh Hadid County local council, was a 53-year-old geography graduate from Sheikh Hadid town in Aleppo governorate northern suburbs. On June 7, 2018, he was arrested by gunmen affiliated with the General Suleiman Shah battalion, one of the factions of the Armed Opposition, from his home in Sheikh Hadid town. Although he was released after four days, he died on June 12, 2018, as a result of torture sustained during his detention.



C. Targeting media workers

In 2018, SNHR recorded the death of one media worker at the hands of factions of the Armed Opposition, a reduction on the 2017 figure of three media workers killed by factions of the Armed Opposition in 2017.

Hasan Ali Badran

On Thursday, March 8, 2018, the state-run Syrian Arab News Agency ([SANA](#)) and other [media](#) outlets loyal to Syrian Regime forces mourned the death of Hasan, who was killed by factions of the Armed Opposition while he was working on media coverage of clashes between Syrian pro-Regime forces and opposition factions on al Mohammadiya battlefield in Eastern Ghouta. We were unable to identify either the weapon that killed him or the extent of his injuries up to the time of this report's preparation.

Conclusions

The aforementioned documented cases, among others, demonstrate that a number of Armed Opposition factions have perpetrated crimes that qualify as war crimes as shown in killings using indiscriminate shelling. Also, some opposition groups have perpetrated acts of torture against some of their detainees. In addition, some Armed Opposition factions have carried out looting in different areas.

E. Self-Management forces (mainly Democratic Union Party forces – a branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party)

A. Extrajudicial killing

Kurdish forces became a party to the conflict in Syria in July 2012 when the People's Protection Units, the armed wing of the 'Democratic Union Party' surfaced. Subsequently, the party and its forces joined the Kurdish Self-Management forces, which was established in January 2014. These forces managed to seize some areas in northern and eastern Syria. The Kurdish Democratic Union Party and its forces are the main core of what subsequently came to be called the Self-Management forces, which is the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK.

In 2018, Self-Management forces killed 285 civilians, including 29 children and 26 women (adult female), and committed at least four massacres. Amongst their victims are seven civilians killed by sniper shots, including one child.

This was a slight reduction on the 2017 figure, when Self-Management forces killed 316 civilians, including 58 children and 54 women, and committed at least four massacres.



On Monday, March 26, 2018, a landmine planted by the Self-Management forces in al Ashrafiya neighborhood of [Afrin](#) city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, before their withdrawal from the city, exploded, resulting in the deaths of seven civilians from one family, including five women. The city was under the control of the Euphrates Shield forces (factions of the Armed Opposition supported by Turkish forces) at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, April 11, 2018, another landmine planted by the Self-Management forces in [Afrin](#) city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, before their withdrawal from the city, exploded, resulting in the death of 11 civilians, including one female child and seven women. The city was under the control of the Euphrates Shield forces at the time of the incident.

B. Arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention

The arrests carried out by the Self-Management forces in 2018 were concentrated in Hasaka and Raqqa governorates, targeting activists and politicians critical of their policies in the areas under their control. We also recorded several incidents of arrest of an ethnic character. The Self-Management forces also continued their policy of arbitrary arrest for the purpose of forced conscription throughout 2018, as well as increasing the rates of arrests of families with close ties to members of factions of the Armed Opposition or ISIS.

Meanwhile, SNHR documented that Self-Management forces arrested at least 965 individuals, including 83 children and 74 women (adult female), in areas under their control in 2018. This was a sharp increase on the figure from the previous year, 2017, when we recorded the arrest of 647 individuals, including 47 children and 46 women by Self-Management forces.

[Khalil Ismail al Hasan](#), a 25-year-old anesthetic nurse from Raqqa city, was arrested by Self-Management forces on Friday, August 17, 2018, at a checkpoint in Raqqa city. His fate remains unknown to the SNHR.

[The media activist Ahmad Sofi](#) is a reporter for the Ark Media Institution, and a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, from al Malikiya city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. He was arrested by Self-Management forces on Monday, October 22, 2018 at a checkpoint on the road between al Qasr village and al Malikiya city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. His fate remains unknown to SNHR, as well as to his family.



C. Torture inside detention centers

Self-Management forces use various methods of torture in their detention centers, mainly severe beatings, pulling out of nails, breaking detainees' bones with Kalashnikovs or metal rods, administering electric shocks, depriving detainees of sleep, food and healthcare, and subjecting them to solitary confinement, which may last for months.

In 2018, SNHR recorded at least 10 cases of individuals dying due to torture and medical negligence at the hands of Self-Management forces, double the figure for 2017 when we documented the deaths of five individuals due to torture in the Self-Management forces' detention centers.

Fahd Ammash al Nayef, a petroleum engineer, from Sbeikhan city in Deir Ez-Zour governorate eastern suburbs, in May 2018, was arrested by Kurdish Self-Management forces in Swaidan Jazira in Deir Ez-Zour governorate eastern suburbs. On Thursday, June 7, 2018, his body was delivered to his family after he died due to torture and lack of medical negligence inside a Self-Management forces' detention center.



D. Targeting medical personnel and their related facilities

SNHR documented the death of one medical worker in 2018 at the hands of Self-Management forces who were also responsible for two attacks on medical facilities. In 2017, meanwhile, we recorded the deaths of three medical personnel and two attacks on medical facilities by the same party.



The most notable medical personnel victims

[Saleh Ahmad al Yasin](#), a 55-year-old pharmacist, from Mouhasan city in Deir Ez-Zour governorate eastern suburbs, was arrested in April 2018 by Self-Management forces at his workplace in Jazaret Bouhmaid village in the western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. On Thursday, June 7, 2018, we received information confirming that he had died due to torture and medical negligence in a Self-Management forces' detention center in the village.

The most notable attacks on medical facilities

On Friday, January 19, 2018, at around 01:00, Self- Management artillery forces, stationed in Afrin city, fired a mortar shell at the [Mental Hospital](#) in [Izaz](#) city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which partly destroyed the [building and inflicted moderate damage to its cladding](#) and [furnishings](#). We note that the [hospital houses](#) about [200 people suffering](#) from mental and psychological conditions. Afrin city was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.

E. Targeting media workers

SNHR documented the death of one media worker at the hands of Self-Management forces in 2018.

[Mostafa Mohammad Khattab](#)

On Tuesday, February 20, 2018, Mustafa was killed [by shrapnel wounds](#) to most of his body inflicted by a guided missile fired by a Self-Management force which landed near him while he was providing media coverage of the clashes between the Self-Management forces and factions of the Armed Opposition on the Bulbul district battlefield in the suburbs of Afrin in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, with the fighting being part of the battle of the 'Olive Branch'.

Mustafa, an unmarried photographer with al Hamzah faction, one of the factions of the Armed Opposition, from Kafr Oweid village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was born in 1997 and held a preparatory certificate.

Conclusions

Kurdish Self-Management forces have violated many basic rights, including the right to life. These forces are also responsible for carrying out many other violations, including torture and forced disappearance, all of which constitute crimes against humanity, in addition to perpetrating a number of war crimes, such as indiscriminate shelling, displacement, looting, abduction, and torture.



F. International coalition forces

A. Extrajudicial killing

International coalition forces began their military campaign against ISIS on Tuesday, September 23, 2014. In 2018, International Coalition forces escalated their attacks especially in the Hajin district in Deir Ez-Zour governorate.

We documented dozens of unjustifiable attacks, in which International Coalition forces failed to take any of the necessary measures to minimize the massive casualties inflicted. We documented the deaths of 417 civilians, including 175 children and 90 women (adult female), as well as 28 massacres, at the hands of International Coalition forces in 2018. This was lower than the same figures for 2017, when SNHR documented that International Coalition forces were responsible for the deaths of 1,759 civilians, including 521 children and 332 women (adult female), and committed at least 113 massacres.

On Sunday, February 4, 2018, at around 01:30, fixed-wing International Coalition warplanes fired missiles at al Bahra village in Deir Ez-Zour governorate eastern suburbs, [which resulted in the death of 40 civilians](#), including [21 children](#) and [13 women](#), all of whom were IDPs from al Sfira city in Aleppo governorate eastern suburbs. The village, which was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces up to the time of this report's preparation.



A child victim of a massacre perpetrated by International Coalition forces warplanes in al Bahra village/ Deir Ez-Zour on February 4, 2018



On Monday, June 4, 2018, at around 06:00 fixed-wing International Coalition forces warplanes fired missiles at al Jazza' village of al Shaddadi city in the southern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, killing 13 civilians, including 10 children and two women, and injuring 10 others. The village, which was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident, is under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces at the time of the preparation of this report.

B. Targeting medical personnel and their related facilities

According to SNHR's archive, at least four medical personnel were killed in 2018 by International Coalition forces who were also responsible for nearly five attacks on medical facilities. In the previous year, 2017, meanwhile, International Coalition forces were responsible for the death of eight medical personnel, as well as seven attacks on medical facilities.

Most notable medical personnel victims

Zaher Hammadi Samir al Hussein, a medic nicknamed Abi al Harith, was an Arabic Literature graduate from al Boulayl village in Deir Ez-Zour eastern suburbs. He was killed on Friday, February 2, 2018, in a missile attack by fixed-wing International Coalition forces warplanes on the field hospital in al Bahra village in Deir Ez-Zour eastern suburbs, which resulted in a massacre; three of the victims were medical personnel at the hospital.

Most notable attacks on facilities

On Friday, March 2, 2018, fixed-wing International Coalition warplanes fired missiles at the field hospital, known as Nabd al Hayat Hospital, in al Sh'afa city in Deir Ez-Zour governorate eastern suburbs, which resulted in the complete [destruction of the hospital building](#), putting it out of service. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

C. Incendiary Weapons

We recorded three attacks using incendiary munitions by International Coalition forces in 2018, compared to two attacks by them using incendiary munitions in 2017.

On Monday, November 5, 2018, International Coalition artillery forces, stationed in the desert area around Hajin, fired [a number of shells carrying incendiary materials](#) at Hajin city in Deir Ez-Zour governorate eastern suburbs, which was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Conclusions

The member states of the International Coalition are responsible for the violations that have occurred since their attacks started. Indiscriminate, disproportionate incidents of bombardment are explicit violations of international humanitarian law, while the crimes of indiscriminate killing constitute war crimes.

G. Other parties

SNHR's documentation of the victims killed in Syria in 2018 includes a range of classifications, also including victims who were killed in bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified, victims who died in fires of unknown source, victims killed by landmines of unknown origin, victims who drowned, and victims who were killed by Jordanian, Lebanese or Turkish forces.

Under this category, SNHR documented the deaths of 1,107 civilians, including 247 children, 145 women, five victims who died due to torture, eight medical personnel, and three media workers.

Also, bombings and attacks carried out by the forces included in this category were responsible for nearly 16 attacks on medical facilities and at least 26 massacres.

VIII. Recommendations

UN Security Council

- The Security Council must take additional steps following the adoption of after Resolution 2254, which asserts that the parties involved should: "... immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such..."
- The Syrian case must be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible should be held accountable including the Russian regime whose involvement in war crimes has been proven.
- Instill security and peace in Syria and implement the norm of the Responsibility to Protect in order to protect the lives, culture, and history of the Syrian people from being further destroyed, looted, and ruined.
- Monitor the Iranian regime's alleged continuing supply of weapons, equipment and militias to the Syrian regime.
- Ensure the safety and security of millions of Syrian refugees, especially women and children, who have been displaced worldwide, and ensure their safety from arrest, torture or enforced disappearance if they choose to return to areas controlled by the Syrian regime.
- Reveal the fate of nearly 95,000 Syrian citizens - particularly women and children – who remain forcibly disappeared, mostly by the Syrian regime's services.



- Request all relevant United Nations agencies to make greater efforts to provide humanitarian and food aid and medical assistance in areas where the fighting has ceased, and in internally displaced persons' camps, and follow-up with those states that have pledged the necessary contributions.

The International Community

- In light of the split within the UN Security Council and its utter inability, action should be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people that can protect them from the daily killing and siege, and increase 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 involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine 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 were exhausted, with the Cessation of Hostilities statements and Astana agreements that followed proving equally fruitless. Therefore, steps should be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and the norm of the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, should be implemented. The UN 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 to fulfill justice and achieve accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, and on activating the principle of the 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 considering that these attacks were perpetrated by the parties to the conflict.
- Train Syrian organizations to begin mine and unexploded ordnance clearance, and raise local awareness of such risks.
- 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.



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 these crimes, the 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 transitional government.

To the Syrian regime

- Stop indiscriminate shelling and targeting residential areas, hospitals, schools and markets.
- End the torture acts 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 and concealed their fate so far.
- Compliance with UN Security Council resolutions and customary humanitarian law.

The Russian regime

- Launch investigations regarding the incidents included in this report, make the findings of these investigations public for the Syrian people, and hold the people involved accountable.
- Compensate all the damaged centers and facilities, rebuild and rehabilitate them, and compensate all the victims' families, who were killed by the current Russian regime, as well as the all the wounded.
- Completely cease the bombing of hospitals, protected structures, and civilian areas, and respect customary international law.
- As a guarantor party in Astana talks, the Russian regime must stop failing de-escalation agreements, and apply pressure on the Syrian regime in order to end all indiscriminate attacks and allow an unconditional passage of humanitarian aids to besieged areas.



The Coalition (international coalition forces and Syrian Democratic Forces)

- The states of the coalition must unequivocally and sincerely acknowledge that some of the bombardment operations have resulted in the death of innocent civilians. Instead of denying, these states should take speedy steps to launch serious investigations, and immediately compensate and apologize to the victims and those who were affected.
- The states supporting SDF should apply pressure on these forces in order to compel them to cease all of their violations in all the areas and towns that are under their control.
- All forms of support, weapons and otherwise, should be ceased until SDF commit to the previous recommendations. This is primarily the supporting states' responsibility. Providing SDF with weapons and support while knowing that they can be used in war crimes or crimes against humanity can be seen as a contribution to these crimes.
- Syrian Democratic forces must immediately stop recruiting children, hold accountable the officers involved, and pledge to return all children who have been arrested for recruitment immediately.

Armed Opposition factions

- Ensure the protection of civilians in all of their areas of control. Also, Armed Opposition factions should distinguish between civilians and military targets, and cease any indiscriminate attacks.
- Pledge to cease any recruitment of children, and investigate incidents that have resulted in violations of international humanitarian law.
- Take punitive actions against those who commit violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

IX. References

A. SNHR's reports

[Approximately 13,000 Civilians Killed at the Hands of Syrian Regime Forces in Eastern Ghouta, including 1,463 Children - February 25, 2018](#)

[107 Civilians Killed, including 34 Children, in the First 72 Hours Following Security Council Resolution 2401 – February 28, 2018](#)

[Satellite Imagery Proves that Russian Attacks Have Exterminated Entire Eastern Ghouta Towns – May 31, 2018](#)

[Idlib Governorate One Year after the De-Escalation Agreement Commenced – June 13, 2018](#)



[After 221 Chemical Attacks, it's Time to Correct the Travesties with Regard to the Chemical Weapons Matter in Syria – June 25, 2018](#)

[Russian Forces Continue Their Streak of Atrocious Massacres, 6,187 Civilians, including 1,771 Children, Killed by Russia since the Intervention Started in Syria – July 18, 2018](#)

[No less than 95,000 Forcibly-Disappeared Persons in Syria since March 2011 – August 30, 2018](#)

[Urm al Kubra Village Massacre by Russian Forces is a Clear Message of Blood and Terror-ization – September 11, 2018](#)

[On the 4th Anniversary of the International Coalition Forces Intervention in Syria, SNHR Showcases a Database for the Incidents Constituting Violations of the International Law – September 23, 2018](#)

[On the 3rd Anniversary of Russia's Intervention in Syria, SNHR Unveils an Incident Database for International Law Violations – September 30, 2018](#)

[The Brutal Attacks on Suwayda governorate between the Terrorism of the Syrian Regime and ISIS – October 16, 2018](#)

B. International reports

[OPCW reports in 2018](#)

[Report on the Attack of Sarqeb city, Idlib suburbs – May 15, 2018](#)

[Report on the two attacks on Latamena town, Hama suburbs – March 24-25, 2017 – June 13, 2018](#)

[Report on the two attacks of al Hamadaniya and Karm al Tarrab neighborhoods, Aleppo governorate – July 2, 2018](#)

[Report on the attack of Douma city, Damascus Suburbs governorate – July 6, 2018](#)

[Reports of the International Commission of Inquiry in 2018](#)

[Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic – March 6, 2018](#)

[Detention in the Syrian Arab Republic: A way forward – March 8, 2018](#)

[“I lost my dignity”: Sexual and gender-based violence in the Syrian Arab Republic – March 15, 2018](#)

[Sieges as a weapon of War: Encircle, starve, surrender, evacuate – May 29, 2018](#)

[Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic – September 12, 2018](#)



Reports of Human Rights Watch

[Syria's 'Disappeared' Deserve Truth and Justice – August 13, 2018](#)

[Syria: Residents Blocked From Returning – October 16, 2018](#)

[Myths and Realities About Incendiary Weapons – November 14, 2018](#)

[The Syrian Conflict's Next Front – November 23, 2018](#)

Reports of Bellingcat blog

[Syrian Forces Bombard Eastern Ghouta with Chemical Weapons for the Fourth Consecutive Time since the Beginning of 2018 – March 15, 2018](#)

[All the Pieces Matter – Syria's Chlorine Bombs and the Douma Chemical Attack – April 29, 2018](#)

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank the victims' families and relatives and all media workers from all fields who contributed effectively to this report. Were it not for their contributions and cooperation with us, we would not be able to complete this report at this level. In addition, our most heartfelt condolences go to the victims' families.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

