

# The Annual Report for Most Notable Violations of Human Rights in Syria in 2017

A Displaced People  
and a State Left in Ruins

**SNHR**

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Friday, January 26, 2018

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 Patterns of Human Rights Violations in 2016 and 2017
- IV. Major Developments in 2017
- V. Most Prominent Political and Military Events in 2017
- VI. Shifts in Areas of Control in 2017
- VII. Details
- VIII. Recommendations

---

## I. Introduction and Methodology

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) is a human rights organization that was founded in June 2011. SNHR is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organization that aims mainly to document the violations that are 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 U.N. has relied on SNHR as one of the most prominent source in all of its analytical statistics on the victims of the conflict. In addition, a large number of Arabic and international news agencies use SNHR as a source as well as many international human rights organizations.

This report, as with the past reports, draws upon the ongoing monitoring of incidents and development by SNHR team, and on an extensive network of relations with various sources that have been built over the course of our work. When we receive information, or hear some news about a violation via the internet or media outlets, we work on following-up on this news and try to verify and collect evidences and data. In some cases, the researcher is able to visit the incident location at the soonest. However, this is a rarity in light of the incredibly high security risks, and given the frequency of daily incidents and the human and material resources. Therefore, the possibility to access evidences vary from one case to another, and, hence, the degree of its classification. Usually, what we do, at SNHR, in such cases is relying on accounts from survivors who experienced the violation firsthand, where we try to access those directly, and, to a second degree, who saw or filmed the violation, in



addition to analyzing the available materials on open sources, such as the internet and media outlets, and, thirdly, speaking to medical personnel who treated the injured, examined the victims, and determined the cause of death.

Please see the methodology adopted by SNHR for [documenting victims](#) and [classifying vital civilian facilities](#).

This report contains 13 accounts from injured, survivors, paramedics, and “central signal” operators.<sup>1</sup>

The accounts were collected through speaking directly with eyewitnesses, and are not cited from any open sources. We have explained the purpose of these interviews to the eyewitnesses who gave us permission to use the information they provided in this report without offering or giving them any incentives.

SNHR has tried to spare the eyewitnesses the agony of remembering the violation, and gave guarantees to conceal the identity of any witnesses who preferred to use an alias.

Furthermore, the investigations included in this report have proved that the targeted areas were civilian areas where no military centers or weapon warehouses were found before or during the attacks. Also, perpetrator parties didn't alert the civilians prior to the attacks as the international humanitarian law requires.

SNHR has analyzed the videos and pictures that were posted online, or were sent to us by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media. Some of the videos published by activists show the location of the attacks, the dead bodies, the injured, and the huge destruction in the aftermath of the attacks. Other videos show remnants of weapons, cluster munitions, and incendiary ammunitions. We also included pictures of victims who died due to torture, victims who were medical personnel and media workers and were killed in attacks by the parties to the conflict. We have copies of all the videos and pictures included in this report in a secret online database, and backup copies on hard drivers. We always make sure to store all of this data with its own source.

This report only represents the bare minimum, which we were able to document, of the magnitude and severity of the violation that occurred. It also doesn't cover the social, economic, and mental ramifications.

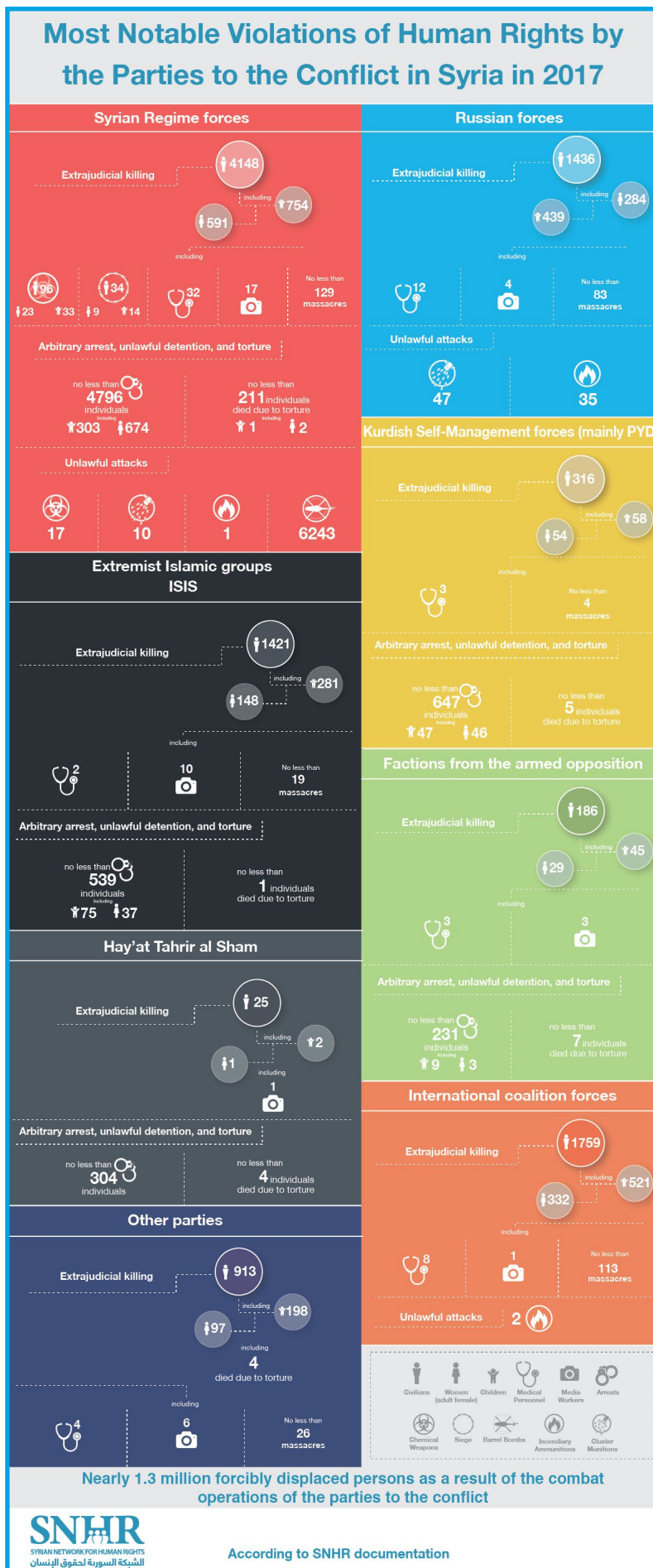
The international humanitarian law and the customary international law in parallel with the international human rights law are the applicable set of laws in the Syrian case. All parties to the conflict are bound by these set of laws.

---

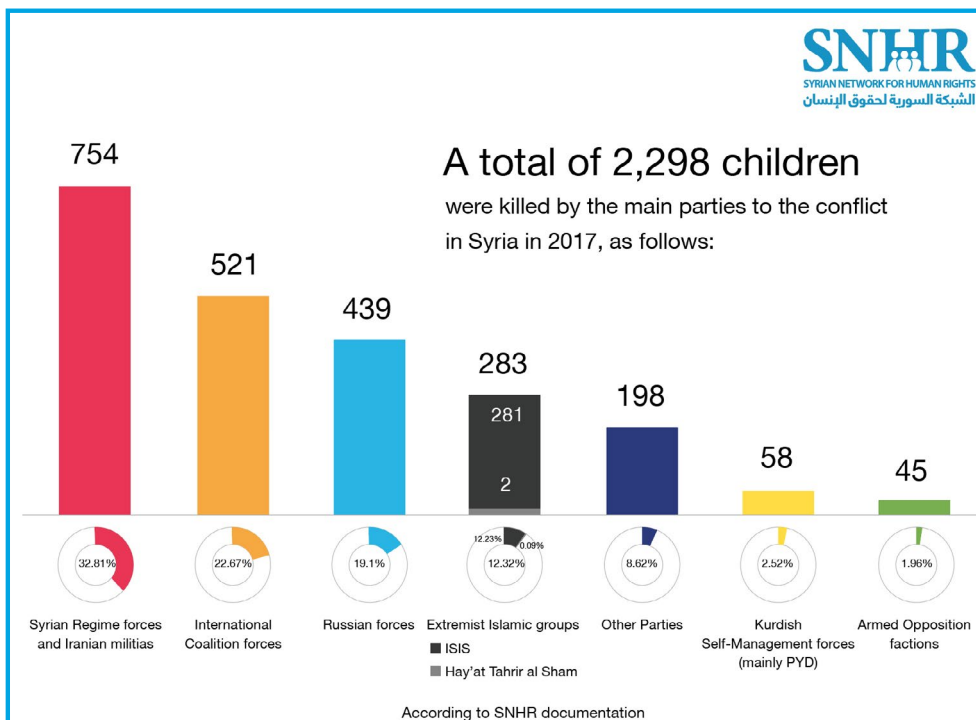
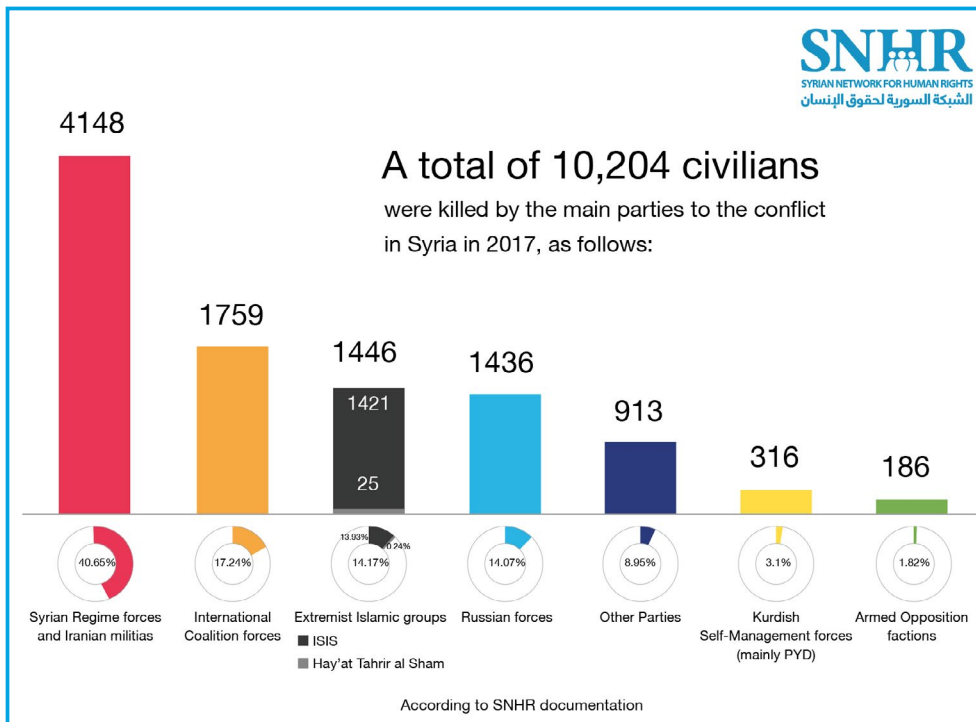
<sup>1</sup> A network that works on picking up radar signals and tracking calls between the pilot and the airbase from which he took off. These observatories announce the news of warplanes taking off from military airbases and track their movement, and can identify the warplanes that took off from Hmeimim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

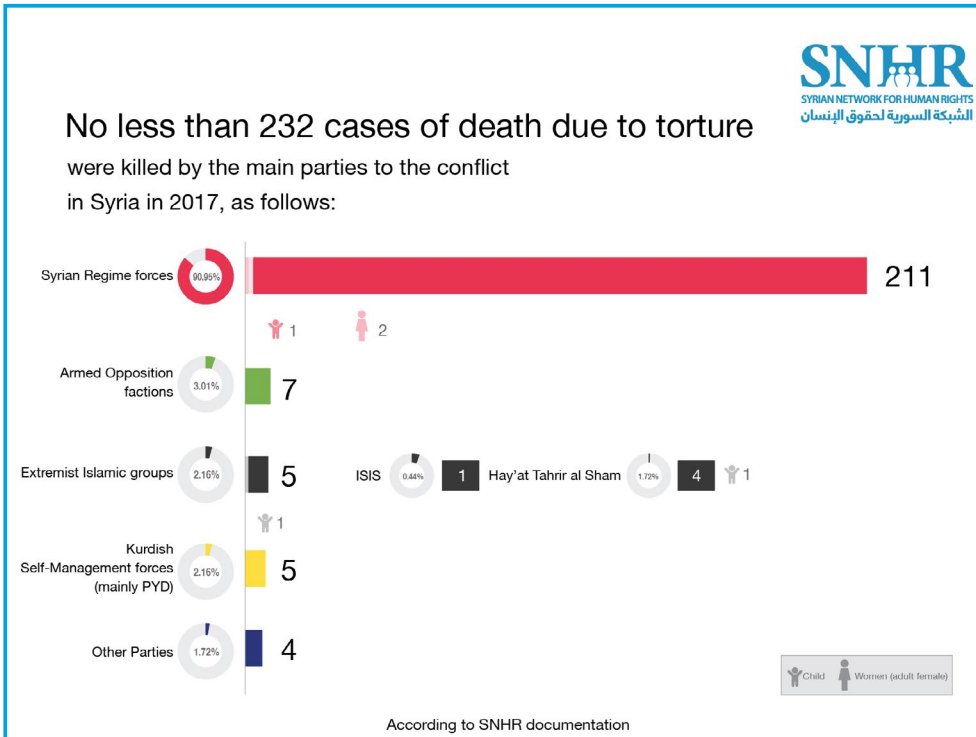
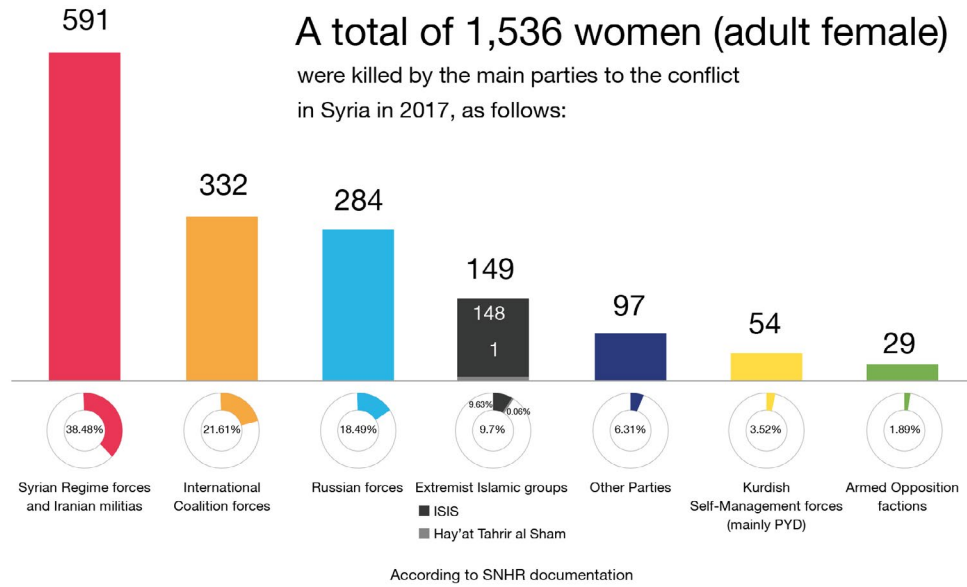


## II. Executive Summary



This report outlines the most notable violations of human rights by the parties to the conflict in Syria from January 1, 2017, until December 31, 2017

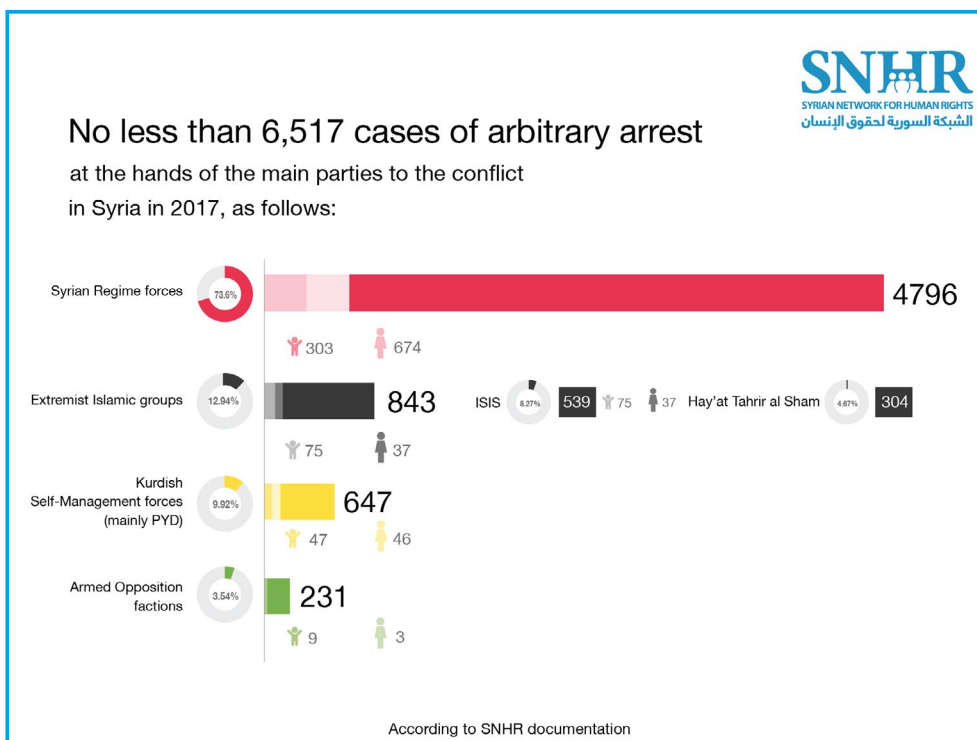




**1- Extrajudicial killing:** SNHR has documented the killing of 10,204 civilians, including 2,298 children and 1,536 women (adult female), distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:

- The Syrian regime (security, army, local militias, and foreign militias): 4,148 civilians, including 754 children and 591 women. Also, Syrian regime forces were responsible for 129 massacres.
- Russian forces: 1,436 civilians, including 439 children and 284 women. Also, Russian forces were responsible for 83 massacres.
- Kurdish Self-Management forces (mainly Democratic Union Party forces – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party): 316 civilians, including 58 children and 54 women. Also, Kurdish Self-Management forces were responsible for four massacres.
- Extremist Islamic groups: 1,446 civilians, divided into:
  - ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State): 1,421 civilians, including 281 children and 148 women. Also, ISIS were responsible for 19 massacres.
  - Hay’at Tahrir al Sham (mainly Fateh al Sham Front): 25 civilians, including two children and one women.
- Factions from the armed opposition: 186 civilians, including 45 children and 29 women.
- International coalition forces: 1,759 civilians, including 521 children and 332 women. Also, international coalition forces were responsible for 113 massacres.
- Other parties: 913 civilians, including 198 children and 97 women. Also, other parties were responsible for 26 massacres.

## 2- Arbitrary arrest and enforced-disappearance

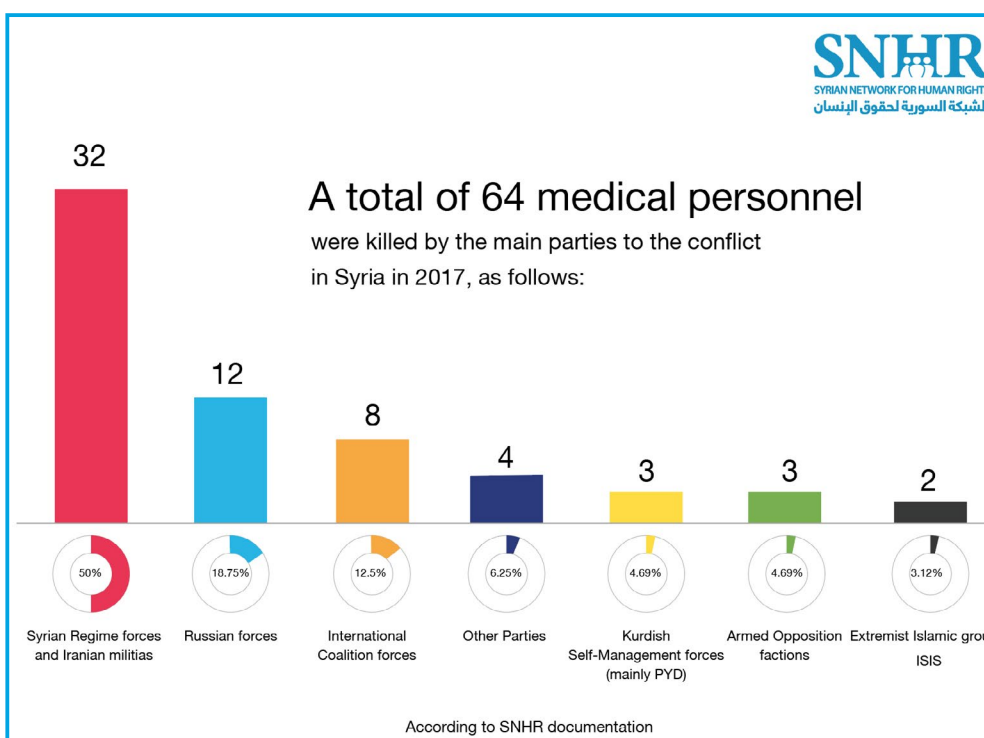




SNHR has documented no less than 6,517 cases of arbitrary arrest in 2017, including 434 children and 760 women (adult female), distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:

- Syrian regime forces: 4,796 civilians, including 303 children and 674 women.
- Extremist Islamic groups: 843 individuals
  - ISIS: 539 individuals, including 75 children and 37 women.
  - Hay'at Tahrir al Sham: 304 individuals.
- Armed opposition factions: 231 individuals, including nine children and three women.
- Self-Management forces: 647 individuals, including 47 children and 46 women.

### 3- Targeting medical personnel



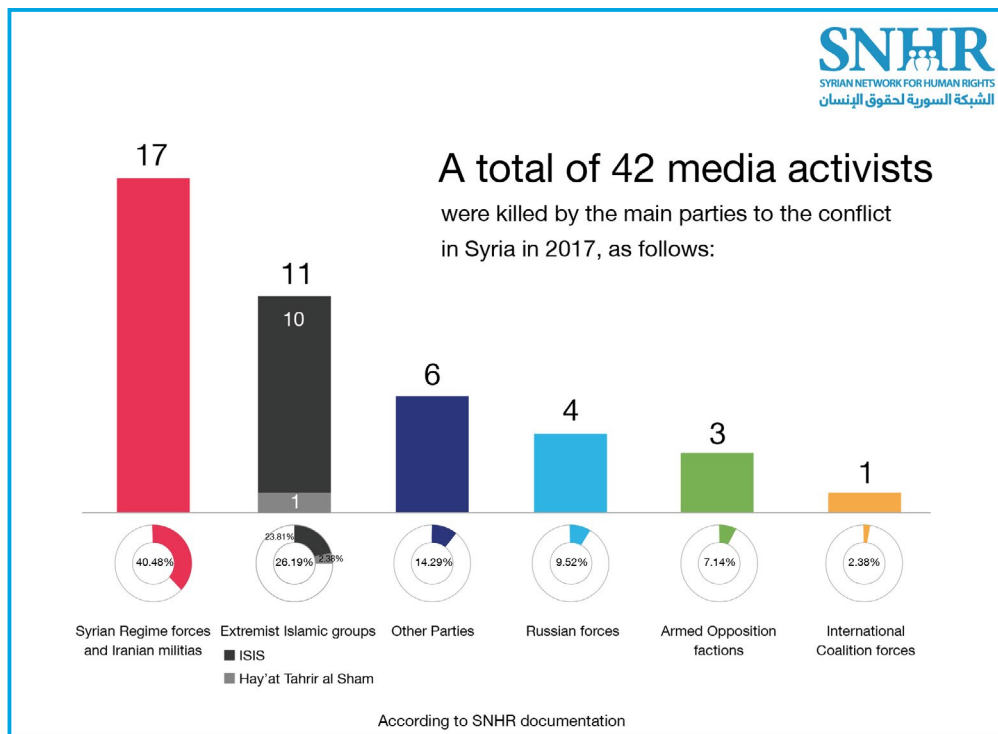
SNHR has documented the killing of 64 medical personnel, distributed by the perpetrator part as follows:

- Syrian regime forces: 32
- Russian forces: 12
- Extremist Islamic groups:
  - ISIS: 2
- Factions from the armed opposition: 3
- Self-Management forces: 3
- International coalition forces: 8
- Other parties: 4





## 4- Targeting media workers



SNHR has documented the killing of 42 media workers, distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:

- Syrian regime forces: 17
- Russian forces: 4
- Extremist Islamic groups:
  - ISIS: 10
  - Hay'at Tahrir al Sham: 1
- Factions from the armed opposition: 3
- International coalition forces: 1
- Other parties: 6



## 5- Unlawful attacks

- Chemical weapons: we recorded 17 attacks using chemical weapons by Syrian regime forces.
- Cluster munitions: we recorded 57 attacks using cluster munitions, distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:
  - Syrian regime forces: 10
  - Russian forces: 47
- Incendiary weapons: we recorded 38 attacks using incendiary weapons, distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:
  - Syrian regime forces: 1
  - Russian forces: 35
  - International coalition forces: 2
- Barrel bombs: we recorded that Syrian regime forces warplanes dropped no less than 6,243 barrel bombs.



### III. Comparison between Patterns of Human Rights Violations in 2016 and 2017

#### Comparison between civilian death toll by the parties to the conflict in Syria in 2016 and 2017



## Comparison by deaths due to torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria in 2016 and 2017



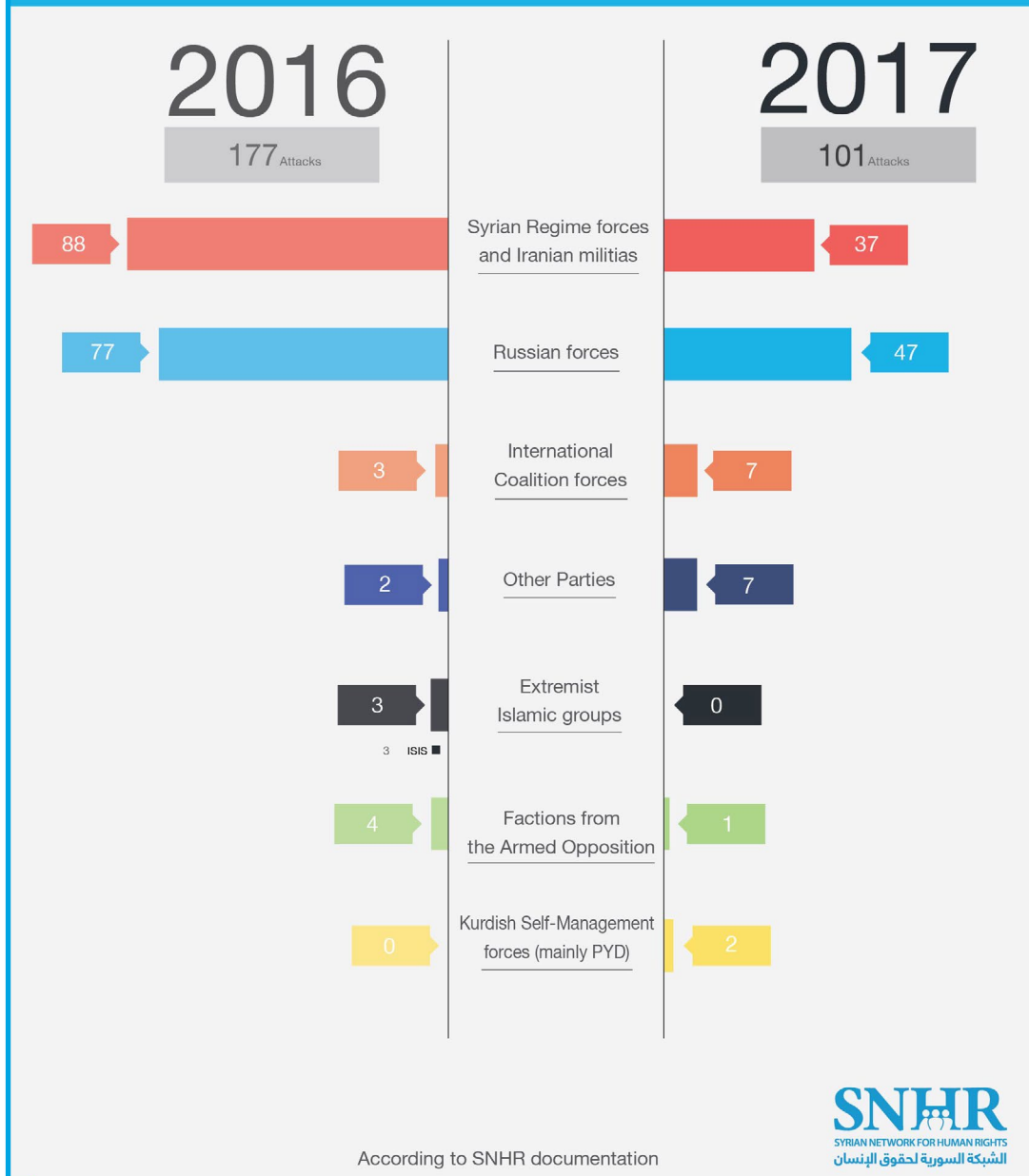
## Comparison between arbitrary arrests made by the parties to the conflict in Syria in 2016 and 2017



**Comparison between victims among medical personnel and attacks on their medical facilities by the parties to the conflict in Syria in 2016 and 2017**



## Comparison between attacks on medical facilities by the parties to the conflict in Syria in 2016 and 2017

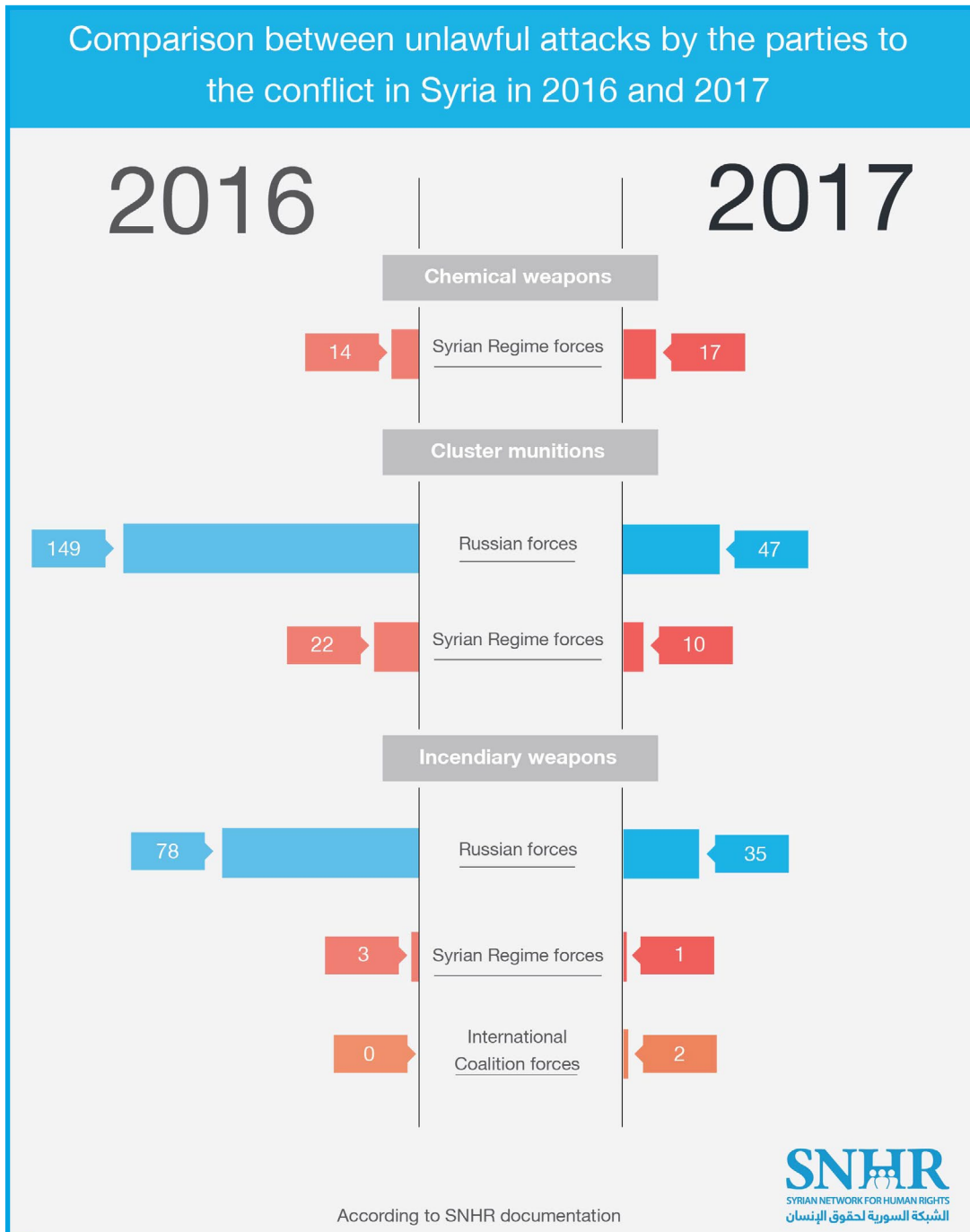




**Comparison between victims among media workers killed by the parties to the conflict in Syria in 2016 and 2017**



**Comparison by unlawful attacks by the parties to the conflict in Syria in 2016 and 2017**



## IV. Major Developments in 2017

2016 ended as a ceasefire agreement was struck under a Turkish-Russian sponsorship. The agreement provided for ceasing all combat operations, including air attacks, as well as raid operations and progression on the ground by the signing parties -factions from the armed opposition and Syrian-Russian alliance forces. However, the agreement fell apart completely in late-2017 as violence and killing returned to their former levels before agreement came into force. [We have documented no less than 533 breaches after two months of the agreement's commencement.](#)

What followed was a notable acceleration on the political front as Geneva city saw five rounds of talks between delegations from the Syrian government and the opposition while Astana city was the ground for eight talks under a Russian, Iranian, and Turkish sponsorship. Subsequently, four de-escalation zones were established in May 2017. The fifth round of talks saw an agreement over the borders of these zones, and was followed by similar agreements in Eastern Ghouta, northern suburbs of Homs, southern suburbs of Hama, and the south region (Daraa, Suwayda, and Quneitra governorates).

As a result of the ongoing monitoring by SNHR team, we have noticed a notable drop in the rates of shelling and destruction and the levels of violence after the de-escalation agreement came into force in May 2017 – especially in the first four months, which was reflected in the lives of residents on the medical, humanitarian, educational, and economic levels. Nonetheless, the breaches by the Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance have been steadily increasing since September 2017 as these forces are carrying out more and more offensives in de-escalation zones, committing hundreds of violations and tens of massacres and attacks on civilian objects, as was seen in Idlib and Aleppo suburbs as well as Eastern Ghouta in Damascus suburbs.

The areas that weren't included in the de-escalation agreement have seen their worst humanitarian crisis since March 2011, where the two eastern governorates, Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zour, which were under the control of ISIS at the time were the targets of heavy and concentrated offensives by the coalition (international coalition forces and the Kurdish-majority SDF) in conjunction with attacks by the Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance forces. The death toll that these two governorates have suffered in 2017 was estimated at no less than 42.9% of the overall death toll of the same year. Even though ISIS gave up large parts and had lost their most important strongholds, the cost for that was extremely steep.



Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance forces continued their siege on towns in Eastern Ghouta, Damascus suburbs, for the fifth year in a row. The Eastern Ghouta de-escalation agreement, which was struck on July 22, 2017 between the Russian authorities and factions from the armed opposition, was to no avail even though the agreement provided for securing passage for relief convoys and evacuating critical medical cases, as the siege remained as suffocating as ever for nearly 350,000 who are living under the siege in Eastern Ghouta. On the contrary, we have recorded that the siege has been intensified, on one hand, while the Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance has escalated their offensives on the other hand.

In 2017, civilians of Idlib governorate, the control over which is divided between Hay'at Tahrir al Sham and factions from the armed opposition, were the subject of [serious violations](#) by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham fighters who carried out multiple attacks in a number of areas in southern and western Idlib governorates and the border lines with Turkey. In this context, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham perpetrated extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests and raided centers for humanitarian organization and vital civilian facilities.

### **Indiscriminate attacks and prohibited weapons**

We have recorded in 2017, as with the past years, that Syrian-Russian alliance forces were solely responsible for the use of cluster munitions as these forces used air-dropped munitions and others that are fired from launchers to target populated areas that are far away from the clash lines.

The Syrian regime is still heavily using chemical weapons in a clear challenge to all the relevant Security Council resolutions. We have documented nearly 17 chemical attacks in 2017 alone – the most notable of which was [Khan Sheikhoun attack on April 4, 2017](#), and al Latamena attack on March 30, 2017, where we recorded that a poison gas, believed to a nerve agent, was used in both of these attacks. The Joint Investigative Mechanism noted that the Syrian regime was responsible for Khan Sheikhoun [attack in its 7th report that was released on October 26, 2017](#). Nonetheless, Khan Sheikhoun attack was followed by seven other attacks in Damascus suburbs in which the Syrian regime used hand grenades loaded with a poison gas that resulted in a smaller number of injuries and victims.

Unlike 2016, in which Russian forces concentrated their attacks on Aleppo and Idlib governorates, Russian forces expanded their attacks in 2017 to include the east and west regions of the country. We have recorded airstrikes in which Russian forces used highly-explosive missiles that penetrated and destroyed fortified buildings and vital civilian facilities that were built inside caves which was the case in [al Atareb city, western suburbs of Aleppo](#),



[and Kafr Zita city, northern suburbs of Hama](#), where these attacks resulted in the killing of a large number of victims and significantly destroyed the infrastructure. This consists with the use of bunker-buster missiles as the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry noted [in its February 2017's report](#).

On the other side, Syrian regime helicopters and fixed-wing warplanes continued to drop barrel bombs on the areas that are out of their control, targeting residential areas and vital civilian facilities, which resulted in tens of massacres and significant damages to the infrastructure.

2017 saw the first documented use of incendiary ammunition by the international coalition forces where we recorded two attacks on the 8th and 9th of June 2017 in the neighborhoods of al Mashlab, al Sbahiya, and al Romaniya in Raqqa city, in addition to tens of similar attacks by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces in Idlib and Aleppo governorates that saw the use of incendiary ammunition or barrel bombs loaded with an incendiary substance, we believe it was napalm.

### **Fleeing and forced displacement**

About 1.3 million people have been forcibly displaced in 2017 – either through mass waves of displacement in light of the combat operations and ongoing clashes between the parties to the conflict, or as a result of coercive truces and agreements in the besieged cities and towns.

Syrian regime forces, thanks to their crimes, and their siege, oppression, and coercion, managed to enforce a number of truces and agreements that resulted in displacing civilians and armed opposition fighters forcibly from Madaya, al Zabadani, and Beit Jen towns, as well as villages and towns in Wadi Barada, Damascus suburbs governorate, and the neighborhoods of Barza, al Qaboun, and Tishreen in Damascus city, and al Wa'er neighborhood in Homs city. Additionally, the Madaya and al Zabadani agreement included provisions for evacuating thousands of residents from Kafrayya and al Fou'a towns in northern suburbs of Idlib, which are under a siege imposed by factions from the armed opposition, in a very explicit indication of the demographic change that is being engineered by the Syrian regime.

At the end of 2016, Raqqa governorate's population was estimated around 470,000 people. In 2017, nearly 450,000 people fled the governorate, where the international coalition forces' air attacks and SDF were responsible for displacing nearly two-thirds of them while the attacks by the Syrian-Russian alliance led to the displacement of the last third.



In addition, the Syrian-Russian alliance's attacks on Deir Ez-Zour governorate -particularly in its suburbs to the west of Euphrates River- have forced nearly 450,000 people to flee. Most of these people headed for SDF-held areas on the other bank of Euphrates River.

Since mid-September 2017, Syrian-Russian alliance forces have been carrying out intensified attacks in areas of eastern suburbs of Hama. On November 12, 2017, the offensive expanded to reach eastern suburbs of Idlib, southern suburbs of Aleppo, and then southern suburbs of Idlib in late-December 2017. Being of strategic importance, Syrian regime forces is aiming, through this offensive, to take over Abu al Thohour military airbase and all of the areas to the east of al Hejaz Railroad. These offensives have caused the displacement of nearly 300,000 people, most of them settled in the agricultural lands and woods to the east of Ma'aret al Nu'man city and in northern and western suburbs of Idlib governorate.

Idlib governorate was the prime destination for most of the IDPs, which had a great toll on the camps and shelters that were constructed with a smaller capacity in mind than what they ended up receiving. This led to shortages in securing heating and food supplies in light of an utter lack of medical and educational services as the living situation for the residents of the camps are deteriorating.

**Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, says:**

“2017 saw new widespread displacement waves in various parts of Syria. As the level of services for those displaced have been reduced, and seeking refuge is no longer an option, those IDPs have become more of detainees with no haven after their houses and jobs are ruined. On the other hand, patterns of other violations continue, such as killing, indiscriminate and deliberate shelling, the use of chemical weapons for the 6th year in a row, and cluster munitions. The Syrian regime is still the main perpetrator of every type of violation. And securing protection for civilians is still being neglected.”

## **V. Most Prominent Political and Military Events in 2017**

### **Geneva peace talks**

2017 alone saw five rounds of talks that all failed to address the political transition issue which was the purpose for which the talks were proposed under the U.N. sponsorship.

- Geneva 4 talks were held from February 23 to March 3 in accordance with standards specified in Security Council resolution 2254. Staffan de Mistura, the international special envoy, proposed that three issues “baskets” should be tackled in parallel: governance issues, constitutional issues, and electoral issues. The Syrian regime demanded a fourth “basket”, addressing counter-terrorism. Mr. de Mistura added later than matters related to



security rule and trust-building measures should be discussed as well.

The U.N. special envoy to Syria, Staffan de Mistura, noted in a press conference, in the wake of Geneva talks, that negotiation ended after an agenda was agreed upon, in which a number of points were included, such as forming a non-sectarian government in six months' time, conduct free and fair elections after a constitution is established within 18 months.

- Geneva 5 was held on Thursday, March 23, and lasted until Friday, March 31, and addressed the four main baskets, governance, constitution, election, and counter-terrorism, despite the parties' disagreement on the order by which these issues should be discussed. As the High Negotiations Committee insisted on the governance issue being the most pressing one while the Syrian regime delegation refused to skip counter-terrorism. All parties discussed the entirety of the baskets according to their statements.
- Geneva 6 was held from Sunday, May 14, to Saturday, May 20, and was a “short, intense, active meetings.”
- The seventh round was held from Monday, July 10, until Friday, July 14. Staffan de Mistura held meetings with the Syrian regime delegation, headed by Bashar Jaafari, and the High Negotiation Committee as well as meetings with representatives of Moscow and Cairo platforms, with no outcome to be noted.
- Geneva 8 was held on two stages – the first one started November 28 and ended on Friday, December 1 whereas the second stage was between Friday, December 8, and Friday, December 15.

De Mistura stated that the final round was “a big wasted opportunity”, assigning most of the blame for its failure on the Syrian regime. The Syrian regime delegation agreed to enter direct negotiations with the “Syrian Negotiations Committee” provided that “Riyadah-2” statement is withdrawn.

### **Rounds in the city of Astana**

Astana talk commenced in January 2017, and has reached an 8th round in December of the same.

- In the first round, which started on Monday, January 23, parties asserted that a political solution was the way to go in Syria. The Russian, Turkish, and Iranian delegations agreed on establishing a trilateral joint mechanism to maintain the ceasefire in Syria,
- The second round was held on Wednesday, February 15. It discussed, most notably, establishing a trilateral work group (Russian-Turkish-Iranian) to monitor the progress of the cessation of hostilities and formulate a mechanism to exchange prisoners between Syrian regime forces and armed opposition.
- The third round started on Tuesday, March 14, and saw a proposal by Russia for the new constitution. Also, this round was held in light of the armed opposition's boycott.





- The fourth round started on Wednesday, May 3. The most notable development was a de-escalation zone agreement that included Idlib governorates and some surrounding areas (parts of Latakia, Hama, and Aleppo governorates), certain areas in northern Homs governorates, parts of Daraa and Quneitra governorates in south Syria, and Damascus suburbs governorate's Eastern Ghouta.
- The fifth round started on Tuesday, July 4. The three sponsoring states, Russian, Turkey, and Iran, failed to reach an agreement over the borders of the de-escalation zones in Syria. After two days of talks, two more meetings were dated for the 1st and 2nd of August 2017 in Iran, to draw maps for the second and third de-escalation zones with more questions being raised with regard to the first zone in Idlib governorate and some reservations on the south region.
- The sixth round, started on Thursday, September 14, was held in light of complaints being made by the opposition delegation over the Syrian regime's lack of commitment to the de-escalation zones in many areas. The opposition delegation included 24 members and was headed by the Brigadier Ahmad Barri. This round saw Ahrar al Sham Islamic Movement's first participation in the talks. The Syrian regime delegation was headed by Bashar Jaafari. This round ended with an agreement over the borders of the de-escalation zones that were previously unveiled – particularly Idlib governorate which was a point of disagreement.
- The seventh round started on Monday, October 30. The sponsoring states' delegation (Russia, Turkey, and Iran) attended in addition to a number of states that observe the indirect negotiation between the Syrian regime and the Syrian opposition. This round addressed the detainees issue in Homs Central Prison and their strike, and how the Syrian regime tried to misled the Red Cross delegation that came to visit them.
- The eighth round of talks was on Thursday and Friday, December 21-22. The statement released by the Kazakhstani Ministry of Foreign Affairs read that a notable progress has been made with the sponsoring states sorting out the lists regarding the work group on releasing detainees, delivering dead bodies, and searching for the missing, as well as agreeing on the joint statement on removing landmines for humanitarian purposes in Syria, including the UNESCO's historical heritage sites.

### **De-escalation zones**

- in early-May, Iran, Russian, and Turkey announced four de-escalation zones in Syria. The announcement specified that the de-escalation zones would be Idlib governorates and some surrounding areas (parts of Latakia, Hama, and Aleppo governorates), certain areas in northern Homs governorates, parts of Daraa and Quneitra governorates in south Syria, and Damascus suburbs governorate's Eastern Ghouta.



- On Friday, July 7, the United States, Russian, and Jordan announced a ceasefire agreement in southwestern Syria. Rex Tillerson, the United States Secretary of State, stated, in the wake of the 2017 G20 Hamburg summit, that his country doesn't see a future for the Assad family in Syria.
- On Saturday, July 22, a de-escalation agreement on Eastern Ghouta was signed by Jaish al Islam, on one side, and Russian military officials, on the other side, under an Egyptian mediation. A similar agreement followed on Wednesday, August 16, that established Failaq al Rahman's inclusion in the de-escalation agreement.
- On Monday, July 31, Igor Konashenkov, the chief spokesman for the Russian Ministry of Defense, said that Moscow and the armed opposition have agreed on the "practical details" with respect to a "de-escalation zone" in Homs during talks that were held in the Egyptian capital, Cairo. Konashenkov said that "Starting from August 4, the Russian military police is setting up two checkpoints... as well as three look-out posts... along the contact line between the sides at the Homs de-escalation zone."
- On Tuesday, September 5, factions from the armed opposition reached an agreement in al Qalamoun al Sharqi area with the Russian side that involved a ceasefire and the passage of humanitarian aids to the opposition-held cities and towns in the region. The agreement's statement mentioned the cities and towns (al Dmair, al Rheiba, Jeyroud, al Mansoura, al Nasiriya, Jabli al Batra, and al Maghar). The agreement provided for a ceasefire, and that both parties are to facilitate an immediate access for relief convoys, including food, medications, and humanitarian needs, to the area via four points in al Dmair, al Rheiba, al Nasiriya, and Jeyroud.

### **International positions and resolutions**

- On Friday, January 20, Security Council members condemned the destruction of the historical heritage in Syria by ISIS in light of reports on ISIS destroying parts of Tadmur Theater in eastern suburbs of Homs.
- On Tuesday, February 28, Russia and China used veto against a west-supported Security Council resolution that would impose sanctions on the Syrian regime for using chemical weapons. Drafted by the UK, France, and the US, the resolution won the support of nine states while three states opposed it (Russian, China, and Bolivia). Kazakhstan, Ethiopia, and Egypt abstained from voting.
- On Friday, April 7, the US launched 59 cruise missiles on al Shayrat Airbase in Syria in retaliation for a chemical attack. The United States said that "the airstrikes targeted the airbase that carried out the attack of Tuesday, April 4, destroying 20% of the Syrian war-planes." Homs governor, Talal al Brazi, revealed that 13 soldiers were killed and wounded in the American missile strike on al Shayrat Airbase in Syria.



- On Wednesday, April 12, Russia expressed its opposition on a French-British-American draft resolution that would pave the way for holding the Syrian regime accountable and investigate Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack. Washington hinted that it might take solo action in the event of the failure to take joint action on the U.N. level, in light of a continued international condemnations of the chemical attack.
- On Thursday, October 26, the Joint Investigative Mechanism released a report, in which it declared Syrian regime forces responsible for using sarin gas in Khan Sheikhoun attack, while ISIS, the report said, was responsible for an attack in Um al Housh village, Aleppo suburbs, in which sulfur mustard was used.
- On Thursday, November 16, the Security Council failed to adopt two draft resolutions proposed by the United States and Russia on extending the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism.
- On Wednesday and Thursday, November 22-23, the final statement for the expanded conference held by the revolutionary forces and the Syrian opposition in Riyadh. A new Negotiation Committee was formed that included members of Moscow and Cairo platforms.
- On Tuesday, November 28, the World Food Programme said that 10 million people in Syria don't know where their next meal will be coming from, adding that some of them are already searching for food in the trash.
- On Monday, December 11, the Russian president Vladimir Putin visited Hmeimim Airbase in Syria, where he was greeted at the Airbase by the head of the ruling Syrian regime, the Russian Minister of Defense Sergey Shoygu, the Russian commander of the Russian Aerospace Forces Sergey Surovikin. Putin ordered for the preparations for the Russian forces' withdrawal from Syria to commence.
- On Thursday, December 21, the Security Council renewed the mandate of the U.N. force that monitors the Disengagement of Forces Agreements between Syria and Israel until June 2018. The Security Council called on all parties to fully cooperate with the UNDOF in Golan and respect its privileges and immunities, and to ensure its freedom of movement.

### **Most prominent military events in 2017**

- On Sunday, February 12, factions from the armed opposition launched the battle "al Mawt Wala al Mathalla" (Death before Degradation) which aimed to take over al Manshiya neighborhood, which is of a strategic importance, in Daraa city in order to cut off Syrian regime forces from reaching the Jordanian-Syrian borders. Jordan, in turn, decided to shut off the borders and prevented a large number of wounded people from entering.
- On Thursday, February 23, Turkish-supported armed opposition factions took over al Bab city and Bza'a and Qbasin town in eastern suburbs of Aleppo. Only 30 kilometers from the



Turkish borders, Al Bab city was an ISIS stronghold and was a primary target for Turkey who wanted end any ISIS's presence near its borders.

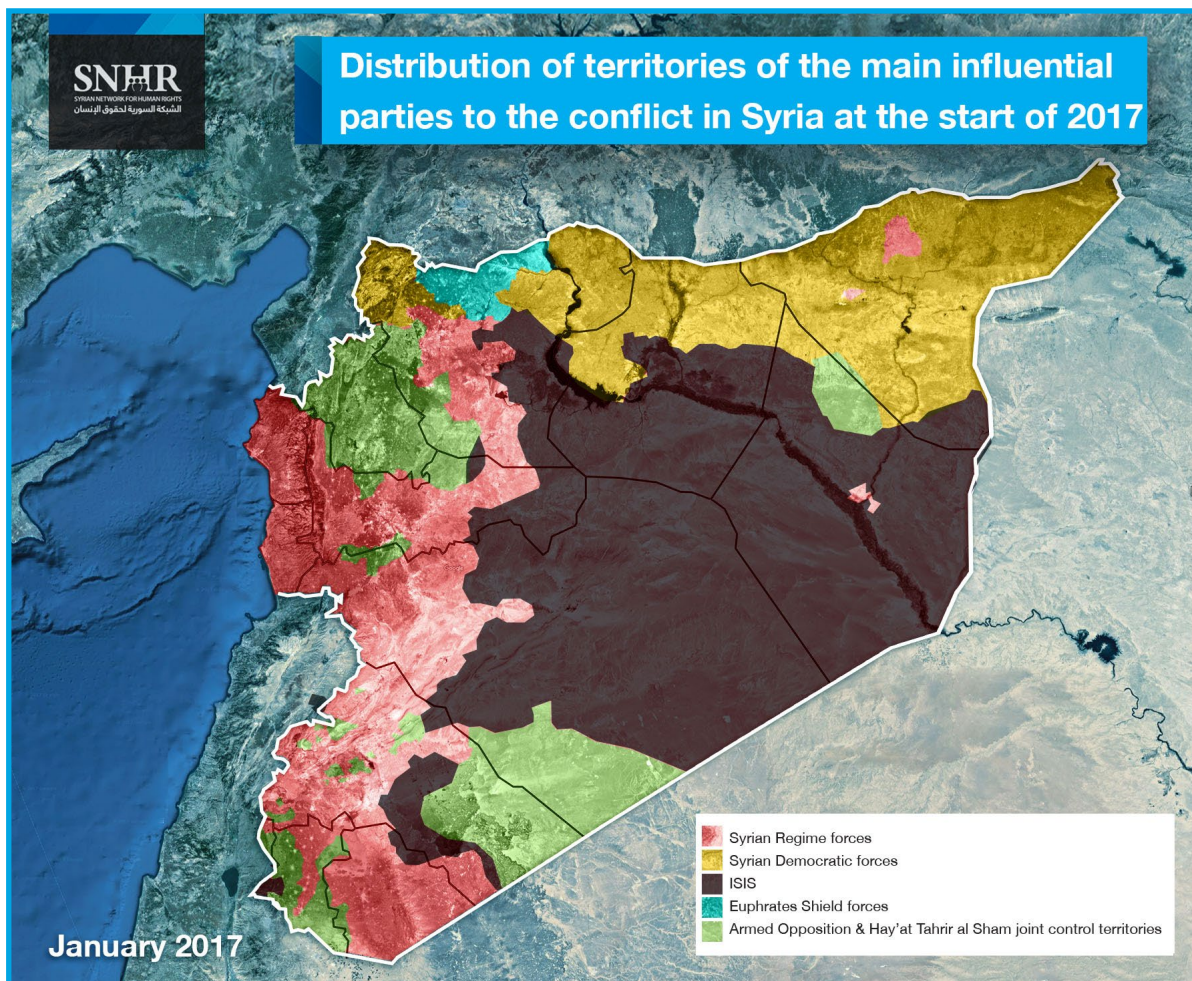
- Two airstrikes carried out by the United States hit on Thursday, May 18, and Tuesday, June 6, two convoys transporting forces affiliated to the Syrian regime in al Tanaf area, which is of a strategic importance, on the Jordanian and Iraqi borders. SANA, which is affiliated to the Syrian regime, said that a number of people were killed in an international coalition airstrike on a military point in the Syrian Badiya according to a military source who said they are rejecting any attempts to justify the airstrike.
- On Saturday, October 14, Turkey deployed tens of soldiers and vehicles in Idlib governo-rate, northern Syria, as a de-escalation zone was being established there in accordance with an agreement with Russian and Iran that was struck in Astana, Kazakhstan's capital, in order to end the clashes between the opposition and the Syrian government.
- On Thursday, October 19, The Kurdish-majority international coalition-backed SDF announced that they have taken over Raqqa city completely, the most important ISIS stronghold in Syria. An agreement was struck on October 13 that saw ISIS surrendering their last areas of control in the city in exchange for a safe exit for their fighters and their families.
- On Friday, November 3, Syrian regime media outlets said that "Deir Ez-Zour city is liberated completely" from ISIS. The city is particularly important for its strategic location as it is a transportation point that connects the eastern region with the northern and middle regions, in addition to it being a main passage between Badiyat al Sham and the Upper Mesopotamia, not to mention its economic significant as an agricultural area and a gas and oil-rich area.
- On Tuesday, November 14, factions from the armed opposition initiated a battle to take over Idarat al Markabat in Harasta city, Damascus suburbs, amid a heavy air escalation by the Syrian-Russian alliance's air forces that intensified the residential neighborhoods in Eastern Ghouta to kill and wound tens of victims.
- On Sunday, November 19, The Syrian regime, and its allies, took over al Boukamal city, east of the country, after kicking ISIS out. Accordingly, SDF became the party to control most parts to the east of Euphrates River while Syrian regime forces and their Russian and Iranian allies are in control of the other side.
- Israel carried out repeated airstrikes on multiple sites in Syria, as the number of airstrikes notably increased compared to past years. The most recent of which were on Saturday, December 2. DPA cited a source who is close to Syrian regime forces as saying that the Israeli airstrikes targeted mainly al Lewa 91 in al Kiswa area, Damascus suburbs, adding that a huge fire broke out in the area. The source also revealed that one of the airstrikes targeted al Lewa 90 in Tal al Shahem area, northern suburbs of Quneitra.





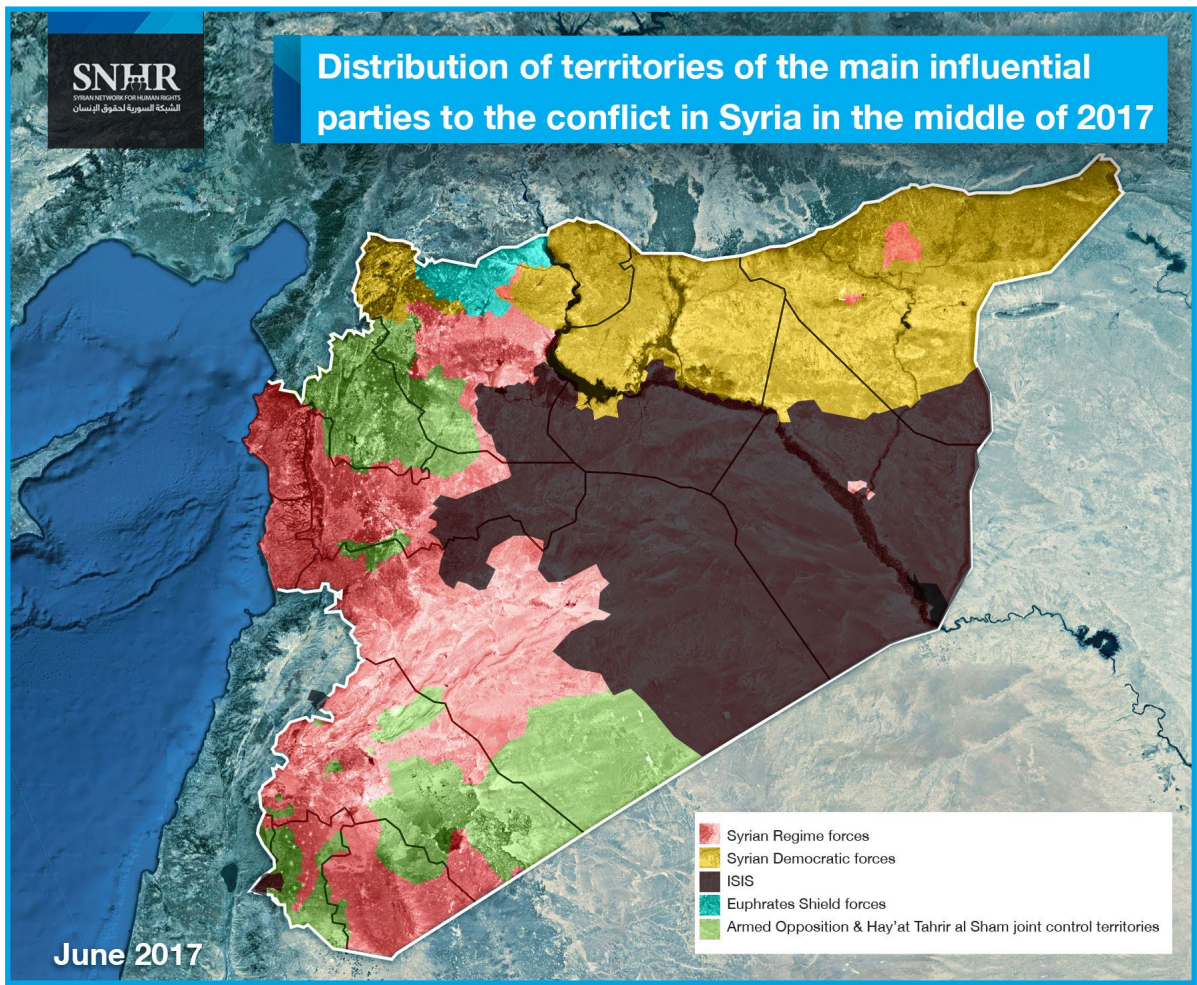
## VI. Shifts in Areas of Control in 2017

When 2017 started, ISIS was in control of nearly 50% of the Syrian lands – al Badiya areas and Hawd al Furat while about 17% was under the Syrian regime's control. The Syrian regime's areas of control included most of the Syrian coastal areas, in addition to the capital Damascus and parts of Homs, Aleppo, and Hama governorates. The Kurdish-majority SDF were in control of approximately 19%. The control over the remainder of the Syrian region were divided between factions from the armed opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham – Idlib, the largest area, Daraa, and parts of Aleppo and Hama suburbs, as well as parts of Homs, Latakia, and Damascus. The following map show the distribution of areas of control at the start of 2017.



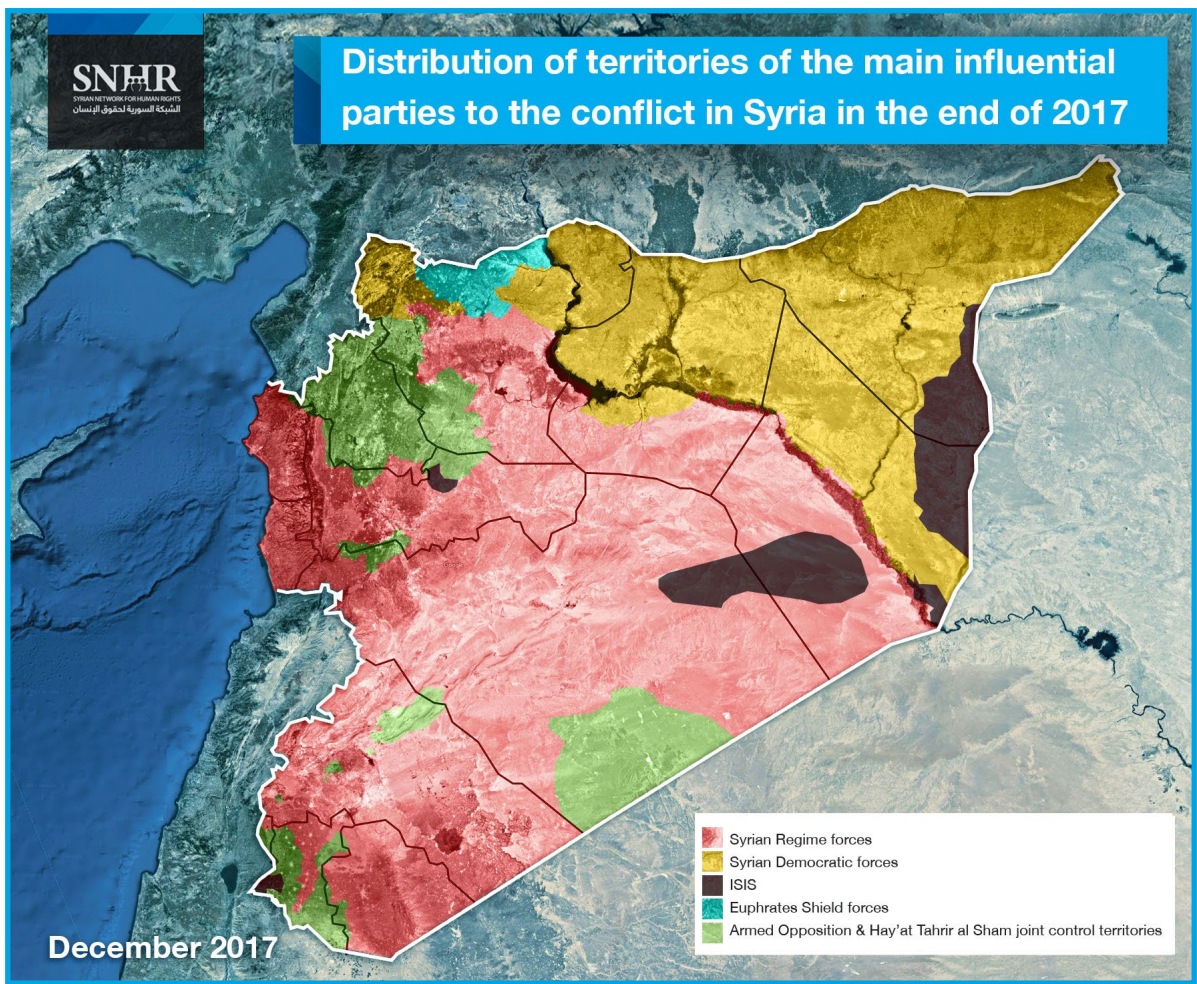


In the first half of 2017, a shift in territories occurred as ISIS retreated in favor of Syrian regime forces and SDF on two different battlefronts where Syrian regime forces, with its Iranian and Russian allies, moved towards the Badiya to take over Tadmur city, eastern suburbs of Homs, while SDF aimed for Raqqa city and took over al Tabqa. On the other hand, factions from the armed opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham maintained their main territories. The following map show the distribution of areas of control in mid-2017.





In the last-third of 2017, SDF's areas of control expanded to over 27% at the expense of ISIS, who only had nearly 3% left, as the group had completely lost Raqqa governorate and most of the villages and towns to the east of Euphrates River. Syrian regime forces and their allies, on the other hand, progressed and removed ISIS from Deir Ez-Zour and al Boukamal cities, as well as the Syrian Badiya in eastern suburbs of Homs and parts of Hama suburbs thanks to the support of their Iranian and Russian allies. In light of these developments, Syrian regime forces ruled nearly 55% of the Syrian lands while factions from the armed opposition lost a significant part of their territories due to the clashes with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham who managed to maintain its areas of control in general in 2017. The following map show the distribution of areas of control with the end of 2017.





## VII. Details

### A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias)

#### 1- Violations relating to treating civilians and hors de combat fighters

##### A. Massacres and other acts of unlawful killing

SNHR has documented that Syrian regime forces killed 4,148 civilians, including 754 children and 591 women, between the start of 2017 -Sunday, January 1, 2017- and the time of this writing at the end of 2017. Additionally, Syrian regime forces perpetrated 129 massacres in the same period of time.

33% of the overall number of victims were women and children which is an explicit indicator that suggest that Syrian regime forces have deliberately targeted civilians in indiscriminate bombardments and executions.

In 2016, according to SNHR archive, Syrian regime forces killed twice as many victims compared to 2017, as 8,736 civilians were killed, including 1,984 children and 1,237 women (adult female).

Monday, February 20, 2017, around 11:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes carried out an airstrike with four missiles on the residential buildings in al Hafez Street, Barza neighborhood, northeastern Damascus city, which resulted in the killing of seven civilians at once, including one child and two women. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Sunday night, March 12, 2017, Syrian regime rocket launchers fired a number of rockets at al Hamidiya neighborhood, eastern Deir Ez-Zour city, which resulted in the killing of 19 civilians, including seven children and three women. The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday morning, April 4, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the local market in public square in Saqba city, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of 19 civilians, including six children and eight women who were mostly from the same family. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Tuesday, April 25, 2017, around 23:30, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the [residential houses](#) in the middle of Talbisa city, northern suburbs of Homs governorate, which resulted in the killing of five civilians, including four sibling children. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, June 14, 2017, around 13:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired [a missile](#) in southern Tafas city, western suburbs of Daraa governorate that targeted the Martyr [Yousef Kiwan School](#), which was occupied by three IDPs families from Ataman town. The bombardment resulted in the killing of eight civilians, including one child and one woman, while seven others were injured, including four children and two women. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Damages in the aftermath of a bombing by fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes on the Martyr Yousef Kiwan School in Tafas city, Daraa – June 14, 2017

Friday, September 29, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes (Su-24) fired [12 missiles](#) on [a residential neighborhood](#) in southeastern [Armanaz](#) town, western suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of [39 civilians](#), including nine children and [11 women](#), while about [15 houses](#) were [heavily destroyed](#). The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.





Victims being pulled out in the aftermath of an attack by fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes on Armanaz town, September 29, 2017

## B. Arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention

Since the start of 2017, Syrian regime forces have resorted to arbitrary arrests for the purpose of conscription mainly through raids and pursuits in residential neighborhoods, markets, and universities, as well as at checkpoints. Syrian regime forces targeted youngsters and men in the age group 18-48 years old, including students and government employees. The arrests were concentrated in the cities of Homs, Hama, and Damascus. Also, arbitrary arrests involved women and children and were mostly made in the form of mass arrests at bus take-off points in Syrian regime forces-held areas or when buses that came from opposition-held areas go through the Syrian regime's areas of control, where the Syrian regime uses those detainees in prisoner exchange negotiations. Syrian regime forces were responsible for 74% of arbitrary arrests and enforced-disappearances that were documented in 2017.

Further, Syrian regime forces widely targeted, in their arrest campaigns, activists, figures opposing their policies, and relatives and parents of armed opposition fighters who live in Syrian regime forces-held areas -even children and women- particularly in Damascus and Homs governorates. Most of the arrests were made to apply pressure on opposition figures and fighters for armed opposition in order to surrender themselves to the Syrian security authorities or to use those detainees in prisoner exchange deals.



We have also monitored in 2017 that Syrian regime forces carried out mass arrests that targeted civilians in the areas they recently took over in eastern suburbs of Hama and Homs governorates as well as eastern and western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorates, where Syrian regime forces and pro-regime militias, local and foreign, have arrested hundreds of civilians along with their families, including women and children, under the pretense of them being ISIS affiliates.

SNHR has documented that Syrian regime forces arrested 4,796 individuals, including 303 children and 674 women (adult female), in 2017 while 7,540 individuals were arrested in 2016, including 251 children and 448 women (adult female).

Sahar Aqqad, woman, from al Aydeen camp in the center of Homs city, nurse at the Palestinian Red Crescent's Bisan Hospital. On Thursday, September 28, 2017, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces in a raid in al Aydeen camp. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

[Mohammad al Saleh](#), political activist, from al Shammass neighborhood, southern Homs city. On Friday, October 20, 2017, he was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint in Homs city. He was taken to the Military Security branch in the city. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Aisha Ibrahim al Nseirat, woman, from Ibtat' town, northern suburbs of Daraa governorate, housewife. On Tuesday, November 14, 2017, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint in Daraa city. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

[Saeed Aqeil](#), from Suwayda city, Arabic teacher who teaches at Kamal Ibied School and al Mutafwiqeen School in al Suwayda city. On Monday, May 22, 2017, he was arrested by Syrian regime forces at al Adlaiya checkpoint on Damascus-Suwayda road. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Monday, September 11, 2017, Syrian regime forces arrested 10 civilians, including two women, in Wadi al Ethieb area, which is administratively a part of Egerbat county, eastern suburbs of Hama governorate. The civilians were arrested as they were heading for Hama and Idlib governorates. They were taken to an undisclosed location. Their fates are still unknown to SNHR as well as their families.





Tuesday, September 19, 2017, Syrian regime forces arrested 19 civilians from Darayya city, southeastern Damascus suburbs governorate when they were at the Mandatory Recruitment division in Kafrsousa neighborhood, Damascus city. They were taken to an undisclosed location. Their fates are still unknown to SNHR as well as their families.

Sunday, October 8, 2017, Syrian regime forces carried out a raid and arrest campaign in Daraa al Mahata neighborhood in the middle of Daraa city. We've recorded the arrest of 11 civilians, including three women. They were taken to an undisclosed location. Their fates are still unknown to SNHR as well as their families.

### C. Torture inside detention centers

SNHR's victim documentation team records one new detainee who died due to torture almost every day on average. SNHR releases eight monthly reports, including one report on deaths due to torture for each respective month.

SNHR has recorded that 211 individuals at least died due to torture at the hands of Syrian regime forces in 2017, including one child and two women (adult female), compared to 447 individuals who died due to torture in 2016, including two children and seven women.

Child Jaber Othman, from al Mleiha town, Damascus suburbs governorate, 15-year-old. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces who detained him in the area's branch in Damascus city. His family confirmed to us that he was in good health before his arrest. On Tuesday, July 4, 2017, we received information that confirmed he had died due to torture inside the area's branch.

Amal Abdul Karim, from Hama city, born in 1994. In April 2015, she was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint on the road between Qal'at al Madiq, northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate and Hama city. Her family confirmed to us that she was in good health before her arrest. On Monday, September 11, 2017, we received information that confirmed she had died due to torture inside Palestine branch, a detention center in Damascus city.

Ahmad [Hassan Bahaa al Din](#), a student at the industrial institute, from Tadmur city, eastern suburbs of Homs governorate, born in 1995. In 2014, he was arrested by Syrian regime forces in Homs city. On Sunday, October 15, 2017, we received information that confirmed he had died due to torture inside a detention center.



Loay Thalja, veterinarian, a former political activist with the Syrian Communist Party, from Salqin city, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. In October 2017, he was arrested by Syrian regime forces at Damascus International Airport as he was heading for Saudi Arabia. On December 6, 2017, we received information that confirmed he had died due to torture inside a detention center in Damascus city.



Veterinarian Loay Thalja, a torture victim at the prisons of the Syrian regime – December 2017

#### D. Sexual violence

We have recorded no less than five incidents of sexual violence against women in 2017. All of the five incidents took place inside Syrian regime detention centers during inspection, where women detainees are forced to unclothe and subjected to sexual molestation under the pretense of molestation. In addition, women are subjected to verbal sexual violence during interrogation and accused of sleeping with fighters from the armed opposition. Also, women detainees can be sexually exploited in exchange for meeting some of her personal needs, such as new clothes, allowing her family to visit her, or make a phone call.

It is hard for women to reveal to us that they were the subject of sexual violence in light of the Syrian society's culture that stigmatize such revelations. As such, women abstain from revealing such incidents so they won't face alienation by their families and communities or even death threats.

#### E. Violations against children's rights

Indiscriminate or deliberate bombardment doesn't distinguish, especially in residential areas, between a child, a man, or a woman. However, the rising rate of children's deaths reflect that residential areas are being targeted, as well as the indiscriminate nature of the bombardment and the lack of distinction or even proportionality in these types of attacks. Syrian regime forces killed no less than 754 children. What is even more appalling and barbaric is the fact that one of those was killed inside a detention center in light of the torture that doesn't take into consideration his sensitive physical nature.



Children in Syria have suffered from cumulative repercussions that resulted from the daily bombardment and destruction where no less than 1,156 schools and kindergartens have been damaged since March 2011, putting no less than 2.5 million children inside Syria out of school. Also, the health sector was damaged with vaccination rates decreasing, not to mention the psychological ramifications that are almost impossible to predict in the foreseeable or long future.

You can see our recent report: [“Children of Syria...The Glaring Letdown”](#) which documents violations against children in Syria since March 2011.

Wednesday, May 10, 2017, Syrian regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on Smouma village, which is administratively a part of Maskana county, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The attack resulted in the killing of 12 civilians, including eight children and two women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Saturday, September 16, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at a boat that was being used by civilians who were attempting to flee via Euphrates River from Mouhasan city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Ezour governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of six civilians from the same family, including three children. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, October 31, 2017, around 10:30, Syrian regime forces stationing in al Mleiha town, which is [adjacent](#) to Jisreen town, fired a mortar shell that landed in front of the main entrance to [Mohammad Nasser Ash'oush School](#) in Jisreen town, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of [six civilians](#), including five children while no less than 20 children students were wounded. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Amer al Ghoutani<sup>3</sup>, a paramedic at a medical center in Jisreen town, said: **“We received nine children, five of whom died immediately while the remaining five were injured. One of the children is named Mohammad Kaboush, and he had both of his lower limbs amputated, and have sustained injuries in the abdomen and urinal system.”** Amber added that the bombardment happened a few hours after the U.N. delegation left Jisreen town: **“One of the children’s father started screaming and saying that he doesn’t want the aids and food supplies the delegation brought with them. He just wanted his son to be healthy and well again.”**

---

<sup>3</sup>We contacted him via Facebook







Injured children after Syrian regime forces fired a mortar shell near Mohammad Nasser Ash'oush School in Jisreen  
– October 31, 2017

## 2- Violations relating to the conduct of hostilities

### A. Unlawful attacks

#### 1- Aerial and artillery bombardment

Syrian regime forces have used blind barrel bombs, scud missiles, and other weapons of indiscriminate bombardment throughout Syria. 95% of these attacks were highly indiscriminate, lacking any mechanism to distinguish between fighters and civilians while the remaining 5% targeted fighters' bases or military centers. Nonetheless, the majority of these attacks haven't taken into consideration the principle of proportionality in case the military center was surrounded by non-military buildings.

Syrian regime forces used no less than 6,243 barrel bombs in 2017, compared to 12,958 barrel bombs at least dropped by the Syrian regime's air arsenal in 2016.

Wednesday, January 4, 2017, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on al Jabiriya village, eastern suburbs of Homs governorate, which resulted in the killing of three civilians. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Thursday, February 16, 2017, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped two barrel bomb on the residential buildings near the public road in the middle of al Habeit village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of four civilians, including one female child and one woman. The village was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

Monday, May 8, 2017, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on Debsi Afnan village, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of three civilians, including one child. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Tuesday, June 27, 2017, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on al Ajami village, northwestern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the killing of two women (a mother and her daughter). The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Friday, October 20, 2017, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped three barrel bombs on Theyban town, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of three children. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

## 2- Sniping attacks

Sniping within cities is different than other forms of combat seeing that a sniper can properly lurk and look at their victim through the scope, which makes sniping similar to executions. In that, the killer is fully aware of the identity of their victim before deliberately killing the victim whether it was a child, elder, woman, or even a disabled person, and certainly without knowing the religious beliefs of the victim.

In 2017, we recorded the killing of 77 civilians, including 13 children and seven women, at the hands of government snipers.

Thursday, May 25, 2017, we recorded the killing of Amin al Refa'i by a Syrian regime forces sniper as he was trying to leave al Hajar al Aswad neighborhood, which is besieged by Syrian regime forces, in southern Damascus city.

Monday, October 2, 2017, a Syrian regime forces sniper, stationing inside the Heart Hospital building in Deir Ez-Zour city, targeted and killed Eman Jasim al Hamoud al Suliman, woman, in Mhaimeda town, western suburbs Deir Ez-Zour governorate.

## B. Individuals and objects under specific protection

### 1- Hospitals and workers in the health sector

Syrian regime forces have continued to target hospitals, medical points, and pharmacies, in addition to the repeated targeting of workers in the medical field either through direct killing, torture in prisons, or abduction and restriction. Operations targeting civil defense teams, who work on aiding the wounded in armed opposition factions-held areas, have been escalated. All of this drove medical personnel, particularly medical specialists, to flee out of fear of being killed, tortured, or forcibly-disappeared, which further overwhelmed the few who decided to stay as we monitored cases where veterinarians, dentists, and nurses



found themselves forced to conduct surgeries that require specialists. All of this have increasingly worsened the medical situation in general.

We have recorded that Syrian regime forces killed no less than 32 medical personnel. Also, we have recorded that Syrian regime forces were responsible for no less than 37 attacks on hospitals and medical points. In contrast, we have documented that 41 medical personnel were killed by Syrian regime forces, in addition to no less than 88 attacks on medical facilities.

We have noticed that Syrian regime forces deliberately target some medical facilities in a repeated manner which clearly aims to inflict as much damage as possible to these facilities and deny civilians their services. We have documented that several vital civilian facilities, which were the last in their respective areas, such as the last hospital or school have been rendered out of commission due to the Syrian regime's bombardment, as well as its allies, on these facilities. This was the case in a number of areas.

### **Most notable victims among medical personnel**

Saturday, January 7, 2017, we recorded that [Ryad al Dalati](#), a 35-year-old nurse from Bas-sima town, Wadi Barada area, northwestern Damascus suburbs governorate who works as a room nurse with the Medical Commission in Wadi Barada, was shot and killed by a sniper from Syrian regime forces and its pro-regime militias who were stationing on the outskirts of the town. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident, with a minor presence for fighters from Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.

Tuesday, April 4, 2017, we recorded the killing of Emad al Din Mohammad al Qadah, a pharmacist, along with his children and a number of his family members who all suffocated to death after fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes (Su-22) fired a missile loaded with a poison gas on al Shamali neighborhood, Khan Sheikhoun city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Pharmacist Emad al Din al Qadah, suffocated to death in an attack by Syrian regime warplanes using poison gases on Khan Sheikhoun – April 4, 2017

Thursday, June 29, 2017, we recorded the killing of [Khadija Khaled Dmairi](#), a female nurse, from Talbisa city, northern suburbs of Homs governorate, born in 1968, worked at the children's wing at Talbisa Makeshift Hospital, married and a mother of one daughter. Khadija was killed in a shelling by Syrian regime rocket launchers that fired a number of rockets at Talbisa city. One of the rockets landed in front of her house where she was sitting as the shrapnel hit her head and shoulder, promptly killing her. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

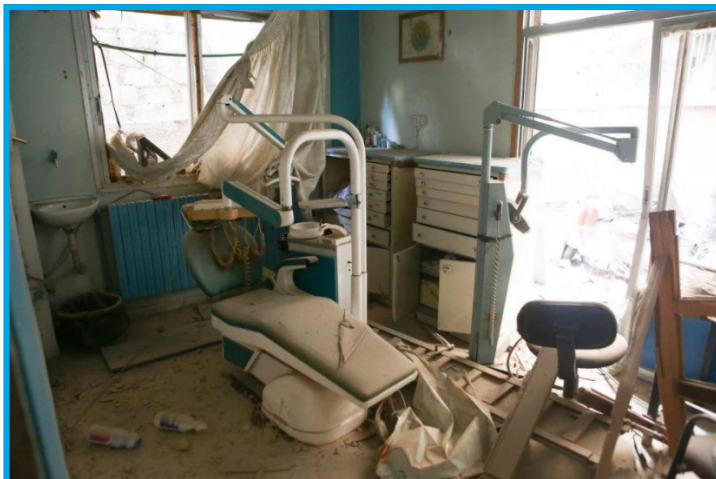
### **Most notable attacks on medical facilities**

Wednesday, January 11, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a missile [near a hospital](#) in Tafas city, southern suburbs of Daraa governorate. The hospital building and its cladding materials were moderately damaged. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Monday, February 6, 2017, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs near Kafr Zita Specialized Hospital in Kafr Zita city, northern suburbs of Hama governorate. The hospital building and its equipment were heavily damaged as the hospital was temporarily rendered out of commission. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

Friday, October 6, 2017, around 12:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a missile near [Shefaa Medical Institutions](#)- houses a number of clinics, [medical laboratories](#), and a pharmacy- in Douma city, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate. The building was [partially destroyed](#) and its cladding materials and [medical equipment](#) were heavily damaged as the building was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.





Damages in Shefaa Medical Institution in the aftermath of an attack by fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes in Douma city, Damascus suburbs – October 6, 2017

## 2- Workers in the religious field and cultural properties

Syrian regime forces haven't excluded places of worship, such as mosques, churches, and others, from their daily bombardments. In some cases, these places were deliberately targeted. Also, we recorded cases where Syrian regime forces used places of worship as bases from which they carried out attacks on nearby areas. We have recorded no less than 106 attacks on places of worship by Syrian regime forces in 2017. 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.

Saturday, January 14, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired [a number of shells](#) at al Khalaf Mosque in al Ghariya al Gharbiya town, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. [The mosque building](#), its cladding materials, and furniture were heavily damaged. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Monday, April 24, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a missile at [Othman ben Affan Mosque](#) in Taldao city, northwestern suburbs of Homs governorate. The mosque building was heavily destroyed and its furniture were heavily damaged as the building was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Thursday, September 28, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes (Su-24) fired a number of missiles near the [southern mosque](#) in Mazra'at al Tes'a area, Sahl al Rouj area, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. The mosque building was partly destroyed and its furniture was moderately damaged. The area was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Saturday, November 18, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Fatima al Zahraa Mosque in [al Boukamal](#) city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The mosque building and its cladding materials were heavily damaged as the mosque was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Damages in Fatima al Zahraa in the aftermath of an attack by fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes on al Boukamal city, Deir Ez-Zour – November 18, 2017

### 3- Media workers

As with the past years, the Syrian government has continued its targeting of Media workers and reporters. Violations against Media workers vary and include violations such as killing and arrest. Syrian regime forces killed 17 Media workers in 2017 alone, compared to 41 Media workers killed at the hands of Syrian regime forces in 2016.

Osama Khaled al Hbali, Tuesday, May 23, 2017, we received information that confirmed he had died due to torture in Seydnaya Prison. Osama was arrested by the Syrian regime forces' Military Security on Saturday, August 18, 2012, in al Dabousiya area, suburbs of Homs governorate on the Syrian-Lebanese borders as he was coming back from Lebanon where he went to receive treatment for a [previous injury](#).

Osama, an independent Media worker, from al Khaldiya neighborhood, Homs city, born in 1988, has an intermediate education certificate, unmarried.



Sawsan al Hbali<sup>4</sup>, Osama’s sister, has told SNHR the following regarding her brother’s death: **“Members of the Military Security arrested my brother Osama on August 18, 2012, on the Syrian-Lebanese borders as he was on his way back from Lebanon where he went to get treatment. In early-2017, they told me that my brother died according to lists the regime provided in response to inquiries on the detainees’ state as part of al Wa’er neighborhood negotiations. I didn’t believe that, but I didn’t tell anyone. In early-May, I hired a lawyer to inquire about my brother’s situation, whether he was alive or not, or if there was a possibility to transfer him to Adra Prison. However, the lawyer told me that he was executed in March 2015, after a technical field-trial where he was charged with committing terrorist acts that led to the death of a person. Everyone knows that my brother was a peaceful activist who has never borne arms.”**

Adnan Qasem al Akrad. He was killed on Tuesday, September 12, 2017, by a Syrian regime forces sniper who shot him in the head as he was working on [a report documenting the breaches to the truce by Syrian regime forces in al Manshiya neighborhood](#), Daraa al Balad area, Daraa city. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Adnan, a photographer for Ferqat 18 Athar, an armed opposition faction, from Tareeq al Sad neighborhood, Daraa al Mahata area, Daraa city, born in 1991, has a high school diploma, unmarried.

SNHR contacted the Media worker Abu Mahmoud al Hourani<sup>5</sup>, a friend of Adnan’s, who told us:” **As Adnan was in al Manshiya neighborhood working on a report documenting the breaches by Syrian regime forces to the truce, he was shot by a Syrian regime forces sniper. He was rushed to Eisa Ajjaj Hospital in Tareeq al Sad neighborhood where he drew his last breathe.”**



Adnan Qasem al Akrad after he was killed by a Syrian regime sniper – September 12, 2017



Adnan Qasem al Akrad

<sup>4</sup>We contacted her via Facebook

<sup>5</sup>We contacted him via WhatsApp



## C. Use of Prohibited weapons

### 1- Chemical weapons

According to SNHR archive, the Syrian regime has been responsible for 17 attacks with poison gases since the start of 2017, at the time of this writing, compared to 14 attacks in 2016. Therefore, the Syrian regime has breached all relevant Security Council resolutions: 2118, 2209, and 2235.

Chemical attacks in 2017 resulted in the killing of 96 civilians, including 33 children and 23 women.

Khan Sheikhoun attack on April 4, 2017, was the largest attack that resulted in the greatest death toll where the Syrian regime used sarin gas according to the Commission of Enquiry and the Joint Investigative Mechanism. Even though the American administration targeted Shayrat Military Airbase on April 7, 2017, the airbase from which the warplanes that were responsible for Khan Sheikhoun attack took off, the Syrian regime hasn't stopped using chemical weapons by resorting to attacks of smaller scale that don't result a large number of victims and injuries. According to our records, the Syrian regime has carried out no less than seven attacks using poison gases after Khan Sheikhoun attack.

Monday, January 20, 2017, between 15:00-16:00, Syrian regime forces shelled no less than [four shells](#) loaded with [poison gases](#) that targeted al Nashabiya battlefield in al Marj area, Eastern Ghouta, Damascus suburbs. 11 armed opposition fighters exhibited suffocation symptoms as a result of the attack. The area was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Doctor Anas<sup>6</sup>, a staffer at al Marj Hospital, said that he contacted the medical staff that took in the injuries and they told him about the symptoms they showed: **“The injured exhibited symptoms such as breathing difficulties, miosis, and foaming. They were 11 fighters from Jaish al Islam. Case 3 required oxygen, dexamethasone, and atropine while we exposed the others to fresh air with water spray and bronchus extender.”** The doctor added that he met one of the people who witnessed the chemical attack: **“He told me that he identified a green-colored gas that was released from the shells, and that he suffered from breathing difficulties and immediately left the place, and needed a few hours to recover. This statement makes me think that chlorine gas was used rather than a nerve agent given that the symptoms were less severe.”**

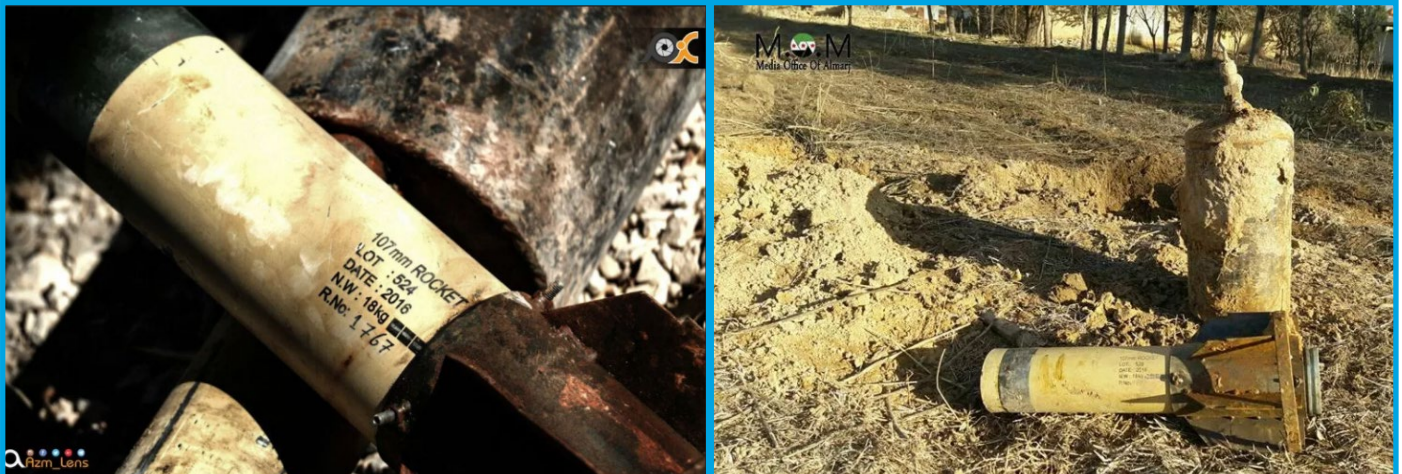
The medical office in al Marj area has released [a statement](#) on the incident.

---

<sup>6</sup>We contacted him via Skype







Ground shells alleged to be loaded with poison gases that were found after an attack by the Syrian regime on one of the opposition battlefronts, al Marj area, Damascus suburbs – January 30, 2017

Irbeen city, Damascus suburbs – Thursday and Friday, February 9-10, 2017

Syrian regime forces used ground [shells loaded](#) with [poison gases](#) on Irbeen [battlefront](#) in Damascus suburbs. [The attack took place](#) on Thursday dawn where [four](#) of the armed opposition fighters were injured while the Friday's [attack](#) was around 16:00 and [two](#) armed opposition fighters [were injured](#). The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

The symptoms exhibited by the injured were almost identical – breathing difficulties and irritated respiratory mucosa while others suffered from foaming.

Irbeen Surgical Hospital's YouTube channel has uploaded a [video](#) showing one of the injured and another person explaining the symptoms that were seen in the aftermath of the attack on February 9. That person said that they were agitated, and suffering from faintness and breathing difficulties as irritated respiratory mucosa and foaming. He added that treatment involved giving them doses of steroids and atropine while pulling out the secreted matters.

In another YouTube [video](#), two people were shown as one of them was put on a respiratory device while someone, appears to be a paramedic, said that the symptoms seen on the injured in the aftermath of the February 10 attack were less severe than the ones seen on the injured after the attack on the previous days. The person added that they suffered from dizziness and dyspnea.



An official<sup>7</sup> at the media office of Failaq al Rahman, a media group that is affiliated with Failaq al Rahman faction, told us that Syrian regime forces stationing at the government hall in Eastern Ghouta were responsible for using the gas-loaded shells: **“According to what we’ve recorded, the shell used on February 9, might be a mortar or an RBG shell while the February 10 attack was most likely an RBG shell.”**

A report published by UOSSM, which is a relief organization that works on providing medical aids, said in a [report](#) that the two chemical attacks on February 9 and February 10 in Irbeen city have caused similar symptoms on the injured. The report added that these symptoms were breathing difficulties, losing consciousness, foaming, and severe agitations.



An injured in the aftermath of the Syrian regime's poison gas attack on an armed opposition battlefield in Irbeen, Damascus suburbs – February 9, 2017

Monday, April 3, 2017, around 21:15, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped two barrel bombs loaded with [poison gases](#) that fell in al Janoubi neighborhood, al Habbit village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, to kill [one infant](#) who suffocated to death while 13 civilians from two families were injured. The village was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

<sup>7</sup> We contacted him via Telegram







An infant who suffocated to death as Syrian regime warplanes dropped a barrel bomb loaded with a poison gas on al Hbeit, Idlib – April 3, 2017



Injured children in the aftermath of an attack by Syrian regime warplanes who dropped a barrel bomb loaded with a poison gas, al Hbeit, Idlib – April 3, 2017



## 2- Cluster munitions

SNHR has documented no less than 10 attacks using cluster munitions by Syrian regime forces between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2017, while we've documented no less than 22 attacks using cluster munitions by Syrian regime forces in 2016.

Monday, June 26, 2017, between 18:50 and 19:00, two fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes carried out two airstrikes on Dael city, central suburbs of Daraa governorate, using RBK-500 missiles loaded with PTAB-1M cluster submunitions. The first airstrike targeted the residential market area, injuring 18 civilians, including six children and seven women, whereas the second airstrike targeted an agricultural land on the western outskirts of the city where we didn't record any injuries in the second attack. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Khaled Abu Salah<sup>8</sup>, head of the media office at [Nabd Houran Hospital](#) in Dael city, said that he heard an announcement from the “central signal” which said that two Syrian regime forces warplanes are soaring in Dael city around 19:00. A few minutes later, he heard an explosion followed by the sound of smaller explosions that was similar, according to him, to the sound of fireworks: **“We received about 18 injured people, including six children and seven women. Most of the injuries were caused by small shrapnel. There were five pieces of shrapnel at least in each injured person’s body. The first airstrike targeted an area near the market while the second airstrike targeted an agricultural area in the west side of the city and was with two missiles of the same kind as I found out later.”**



<sup>8</sup> We contacted him via WhatsApp



Wednesday, November 15, 2017, a Syrian regime rocket launcher that was stationed in Dahiyat al Assad area in northern Kafr Batna town fired [two rockets loaded](#) with O-10 submunitions that targeted the northeastern neighborhoods in Kafr Batna city, Damascus suburbs governorate, and injured five civilians at least. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Anas Abu Ayman<sup>9</sup>, a photographer who works for Ghouta Media Center, told us that the shelling was nearly at 08:00. He added that he saw a rock exploding in the sky and small bombs exploding in the air: **“The small bombs scattered over a radius of 50-100 meters. One of the bombs exploded near me, but I wasn’t hurt. The bombs were long and thin and were carried out by parachutes. Among the injured were a 10-year-old boy and a woman who was found injured inside her house. These tiny bombs cause serious injuries and can fragmentize easily. The attack lasted for hours, and I counted six rockets at least that were loaded with the same kind of bombs.”**



Small O-10 cluster submunitions fired from a surface-to-surface Syrian regime forces rocket launcher that were found in Kafr Batna, Damascus – November 15, 2017

### 3- Incendiary ammunitions

We have recorded one attack using incendiary ammunitions by Syrian regime forces, compared to three attacks in 2016.

<sup>9</sup> We contacted him via Facebook on November 18, 2017



Friday, June 6, 2017, around 00:10, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped no less than four barrel bombs [carrying](#) an incendiary substance, we believe it is napalm, in the middle of Daraa al Balad area, Daraa city. The attack targeted Daraa al Balad market and al Umari Mosque, and burned al Hassan Bakery to burn as well as [five houses](#) and the northern parts of al Umari Mosque after a barrel bomb landed on it.

#### D. Siege

Syrian regime forces have resorted to a siege policy against the armed opposition factions' areas of control, which was the case in northern suburbs of Homs governorate, a number of towns in Damascus suburbs' Eastern Ghouta, and areas in southern Damascus. The last- ing siege caused widespread cases of malnutrition and dehydration. In addition, a number of disease ran rampant as a result of the pollution which was caused by the mounting piles of trash and a damaged sewage system. All of this resulted in the death of 34 civilians, including 14 children and nine women in 2017.

Tuesday, July 18, 2017, we recorded that female child Fatima Shalla died due to lack of medical supplies in the armed opposition-held Kafr Batna town, Eastern Ghouta in light of a siege imposed by Syrian regime forces.

- Violations perpetrated by the active Shiite militias in Syria

Signs for Shiite fighters and factions fighting with 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 Shiite figure Muqtada al Sadr as reports surfaced about him recruiting and sending fighters to Syria. The major development, however, regarding Shiite factions' presence in Syria was in the summer of 2012 when Liwa Abu al-Fadhal al-Abbas emerged and more and more calls were being made for the Shiites to head for Syria and fight to protect the Shiite shrines, in general, and al Sayeda Zaynab shrine in particular. All of this went hand-in-hand with a huge sectarian propaganda campaign launched by various media outlets that ranged from daily newspapers to TV channels, as well as on social media. In April 2013, the Lebanese group Hezbollah publicly stated that they will 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 as more and more Shiite groups were emerging where those groups were affiliates of their mother factions in Iraq, highlighting an important state of allegiance for most of the Shiite political and military forces in Iraq in favor of the Syrian regime. This also applies to the Iraqi government who facilitated the flow of fighters into Syria as more signs were 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 the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. While the majority of the Shiite fighters who supported the Syrian regime on sectarian basis were Iraqis and Lebanese, we documented the existence, and the death, of fighters descending from various nationalities: Afghanis, Pakistanis, Yemenis, and even African nationalities. In 2017, the [Shiite militias'](#) involvement [was clearly prominent](#) in the battles the Syrian regime launched in September 2017 in Deir Ez-Zour government that aimed to seize the border villages on the border line between Syria and Iraq all the way to al Boukamal in eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour.

## **Conclusions**

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

## **B. Russian forces**

### **A. Extrajudicial killing**

2017 marked the second anniversary of the start of the Russian intervention in Syria that commenced on September 30, 2015. In 2017, Russian forces concentrated their attacks on Idlib and Hama governorates as well as eastern regions such as Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zour governorates. We have recorded hundreds of attacks in which Russian forces had deliberately targeted civilians and vital civilian facilities.

We have recorded the killing of 1,436 civilians, including 439 children and 284 women (adult female), at the hands of Russian forces in 2017. Also, Russian forces were responsible for 83 massacres. It is worth noting that 2017's toll equated to half of the preceding year's, as Russian forces killed 3,967 civilians, including 1,042 children and 684 women in 2016.





Friday, April 7, 2017, around 01:00, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile at the northwestern parts of al Latamena town, northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate, which resulted in the killing of three individuals from the same family (a father, a mother, and one female child). Also, the bombardment caused huge destruction in the shelter where they were hiding. The area was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Manaf al Saleh<sup>10</sup>, head of the civil defense center in al Latamena who visited the attack site in the aftermath of the attack, said that “central signal” operators announced that there are Russian warplanes soaring in al Latamena town. The bombing took place at approximately 01:05 on the northwestern neighborhood. Manaf added that the bombardment targeted a cave where a family sought shelter: **“The missile penetrated a cave underground where a family of three individuals, including a little girl, took shelter. After rescue attempts that lasted for hours, we found them dead.”** Manaf described the destruction caused by the bombardment, and said that the missile created a hole of a depth of six meters and a diameter of 15 meters: **“It was a thermobaric missile. I was able to determine that judging from the size of destruction and the sound of the explosions as these types of missiles go through the ground and explode inside.”**



A father and his daughter who died in a shelter in the aftermath of a Russian air attack on al Latamena town, Hama suburbs – April 7, 2017

<sup>10</sup> We contacted him via WhatsApp



Thursday, September 14, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at Khsham town, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 12 civilians (11 children and one woman) who were mostly from the same family – IDPs from al Boamr county in eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, September 20, 2017, between 16:00-16:15, [fixed-wing](#) warplanes we believe were Russian fired [two missiles](#) that targeted [the market](#) in Qal’at al Madiq town, northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate, which resulted in [the killing](#) of [seven civilians](#), including two children and [three women](#). In addition, [a number of shops](#) and residential buildings were heavily destroyed. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Abu Stief<sup>11</sup>, a “central signal” operator who works on tracking calls between military airbases and pilots and can identify from which airbase the warplane took off, said that he monitored an Su-24 Russian warplane before Qal’at al Madiq attack, and confirmed that the warplanes were responsible for targeting the market.



Child Khaled Eyas al Jaddoua' who was killed in a Russian air attack that targeted the market in Qal’at al Madiq town, Hama – September 20, 2017



Female child Mirna Khaled al Jaddoua' who was killed in a Russian air attack that targeted the market in Qal’at al Madiq town, Hama – September 20, 2017

<sup>11</sup> We contacted him via WhatsApp on October 28, 2017



Munir <sup>12</sup>, a member of the local council of Qal'at al Madiq town, said: **“I couldn't see the warplane or hear it soaring before the bombardment. All I have heard was the sound of the missile's explosion. This suggests that the bombing was by a Russian warplane. The first missile landed on the town market, before the warplane carried out another attack a few minutes later. I headed for the site and the destruction was huge, and the market was turned into rubbles.”** Munir confirmed that there were no military presence for the opposition in the market, and added that there weren't any weapon warehouses or rocket launchers for the opposition nearby: **“It was a civilian market. In mere minutes, it was turned into ashes and people and vendors have been turned into scattered parts. 10 martyrs were killed in the bombardment, including three children and two women.”**



Damages in the market of Qal'at al Madiq town, Hama suburbs, in the aftermath of a Russian air attack – September 20, 2017

Sunday, November 19, 2017, around 19:00, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired [a missile](#) at a residential neighborhood in the middle of Madyara town, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of eight civilians, including one woman. Most of [the victims](#) were from one family (a father, a mother, and their four children) while no less than 15 civilians were injured, including children. In addition, a number of residential buildings were heavily destroyed. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

<sup>12</sup> We contacted him via the local council's\* official Facebook page on October 28, 2017, which is an opposition body that governs the civilian matters in the town.





Omran Abu Salloum <sup>13</sup>, a journalist, said that the bombing being at night and the nature of the explosion's sound and size, in addition to the fact that the missiles were fired from a high altitude, all suggest that the attack was Russian: "The missile targeted a two-floor building that contains a shelter. The building was destroyed completely along with the shelter. The bombardment killed an entire family that were buried in rubbles and their dead bodies were reduced to mere body parts. The sight of the victims was painful to see." Omran confirmed that the targeted area had no military presence or any weapon warehouses for the opposition that would justify such an attack.



Friday, December 8, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired [four missiles](#) at houses in al Zarzour village, which is administratively a part of al Taman'a town, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The bombardment [killed seven civilians](#) at once (five children and two women). The village was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

---

<sup>13</sup> Via Facebook





Heba Zkad al Mohammad – Fatima Shehada al Sayel – Haya Amer al Mohammad  
Three female children who were killed in a Russian air attack on al Zarzour village, Idlib suburbs – December 8, 2017

## B. Targeting medical personnel and their facilities

We have documented the killing of 12 medical personnel in attacks we believe were Russian between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2017, in addition to 47 attacks on medical facilities in the same period of time. In contrast, we have recorded the killing of 36 medical personnel at least and approximately 77 attacks on medical facilities in 2016.

### **Most notable victims among medical personnel**

Khadouj Ahmad Abdul Ghafour, woman, pharmacist, from Sarmada town, northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, a wife and mother. She was killed on Thursday, March 16, 2017, in a bombing by fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian that fired a number of missiles at her house on the road leading to al Jina village from Ibein Sam'an town in western suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The area was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

[Assad Gharbi al Suliman](#), pharmacist, from al Mayadeen city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, born in 1975, married and a father of five. On Wednesday, October 4, 2017, he was killed in a bombing by fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian that fired a number of missiles at the water crossing between al Ashara city and Darnaj village in al Ashara city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.





Omar Ahmad Mustafa, a laboratory operator, from Kafr Karmin village, western suburbs of Idlib governorate, has a certificate from the Medical Institute, born in 1972, married and a father of five. On Monday, November 13, 2017, he was killed in a bombing by fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian that fired a number of missiles at the local market in al Atareb city, western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in a massacre. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Omar Mustafa, laboratory operator, killed in a Russian air attack on al Atareb city, Aleppo – November 13, 2017

Shuja Yousef al Zarzour, a doctor specialized in the study of ear, nose, and throat, from al Boukamal city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, born in 1963, married and a father of five (four sons and one daughter). He was killed on Thursday, November 23, 2017, in a bombing by fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian that fired a number of missiles at the water crossing in Hasrat village, which is administratively a part of al Boukamal city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in a massacre. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

### **Most notable attacks on medical facilities**

Saturday noon, March 25, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian carried out [three consecutive missile](#) airstrikes near Kafr Nobbol Surgical Hospital (formerly al Orient Hospital) in northern Kafr Nobbol city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The hospital's [fuel tank and power generator](#) were moderately damaged. Due to the [heavy bombardment](#), the hospital announced that it is out of commission. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, April 26, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian [fired a missile](#) that targeted [al Latamena Surgical Hospital](#) on the western outskirts of al Latamena town, northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate. [Three medical personnel](#) were wounded while a number of wings were damaged, as the hospital was rendered out of commission. The area was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Hama Health Administration has released [a statement](#) that says that Russian warplanes carried out an attack with highly explosive missiles that heavily damaged the hospital building and its equipment.



According to the accounts we were able to collect, the hospital building is within a fortified cave. Nonetheless, the missiles penetrated the building and widely destroyed it, which leads to believe that bunker-buster missiles were used.

Ibrahim al Shamali<sup>14</sup> , the spokesperson for Hama Health Administration, said that the bombardment was around 05:15, and it was two missiles fired by a Russian warplane, adding that “central signal” operators were the ones to determine that, in addition to the type of the destructive missile and the precision of the strike, which all strongly suggest that Russian forces were responsible for the attack: **“The missiles landed on top of the hospital that is built within a cave. The hospital’s wings were damaged and three medical personnel were injured including one who stayed under rubbles for four hours. The hospital was completely rendered out of commission.”**

Wednesday, August 9, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired missiles at the dispensary in [al Tebni](#) town, western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The dispensary building was heavily destroyed, and was rendered out of commission. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, September 27, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a missile at al Amal Hospital, known formerly as al Rih al Mursala Hospital, in [Darat Ezza](#) city, western suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The front side of the hospital was partially destroyed and its furniture was moderately damaged as the hospital was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

### C. Targeting Media workers

We have documented the killing of four medical personnel in attacks we believe were Russian between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2017. In contrast, 11 Media workers were killed by Russian forces in 2016.

Wednesday, March 22, 2017, Media worker Abdul Hadi Emad Bekdash was killed in a bombing by fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian that fired a missile at his house in al Taybat village, which was administratively a part of Jisr al Shoghour city, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

---

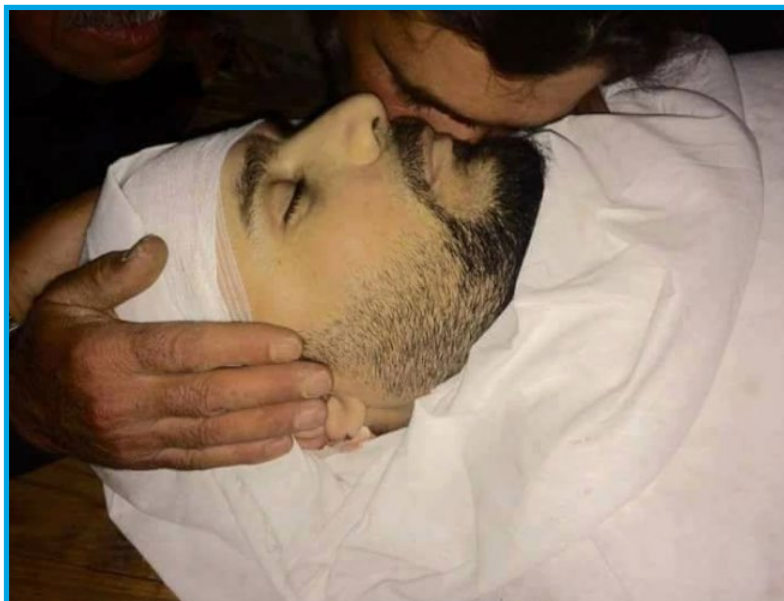
<sup>14</sup> We contacted him via WhatsApp



Abdul Hadi, works as a photographer for the media office of Ahrar al Sham Movement, an armed opposition faction, from Mazeyn village, suburbs of Latakia governorate, born in 1991, a university student at the faculty of economics – department of business management at Tishreen University, unmarried.

Wednesday, April 26, 2017, Media worker [Mousab Abdul Rahim Ahmad Urabi](#) died of an abdomen [injury sustained](#) in a bombing by fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian who fired a missile that landed near him as he was covering a vaccination campaign in al Janoudiya town, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. The town was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

Mousab, head of the Qatari Red Crescent's media office in Syria, and director of Tube Rasd Network in Syria, from al Atareb city, western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1983, has an intermediate education certificate, married and a father of one son and one daughter. Abdul Rahman Abdullah<sup>15</sup>, a relative of Mousab's, said: **“As Mousab was covering the vaccination campaign, which is being conducted in coordination between the Support Coordination Unit, the Qatari Red Crescent, and the vaccination administration in al Janoudiya, Russian warplanes carried out an airstrike on the town with a number of missiles. One of the missiles landed near the car Mousab was in, and the shrapnel injured his abdomen and the pelvis in addition to the shrapnel that hit his left hand, which was disfigured. Mousab needed a specialist to treat him, so he was sent to a hospital in Idlib suburbs. However, he died before he got to the town. There was a doctor along with Mousab who was injured as well, but he, thankfully, survived.”**



Mousab Urabi after he was killed in a Russian air attack on al Janoudiya town, Idlib – April 26, 2017



Mousab Abdul Rahim Ahmad Urabi

<sup>15</sup> We contacted him via Facebook



## D. Use of prohibited weapons

### 1- Cluster munitions

Russian forces have used cluster munitions, especially air-dropped. The number of documented attacks in 2017 was no less than 47 attacks that were mostly in Idlib, Hama, and Aleppo suburbs, compared to 149 attacks that were recorded in 2016.

Sunday, March 12. 2017, around 12:30, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a [RBK-500 missile loaded](#) with [PTAB-1M cluster](#) submunitions that targeted the agricultural lands in northern Khan Sheikhoun city, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

Monday, April 10. 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired at least one RBK-500 missile carrying AO-2.5RTM or AO-2.5RT cluster submunitions that targeted a [main road](#) in Qastoun village, northeastern Hama governorate, which injured [one civilian](#) (Hasan Suliman al Sheikh). The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



A small AO-2.5RTM or AO-2.5RT cluster submunition found in the aftermath of an air attack we believe was Russian in Qastoun, Hama – April 10, 2017

Friday, September 29, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of RBK-500 missiles loaded with ShOAB-0.5 cluster submunitions that targeted al Taman'a town, which resulted in the killing of three civilians (one child and two women) while others were wounded. The area was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.







A small ShOAB-0.5 cluster submunition found in the aftermath of an air attack we believe was Russian in al Taman'a, Idlib – September 29, 2017

## 2- Incendiary ammunitions

SNHR has documented no less than 35 attacks using incendiary ammunitions by forces we believe were Russian between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2017. Most of these attacks took place in Hama and Idlib suburbs. In 2016, Russian forces used incendiary ammunitions in 78 attacks, the majority of which took place in Aleppo governorate. These weapons were used on residential and agricultural areas as we didn't record any incidents where these weapons were used on the battlefronts with armed opposition factions as it was only used in populated areas.

Sunday, March 26, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired [two missiles](#) loaded with [incendiary bombs](#) that targeted Um al Sier [IDPs Camp](#) between Termalla and Ma'aret Harma villages, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, with no injuries recorded as the bombs landed in the agricultural lands on the outskirts of the camp. The area was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.







Remnants and signs of incendiary ammunitions found in aftermath of an air attack we believe was Russian near Um al Sier Camp, Idlib suburbs – March 26, 2017

Saturday, April 8, 2017, around 15:08, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian used [incendiary weapons](#) to target the agricultural lands 2-3 km to the northwest of al Latame-na town, towards al Zaka village, [northwestern](#) suburbs of Hama governorate. The attack resulted in fires in the targeted area. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Sunday, November 12, 2017, [fixed-wing](#) warplanes we believe were [Russian](#) used [incendiary weapon](#) to target the [al Shamali and Janoubi neighborhoods](#) in Senjar town, eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate. [The attack resulted in fires in civilian houses](#). The town was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

Our investigations suggest that these neighborhoods are civilian, residential neighborhoods with no presence for Hay'at Tahrir al Sham fighters.



Remnants of an incendiary ammunitions container that was found in the aftermath of an air attack we believe was Russian in Senjar, Idlib – November 12, 2017



## **Conclusions**

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

### **C. Kurdish Self-Management forces (mainly Democratic Union Party forces – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)**

#### **A. Extrajudicial killing**

Kurdish forces joined the conflict as a main influential party 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 a body called Kurdish Self-Management forces, which was declared 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 came to be called later the Self-Management which is the Syrian branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party.

Civilian numbers killed by the Self-Management forces have doubled compared to what was documented in 2016, where 146 civilians were killed, including 24 children and 23 women (adult female), in 2016, while Self-Management forces killed 316 civilians, including 58 children and 54 women in 2017. Also, Self-Management forces were responsible for four massacres in 2017. Out of the victims killed by Self-Management forces, 56 civilians were killed by snipers, including seven children and six women.

Monday, March 27, 2017, we recorded the killing of Halima Hamadi al Shawi, a woman, in al Karama village, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate at the hands of a Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) sniper who was stationed on the outskirts of the town. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, April 12, 2017, SDF artillery fired a number of shells at Hazema village, northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of six civilians from the same family, including four children. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Saturday, May 13, 2017, SDF artillery fired a number of villages at Mazra'at al Asadiya, northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of 16 civilians who were mostly from the same family, including six children and four women while about 10 others were wounded. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

## B. Arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention

Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party) continued their acts of arbitrary arrest and enforced-disappearance in their areas of control. Arbitrary arrests targeted political activists and media figures who oppose their policies. In addition, Self-Management forces carried out wide arrests for the purpose of conscription, where they targeted civilians and didn't exclude children over 14 years of age or women.

Arbitrary arrests in 2017 were in Ifreen area, located suburbs of Aleppo governorate, and al Qameshli and Amouda in suburbs of Hasaka governorate.

Moreover, Self-Management forces made arbitrary arrests on civilians in the areas they took control of in Raqqa governorate under the pretext of being affiliates of ISIS.

SNHR has documented that Self-Management forces arrested no less than 647 individuals, including 47 children and 46 women (adult female), in their areas of control in 2017. In contrast, the number of detainees in Self-Management's prisons amounted to 673 individuals, including 55 children and 33 women.

[Idrees Ali](#), member of the political office of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, from al Derbasiya city, northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. On Thursday, September 14, 2017, he was arrested by Self-Management forces in al Derbasiya city. He was taken to an undisclosed location. He was released on Friday, September 15, 2017.

[Ismail Sinan](#), member of the political office of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, from Amouda city, northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. On Thursday, September 14, 2017, he was arrested by Self-Management forces in Amouda city. He was taken to an undisclosed location. He was released on Friday, September 15, 2017.

Hamdan Makou, child, from Kherbet al Souda village, western suburbs of Hasaka governorate, born in 2004. On Tuesday, November 21, 2017, he was arrested by Self-Management forces from his place of residence in Kherbet al Souda village for the purpose of conscription. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.





Batoul al Daoud, woman, from al Daoudiya village, northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. She was arrested by Self-Management forces from her place of residence in al Daoudiya village on November 1, 2017. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

### C. Torture inside detention centers

Self-Management forces hurtfully beat detainees on the head and break bones using Kalashnikovs or metal sticks mainly during interrogations with detainees and abductees. Also, some survivors who were previously detained spoke to SNHR of resorting to biting, electrocution, sexual molesting, and sexually extorting detainees.

In 2017, SNHR recorded that no less than five individuals died due to torture at the hands of Self-Management forces while we've recorded that six individuals died due to torture inside Self-Management forces' detention centers' in 2016.

### D. Targeting medical personnel and their facilities

SNHR has documented the killing of three medical personnel in 2017 by Self-Management forces who were also responsible for two attacks on medical facilities – three times as many violations against medical personnel as we recorded by the same party in 2016 where we recorded the killing of one medical personnel while we recorded no attacks by them in the same year.

[Mohammad Khair al Khleif](#), pharmacist, from Tal Allo al Baylouniya, northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, born in 1980, married and a father of three children. He was arrested by Self-Management forces from his place of work in al Qameshli city in December 2016. He died due to torture inside one of their detention centers. His dead body was delivered to his family on Sunday, February 19, 2017.



Pharmacist Mohammad Khair al Khleif, died due to torture inside a Self-Management forces detention center



[Ghazi Ali al Zummar, dentist](#), from al Kesrat village, southern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, born in 1964. He died of wounds on Sunday, July 2, 2017 after he was shot by a Kurdish-majority SDF sniper, who stationed on the outskirts of al Kesrat village, on Monday, June 26, 2017.



Ghazi Ali al Zummar, dentist, killed by a SDF sniper in al Kesrat village, Raqqa suburbs – July 2, 2017

## **Conclusions**

**Kurdish Self-Management forces have violated many basic rights, including the right to life. Also, these forces carried out many violations such as torture and enforced-disappearance, which all constitute crimes against humanity, in addition to a number of war crimes through indiscriminate shelling, displacement, looting, abduction, and torture.**

### **D. Extremist Islamic groups**

1- ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State)

#### **A. Extrajudicial killing**

SNHR has documented that ISIS killed 1,421 civilians in 2017, including 281 children and 148 women (adult female), and committed 19 massacres at least. ISIS, on the other hand, killed 1,510 civilians in 2016, including 258 children and 213 women.

Most of the victims were killed by landmines planted by ISIS in the areas from which they retreated, especially in Raqqa governorate where we monitored that ISIS fighters planted landmines inside houses and on routes that might be used by civilians in the course of fleeing.

Wednesday, January 25, 2017, a number of ISIS fighters snuck to al Mahmoudi village, which is under the control of the Kurdish-majority SDF, and shot and killed six civilians on accusations of apostasy and working with the Kurdish-majority SDF. The victims were IDPs from Abu Sakhr village, which is administratively a part of al Tabaqa city, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate, and was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident. Al Mahmoudi village is administratively a part of al Jarniya county in western suburbs of Raqqa governorate.





Thursday, May 18, 2017, ISIS artillery fired a number of mortar shells at a wedding in Harabesh neighborhood, eastern Deir Ez-Zour city, which resulted in the killing of 15 civilians, including five children and five women. The neighborhood was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

### B. Arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

In 2017, ISIS continued enforcing their policies of arbitrary arrest and enforced-disappearance against civilians in their areas of control. Arrests concentrated on civilians who violate the ISIS-imposed regulations such as smoking and failing to comply with the dress code for women. Also, ISIS targeted owners of exchange shops, internet café goers and owners, and individuals who are related to fighters from armed opposition factions. In addition, ISIS carried out arrests against civilians who tried to flee their areas through ambushes and checkpoints that ISIS set in the adjacent areas and near the clash lines – particularly in Raqqa city.

Further, ISIS resorted to arrest people for the purpose of “Sekhra”<sup>16</sup> which was mostly seen in the besieged neighborhoods of Deir Ez-Zour city, where ISIS’s Hesba members and Islamic Police carried out raids on residential neighborhoods and markets and arrested men and youngsters, before taking them to the battlefronts in the vicinity of Deir Ez-Zour Military Air-base where they are tasked with fortification and digging trenches.

In 2017, SNHR has documented that ISIS arrested no less than 539 individuals, including 75 children and 37 women (adult female) while no less than 1,419 individuals were arrested by ISIS in 2016, including 103 children and 50 women.

Ahmad al Ayed, from al Boukamal city, southwestern Deir Ez-Zour governorate, Arabic teacher in al Boukamal city. On Sunday, March 5, 2017, he was arrested by ISIS fighters who raided where he was near Khaled ben al Walid Mosque in the city. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Adnan al Shafe’i, child, from Ma’adan city, southeastern Raqqa governorate, 14-year-old, he was arrested by ISIS fighters at a checkpoint in the city. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

---

<sup>16</sup> Forcibly making individuals do hard labors without their consent



ISIS uses almost every physical and psychological method of torture adopted by the Syrian regime itself, in addition to new methods of torture that the group created in their detention centers, where we have outlined those in a [separate report](#). Method of torture vary according to charges between people who were detained for violating the ISIS-imposed regulations and detainees who were accused of opposing the group such as military fighters from armed opposition fighters, media workers, human rights activist, and workers with foreign organizations as the second category of detainees are subjected to more severe torture.

SNHR has documented that one individual died due to torture at the hands of ISIS in 2017 while eight individuals died due to torture at the hands of ISIS in 2016.

### C. Targeting medical personnel and their facilities

We have recorded that two medical personnel were killed by ISIS in 2017 - a significant drop compared to 2016 where we documented, in that year, that ISIS killed no less than 14 medical personnel and were responsible for three attacks on medical facilities.

[Mohammad Haj Qasem](#), surgeon, from Maskana town, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1958. Has a medical degree from Aleppo University, married and a father. On Saturday, March 18, 2017, he was killed by a landmine planted by ISIS in al Mansoura town, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate, as he was trying to flee Maskana town towards the Self-Management forces-held areas.

[Ibrahim Khalil al Shawwah](#), dentist. He was killed on Wednesday, August 2, 2017, by a landmine planted by ISIS near al Jisr al Qadim area, southern Raqqa city, as he was trying to flee the ISIS-held areas in Raqqa city.

### D. Targeting media workers

In 2017, we recorded the killing of 10 media workers at the hands of ISIS while 2016 saw double that number where we've recorded that ISIS killed 20 media workers in 2016.

Friday, January 13, 2017, media worker [Obayda Ahmad Hussein al Ghabghbi](#) died of an injury sustained on the day before which was caused by [shrapnel to the chest](#), face, and right hand from an artillery shell that was fired by ISIS and landed near him as he was covering clashes between ISIS and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of the west area in Hawd al Yarmouk, western suburbs of Daraa governorate. Obayda was rushed to Jordan, but he died of his injuries.

Obayda, a photographer for Lewa al Khalifa Omar ben Abdul Aziz, an armed opposition faction, from Kahil village, suburbs of Daraa governorate, born in 1991, has a high school diploma, unmarried.



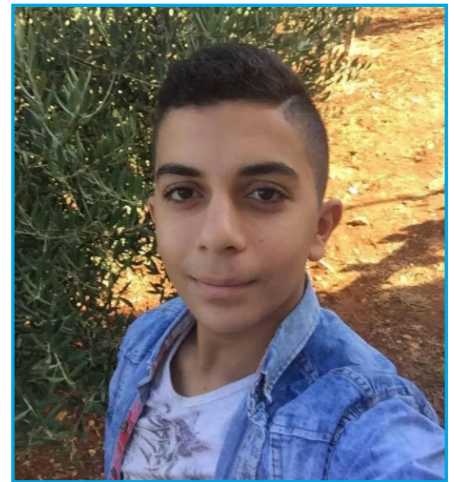


Obayda after he died of an injury caused by a shell that was fired by ISIS, Daraa suburbs – January 13, 2017



Media worker Obayda Ahmad Hussein al Ghbaghbi

Monday, August 21, 2017, ISIS executed the media worker Ali Yousef al Radi by shooting him to death in al Mayadeen city after he was arrested the day before from an internet café in al Mayadeen city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate over charges of unsanctioned media activism. Ali, a media worker, an admin on al Mayadeen Facebook page, from al Ummal neighborhood, Deir Ez-Zour city, 17-year-old.



Ali Yousef al Radi, 17-year-old, ISIS shot him to death in al Mayadeen, Deir Ez-Zour – August 21, 2017

### E. Restricting residents

ISIS enforced discriminative laws in the civilian areas under their control, and imposed sanctions for any person who violate these laws. After completely taking over Raqqa city and its suburbs, ISIS issued a statement on January 20, 2014, that included regulations affecting people's lives and privacy with respect to their day-to-day lives and movement in the city, and even their appearances. This didn't only apply in Raqqa, but in every area that was taken over by the group which also enforced new education curriculum.

ISIS barred women from walking in public without wearing specific clothes (loose cloak, hijab, veil, and gloves). Also, women weren't allowed to leave their houses without a "Muh-ram" (guardian), her husband or any person she can't legally marry. ISIS warned that anyone who violates the rules included in the statement will face punishment.



## 2- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (composed mainly of Fateh al Sham Front)

Hay'at Tahrir al Sham came into existence on January 28, 2017. The group is primarily composed of Fateh al Sham Front (primarily al Nusra Front) and a number of factions from the armed opposition (Kataeb Nour al Din Zenki, Jaish al Sunna, and other groups that broke off 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, which is considered an extremist faction.

### A. Extrajudicial killing

We have recorded that Hay'at Tahrir al Sham killed 25 civilians, including two children and one woman (adult female), in 2017 while they killed no less than 18 civilians, including one woman, in 2016.

Friday, June 30, 2017, we documented the killing of Ahmad Sabri Tqeiqa from Ihsem town, suburbs of Idlib governorate. Ahmad was killed by fighters from Hay'at Tahrir al Sham who shot him after they raided his house to arrest his brother over accusations of being an affiliate of Euphrates Shield (Turkish forces-supported factions from the armed opposition).

### B. Arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

Since it was founded on January 28, 2017, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham have been carrying out attacks on factions from the armed opposition that criticize its policies and refuse to join the group. Also, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham continues to raid areas that are not under its control in Idlib governorate. The group has relied on arbitrary arrests, security pursuits, and summons to Sharia courts, to target activists, military figures, and workers with humanitarian organizations and vital facilities, as well as civil society organization, local councils, and education and health administrations that are affiliated with the interim Syrian government<sup>17</sup>.

SNHR has documented that Hay'at Tahrir al Sham arrested nearly 304 individuals in 2017 – mainly in the areas under its control in Idlib governorate in general as well as suburbs of Hama and Aleppo governorates which are both under the group's control. Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, in contrast, arrested 234 individuals, including 16 children, in 2016.

In addition, we recorded that four individuals died due to torture inside Hay'at Tahrir al Sham prisons in 2017. 2016 saw the same number of victims who died due to torture at the hands of the group.

Ziad Imara, pharmacist, from Saraqeb city, northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. He was arrested by fighters from Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on Tuesday, December 19, 2017, in Saraqeb city. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



Sahban Wati, pharmacist, from Salqin city, western suburbs of Idlib governorate, he was arrested by fighters from Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on Monday, December 18, 2017, from his place of work in Salqin city. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Abdullah al Yasouf, warehouse guard who works with Ghoul Organization, from Harem city, western suburbs of Idlib governorate. He was arrested by fighters from Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on Monday, December 18, 2017, in Harem city. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

### C. Targeting media workers

We recorded that one Media worker was killed by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham in 2017. The Media worker is Mousab al Izzou who was killed on Wednesday, July 19, 2017, after he was shot in the abdomen by a fighter with the group as he was trying to break off a demonstration that called for ending the fighting between armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, and also aimed to prevent the group from taking over the bases of Jabhat Thwar Saraqeb in Saraqeb city, northern suburbs of Idlib governorate.

Mousab, an independent Media worker, from Saraqeb city, born in 1942, married and a father of four children.



Mousab Walid al Izzou, killed in Saraqeb, Idlib suburbs by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham fighters who shot him – July 19, 2017

## **Conclusions**

**Extremist Islamic groups have violated a number of basic rights, including the right to life. Also, these groups practiced a number of violations, such as torture and enforced disappearances which constitute crimes against humanity. In addition, these groups were responsible for a number of war crimes through indiscriminate shelling, displacement, looting, abduction, and torture.**

## **E. Factions from the armed opposition**

### A. Extrajudicial killing

Many of the armed factions that oppose the Syrian government have perpetrated a number of violations that manifested in the form of indiscriminate shelling – particularly mortar shells on Syrian regime forces-held areas. Also, infighting between the armed opposition factions

<sup>17</sup> A governing body formed by opposition entities in March 2013





themselves or clashes between factions from the armed opposition and extremist Islamic groups have put civilians' lives in danger and resulted in the killing of a large number of civilian residents. In 2017, we recorded that 186 civilians, including 45 children and 29 women, were killed by factions from the armed opposition which marks a significant drop in the rates of killing and violence considering that we documented the killing of 1,048 civilians at the hands of factions from the armed opposition in 2016, including 289 children and 210 women.

### B. Arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

In 2017, SNHR documented that factions from the armed opposition arrested no less than 231 individuals, including nine children and three women (adult female), while we've documented that factions from the armed opposition arrested 178 individuals, including six children and two women, in 2016.

Arbitrary arrests made by armed opposition factions were concentrated in 2017, in Damascus suburbs and Daraa governorates, and targeted media workers and doctors, as well as civil society organizations workers. Most of the arrests were in the form of abductions from the street.

In addition, we have recorded that no less than seven individuals died due to torture inside prisons administrated by factions from the armed opposition in 2017 whereas 10 individuals at least died due to torture at the hands of factions from the armed opposition in 2016.

[Abdul Rahman Turki al Haj](#), nurse, from al Qouriya city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. He was arrested by fighters from Lewa al Sultan Murad, an armed opposition faction, on Wednesday, November 8, 2017 at a checkpoint in Izaz city, northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Bashar al Sadat, nurse, from Hamouriya town, eastern suburbs of Damascus suburbs governorate. He was arrested by fighters from Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction, at a checkpoint in Misraba town, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate on Saturday, October 28, 2017. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

### C. Targeting medical personnel and their facilities

We have documented the killing of three medical personnel and one attack on a medical facility by armed opposition factions in 2017 while we recorded that seven medical personnel were killed by armed opposition factions in addition to four attacks on medical facilities in 2016.



[Amer Ryad Karnabba](#), paramedic, from Irbeen city, northeastern Damascus suburbs governorate. Works with al Rahman Medical Network which is affiliated to Failaq al Rahman, an armed opposition faction. He was killed on Friday, April 28, 2017, as bullets hit the ambulance he was inside during the infighting between Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction, on one side and groups affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham and Failaq al Rahman, on the other side in the city. As of this writing, we have yet to identify the group who shot Amer.

[Mohammad al Husari](#), known as Abu Yasser, paramedic with Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction, from al Hajjariya neighborhood, Douma city, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate. He was killed on Thursday, May 4, 2017, as he was shot while he was evacuating wounded during the infighting between Jaish al Islam, on one side, and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham and Failaq al Rahman, on the other side, in Eastern Ghouta. As of this writing, we have yet to identify the group who shot Amer.

Rami Khaled Najib al Zouhaili, cardiologist, from Deir Attya city, northern Damascus suburbs governorate. He was killed on Sunday, October 15, 2017, around 13:00 after a mortar shell landed in al Qashla Street in Bab Touma neighborhood, southern Damascus city. We believe that the shell was fired from an artillery stationed in an armed opposition factions-held area.



Doctor Rami Khaled Najib al Zouhaili, killed in an attack with mortar shells on Bab Touma neighborhood, Damascus – October 15, 2017

#### D. Targeting media workers

In 2017, we documented the killing of three media workers at the hands of factions from the armed opposition. 2017's death toll was smaller than 2016's where eight media workers were killed by armed opposition factions.

Monday, May 1, 2017, [Firas Mamoun Manwar](#), a photographer, died of wounds caused by gunshot from Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction, as Firas was shot in his right eye, hand, and right foot while he was transporting his family from his place of residence to a remote location from the infighting between Failaq al Rahman and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, on one side, and Jaish al Islam on the other side on the outskirts of Zamalka city, eastern Damascus



suburbs governorate. The city is under the control of factions from the armed opposition. Firas, a photographer with Failaq al Rahman, an armed opposition faction, from Zamalka city, born in 1994, has an elementary education certificate, married.

Monday, morning, May 15, 2017, [Yasser al Bwydani](#), a photographer, was killed by a gunshot from Failaq al Rahman, an armed opposition faction, and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham as he was [covering a raid](#) by Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction, on [al Ash'ari town](#), Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate. The town is under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.

Yasser, [a photographer](#) for Jaish al Islam, from Douma city, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, 20-year-old, unmarried.

## E. Siege

Some factions from the armed opposition has been imposing a siege on Kafrayya and al Fou'a towns in northern suburbs of Idlib governorate since March 2015. The imposed siege had its toll on the health and residential situation for nearly 20,000 people.

Madaya and al Zabadani towns agreements, which were struck between factions from the armed opposition and the Syrian regime, included provisions for evacuating waves of residents from the besieged towns of Kafrayya and al Fou'a in exchange of evacuating residents from Madaya and al Zabadani towns.

## Conclusions

**The aforementioned cases, among others, establish that a number of armed opposition factions have perpetrated crimes that qualify as war crimes which manifested in killings through indiscriminate shelling. Also, some opposition groups have practiced acts of torture against some of their detainees. In addition, some armed opposition factions have carried out lootings in different areas.**

## F. International coalition forces

### A. Extrajudicial killing

International coalition forces initiated their military campaign against ISIS on Tuesday, September 23, 2014. In 2017, international coalition forces escalated their attacks especially in Raqqa governorate. We have documented hundreds of unjustifiable attacks, and international coalition forces didn't take the necessary measures to minimize the huge casualties.



We have recorded the killing of 1,759 civilians, including 521 children and 332 women (adult female), by international coalition forces in 2017, meaning that international coalition killed in 2017 three times as many civilians documented in 2016, where international coalition forces killed 537 civilians, according to what we've recorded, including 158 children and 98 women. Also, international coalition forces committed no less than 113 massacres in 2017.

Friday, January 6, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces fired a number of missiles at Suwaydia Kabira village, which is administratively a part of al Tabaqa city, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of eight civilians, from the same family, including six children and one woman. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, March 8, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Matab al Bourashed village, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of 19 civilians, who were mostly from the same family, including 13 children and three women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Monday, July 3, 2017, around 01:00, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Zyanat village, which is administratively a part of Markada city, southern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of nine civilians from the same family, including seven children and one woman. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Monday, September 25, 2017, around 18:00, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired three missiles on a residential building, known as al Bik Restaurant building, near al Ma'ari School in al Qetar Street, northern Raqqa city. The bombardment resulted in the killing of 32 civilians, IDPs from Tadmur city, eastern suburbs of Homs governorate, including 16 children and 10 women. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident whereas it is currently under the control of the Kurdish-majority SDF at the time of this writing.

Wednesday, December 13, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Jerthi al Sharqi village, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 29 civilians, including 21 children and five women. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.





## B. Incendiary weapons

We have recorded two attacks using incendiary ammunitions by international coalition forces in 2017. This was the first time we record that international coalition forces used these types of ammunition since their intervention in Syria started in September 2014.

Thursday, June 8, 2017, international coalition forces used white phosphorus ammunition to target al Mashlab neighborhood (eastern Raqqa city) and al Sbahiya neighborhood (western Raqqa city). On June 9, 2017, international coalition forces resumed the attack, targeting al Sbahiya and al Roumaniya neighborhoods, western Raqqa city. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Distinct white phosphorus ammunition explosions in the sky of Raqqa city – June 8, 2017

## C. Targeting medical personnel and their facilities

According to SNHR's archive, no less than eight medical personnel were killed in 2017 by international coalition forces who were also responsible for seven attacks on medical facilities. In contrast, international coalition forces were responsible for three attacks on medical facilities in 2016 and didn't kill any medical personnel.



### **Most notable victims among medical personnel**

Hanan Mohammad Ali Hasan Hamza, female nurse, born in 1977. She was killed on Saturday, June 10, 2017, in a bombing by fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes who fired missiles at al Nour Street in al Dar'iya neighborhood, western Raqqa city. The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Nurse Hanan Hamza, killed in a bombing by fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes in al Nour Street, Raqqa city – June 10, 2017

[Mustafa Mahmoud al Sheikh](#), orthopedist, from al Bab city, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, fled to Raqqa city, born in 1968. He was killed on Saturday, August 26, 2017, in a bombing by fixed-wing international coalition warplanes who fired missiles in Raqqa city. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

[Mohammad Yousef Dib al Boshi](#), general physician, from al Bab city, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, fled to Raqqa city, born in 1988. He was killed on Thursday, August 31, 2017, in a bombing by fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes who fired missiles in Raqqa city. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

### **Most notable attacks on medical facilities**

Friday, June 23, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the National Hospital in Ma'adan city, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The hospital building was heavily destroyed as the hospital was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.





Destruction in the National Hospital in the aftermath of an attack by international coalition forces – June 23, 2017



The national Hospital in Ma'adan city

Tuesday, August 29, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Mwasa Hospital in the middle of Raqqa city. The hospital building was heavily destroyed as the hospital was rendered out of commission. The middle of the city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

### C. Targeting media workers

We have recorded that one media worker was killed by international coalition forces in 2017. The media worker is [Ahmad Sheikh Shouk](#) who was killed on Thursday, August 10, 2017, in a bombardment by international coalition forces warplanes who fired missiles in Raqqa city. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Ahmad, known as [Abu Amer al Babi](#), a media worker who works with ISIS's Amaq News Agency, from al Bab city, suburbs of Aleppo governorate, 25-year-old. Worked previously with the media office of Harakat Fajr al Islam and then Ahrar al Sham Islamic Movement, an armed opposition faction. He started working with ISIS's media office in late-2013.

### **Conclusions**

**The states of the international coalition are responsible for the violations that have occurred since the attacks started. Indiscriminate, disproportionate bombardments are explicit violations of the international humanitarian law. The crimes of indiscriminate killing constitute war crimes.**



## G. Other parties

SNHR's documentation for victims in 2017 includes a range of classifications, such as the victims who were killed in bombings with unidentified perpetrators, victims who died in fires of unknown source, victims killed by landmines of unknown sources, victims who drowned to death, and victims who were killed by the Jordanian, Lebanese, and Turkish forces. Under this category, SNHR has documented the killing of 913 civilians, including 198 children, 97 women, four victims who died due to torture, four medical personnel, and six media workers.

Also, bombings and attacks carried out by the forces mentioned in this category were responsible for seven attacks on medical facilities and no less than 26 massacres.

Thursday, January 5, 2017, a car bomb exploded in al Mal'ab al Baladi Street in Jabla city, southern suburbs of Latakia governorate, which resulted in the killing of 11 individuals, including four children, four women, and two military men who happened to be passing through the area. As of this writing, we have yet to identify the group who was responsible for the bombing. The city is under the control of Syrian regime forces.

Monday morning, February 13, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes backing Euphrates Shield forces (Turkish forces-backed armed opposition factions) fired missiles at the southeastern parts of al Bab city, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The bombardment resulted in the killing of 18 civilians, who were mostly from two families, including 10 children and five women. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, December 5, 2017, around 10:30, an IED that was planted in a small passenger bus near al Malek Hospital in al Ahram Street to the south of al Nuzha Circle in Ekrema neighborhood, southern Homs city, exploded. The bombing resulted in the killing of 10 civilians, including eight women. As of this writing, we have yet to identify the group who was responsible for the bombing due to the considerable difficulty in identifying the perpetrators of such bombing. The neighborhood was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.





## VIII. Recommendations

### Security Council

- The Security Council has to take additional steps after Resolution 2254 was adopted, which states: “... **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 destroyed, looted, and ruined.
- Expand the sanctions to include the Syrian, Russian, and Iranian regimes who are directly involved in committing crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people.

### 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.

### The United Nations special envoy to Syria

- Expand Security Council briefings rather than only limiting them to the violations of al Nusra Front and ISIS
- Condemn the perpetrators of the crimes, the massacres, and those who were primarily responsible for dooming the de-escalation agreements.

### The International Community

- In light of the split of the 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 would protect them from the daily killing and siege and raise the support for the relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction should be activated in local courts regarding these crimes in order to conduct fair trials for all those who were involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the “Responsibility to Protect” in tens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) after all political channels through the Arab League’s plan and then Mr. Kofi Annan’s plan have been brought out as well as the Cessation of Hostilities statements and Astana agreements that followed. Therefore, steps under Chapter VII of



the Charter of the United Nations should be taken and the norm of the “Responsibility to Protect”, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, should be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.

- Renew the pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court
- Work on fulfilling justice and achieving accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and work on activating the principle of the universal jurisdiction.

### **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 all the wounded.
- Completely cease the bombing of hospitals, protected objects, and civilian areas, and respect the customary international law.
- As a guarantor party in Astana talks, the Russian regime has to 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.
- Start making progress with respect to the detainees issue by revealing the fates of 76,000 persons who have fallen victims to the crime of enforced-disappearance at the hands of the Syrian regime.

### **The Coalition (international coalition forces and Syrian Democratic Forces)**

- The states of the coalition have to unequivocally and truly acknowledge that some of the bombardment operations have resulted in the killing of innocent civilians. Denying so won't do any good for these governments, as documented human rights reports and residents' accounts explicitly expose this fact. 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 SDF-supporting states 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.

### **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.

### **Acknowledgment**

We would love to thank the victims' families and relatives and all media workers from all fields who contributed effectively to this report. In addition, our most heartfelt condolences go to the victims' families.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

