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No less than Two Massacres in Syria in September 2018

No less than 206 Massacres since the Start of 2018



Children killed in a massacre by Russian forces in Jisr al Shoghour city, Idlib - September 4, 2018. By: local activist

SNHR said today that no less than two massacres were perpetrated by the parties to the conflict in Syria in September.

The report notes that the first two years of the popular uprising saw the largest portion of ethnic and sectarian cleansing massacres, where the Syrian regime and its militias were responsible for the majority of these massacres. In mid-2013, Syrian regime forces started relying heavily on warplanes and they were also used later by international coalition forces and Russian forces. The wide use of aerial bombardment doubled the numbers of victims and caused huge destruction to the infrastructure, as one or two new massacres at least are recorded almost every day.

This report draws upon the continued monitoring of news and development by SNHR team, and on accounts by survivors, eyewitnesses, and local media activists as the report contains two accounts that were collected by speaking directly to eyewitnesses and are not cited from any open

sources, in addition to analyzing a large number of videos and pictures that were posted online or sent by local activists.

According to the report, September recorded an unprecedented drop in terms of massacres as the scope of military operations by the parties to the conflict have significantly diminished after the offensive carried out by Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the fourth de-escalation zone (Idlib governorate and parts of Hama and Aleppo governorate) ended. The offensive lasted from September 4 until September 11.

The report documents no less than 206 massacres that have been perpetrated by the parties to the conflict in Syria since the start of 2018. In addition, the report records no less than two massacres in September. The report uses the term “massacre” to refer to an incident in which five peaceful individuals or more are killed in the same attack. Based on this definition, Russian forces and other parties were responsible for one massacre each.

According to the report, the massacres documented this month have resulted in the killing of 16 civilians, including 11 children (6 males and 5 females) and 4 women (adult female). This means that 94% of all victims were women and children, which is a considerably high percentage, and an indication that civilian residents were targeted in most of these massacres. The report notes that five children (four males and one female) were killed in the massacre perpetrated by Russian forces, while 11 civilians, including six children (four females and two males), and four women were killed in the massacre perpetrated by other parties.

The report stresses that Syrian-Russian alliance forces have violated Security Council resolutions 2139 and 2254 through indiscriminate attacks. Also, The Syrian and Russian regime have violated Article 7 and 8 of Rome Statute through the act of willful killing, as well as the rules of the international human rights law which guarantee the right to life. Given that these violations were committed in a non-international armed conflict, they qualify as war crimes.

The report notes that the attacks by Coalition forces (the international coalition and SDF) have caused collateral damages that involved loss of lives, injuries, or significant damages to civilian facilities. There are strong indicators suggesting that the damage was too excessive compared to the anticipated military benefit.

The report adds that the other parties carried out attacks that resulted in civilian deaths, confirming that these violations might constitute war crimes, but don't qualify as crimes against humanity as with the Syrian regime and its pro-regime forces.

The report calls on the Security Council to take additional steps after resolutions 2139 and 2254 have been adopted. Also, the report stresses that the Syrian case should be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who were involved should be held accountable, including the Russian regime whose involvement in war crimes has been proven.

In addition, the report calls for the implementation of the “Responsibility to Protect (R2P)” norm, especially after all political channels have been consumed through all agreements, as well as Cessation of Hostilities statements and Astana agreements. The report stresses that action should be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, and the “Responsibility to Protect” norm, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, should be implemented.

The report calls on the European Union and the United States of America to support the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism that was established in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 71/248, adopted on December 21, 2016. And establish local tribunals that enjoy a universal jurisdiction, and address the war crimes that were perpetrated in Syria.

Also, the report calls on the Commission of Inquiry (COI) and the International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) to launch investigations on the incidents included in this report and past reports. The report stresses that SNHR is willing to cooperate and provide more evidences and data.

Additionally, the report calls on the Russian regime and international coalition forces to launch investigations in the incidents included in the report, made the findings of these investigations public to the Syrian people, and hold all those who were involved accountable.

Further, the report calls on the SDF-supporting states to 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. And cease all forms of support, including weapons.

Lastly, the report calls on armed opposition factions to 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.

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