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QUARTERLY REPORT ON VICTIMS OF UNLAWFUL KILLINGS IN SYRIA

The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First
Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43
Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due
to torture was Documented

Wednesday 01 April 2026

268





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:

First: Background and Methodology	1
Second: Toll of Victims of Unlawful Killings in the First Quarter of 2026.....	3
Third: The Toll of Attacks against Vital Civilian Facilities in the First Quarter of 2026.....	5
Fourth: Conclusions and Recommendations.....	6
Appendix: The most prominent tasks undertaken by the Syrian Network for Human Rights in the case of extrajudicial and unlawful killings	10

FIRST: BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

This report details the number of victims whose unlawful killings in Syria during the first quarter¹ of 2026 were documented by the Syrian Network for Human Rights. These killings were perpetrated by controlling forces and armed groups, both known and unidentified. The report focuses primarily on civilian victims, with particular emphasis on those who died under torture, as well as medical and media personnel and civil defense members. It also highlights the number of massacres committed during the same period. Furthermore, the report presents the toll of attacks on vital centers and civilian infrastructure, especially those essential for the civilian population, such as medical and educational facilities. This information is based on the data the Network was able to document, while maintaining full details in its databases.

SNHR team faces numerous logistical challenges, most notably the cessation of funding for several of its programs and activities. This has directly impacted its ability to expand field monitoring, verification, follow-up, and response to reports received from various regions. Consequently, the Network was unable to document a significant number of violations that occurred during the reporting period. Therefore, the figures presented herein represent the minimum number of victims the team was able to document during the first three months of 2026. It should also be noted that some documented deaths may have occurred months or years prior; therefore, the report includes both the date of documentation and the estimated date of the incident.

The report takes into account the fundamental shifts in the power structure and areas of control in Syria since the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime on December 8, 2014, and the subsequent integration of forces, factions, and entities that emerged after the outbreak of the Syrian revolution into Syrian government institutions. A key development was the agreement reached at the end of January 2016, which stipulated the gradual integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), with its civilian formations and security and military apparatuses, into Syrian state and government institutions, in exchange for the entry of civilian, security, and military state institutions into the central areas previously under SDF control. These shifts have resulted in changes in the actors involved, the security situation, patterns of violations, and forms of accountability, all of which are considered in the legal classification, human rights analysis, and statistical analysis presented in this report.

We also note that, despite the fall of the Assad regime, we continue to document the killing of civilians by Assad forces in various ways, most notably:

- Militias affiliated with the Assad regime killing civilians or members of the Syrian security forces.
- Cluster munitions exploding as a result of previous Russian or Assad regime airstrikes.
- Civilians who were injured in previous Assad regime airstrikes and later died.

For unidentified victims whose names or any information indicating their identity has not been identified, the Network keeps their data in a special archive until new information is obtained.

1. The months of January, February, and March.

This report was based on the [methodology](#) adopted by the Syrian Network for Human Rights in monitoring, documentation and analysis, relying on the documentation and research work completed during the first quarter of 2026. It was based on a review of the Network's database and the information it contains, which was verified according to the adopted standards, in addition to benefiting from direct testimonies, field monitoring, reliable local sources, open sources, visual materials, and reports received by the Network through its official channels.

The information used by the Network undergoes a multi-layered verification process before being included in specialized databases, ensuring the highest possible degree of accuracy and reliability.

This report distinguishes between «Syrian government forces,» which are the military and security forces of the Syrian government in power after December 8, 2024, and «remnants of the Assad regime,» which are militias and armed elements that continue to operate with loyalty to or allegiance to the former Assad regime outside the framework of current state institutions.

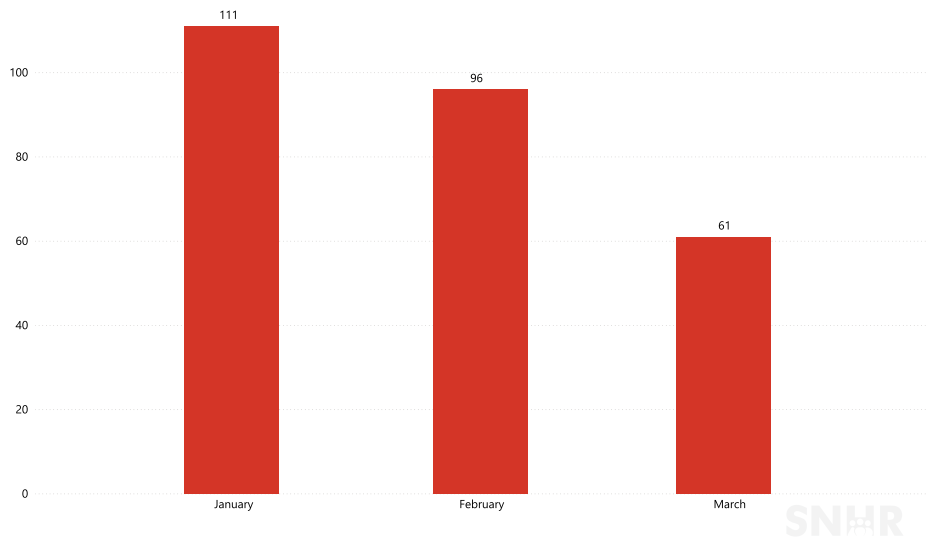
All attacks documented in this report targeted civilian areas, with no military presence recorded at the attack sites. No prior warning was issued to civilians by the attacking forces, as required by international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) bases its casualty figures solely on civilians and those considered as such, excluding combatants killed during clashes or while carrying out military operations.

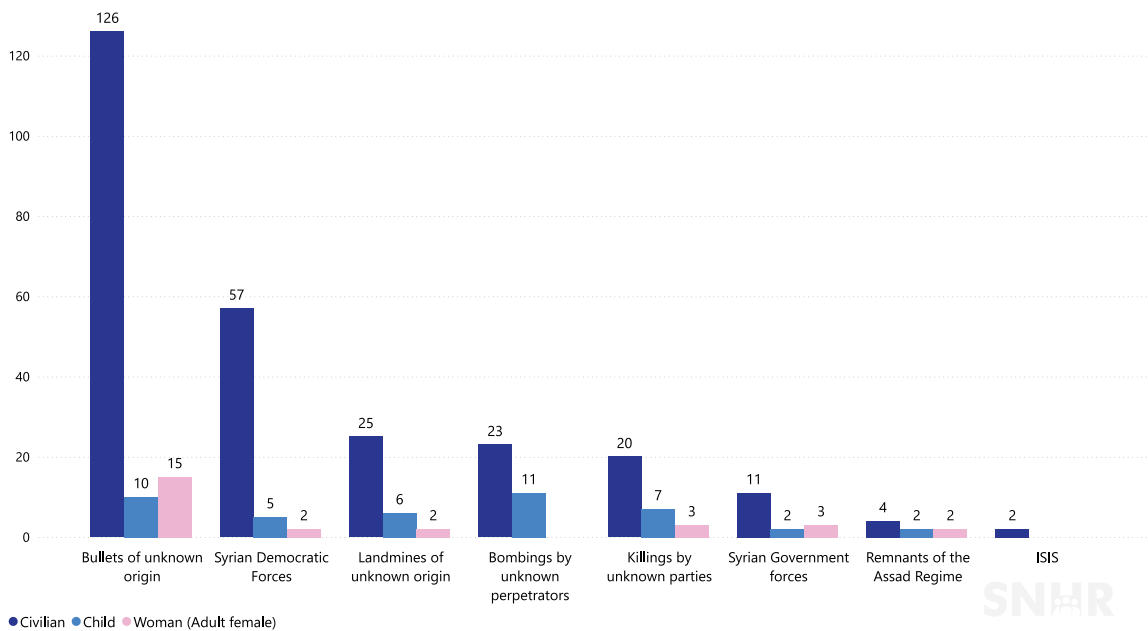
The SNHR emphasizes that the figures presented in this report represent the minimum scale and severity of the violations it was able to document and verify during the first quarter of 2026. It does not necessarily reflect the full extent of all violations committed, particularly given the significant challenges encountered in monitoring and documentation during this period.

SECOND: TOLL OF VICTIMS OF UNLAWFUL KILLINGS IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2026

SNHR documented, in the first quarter of 2026, the killing of **268 civilians** (including 43 children and 27 women, i.e. adult females), among them 8 medical personnel, 1 media personnel, 1 person due to torture, and 4 massacres, at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.



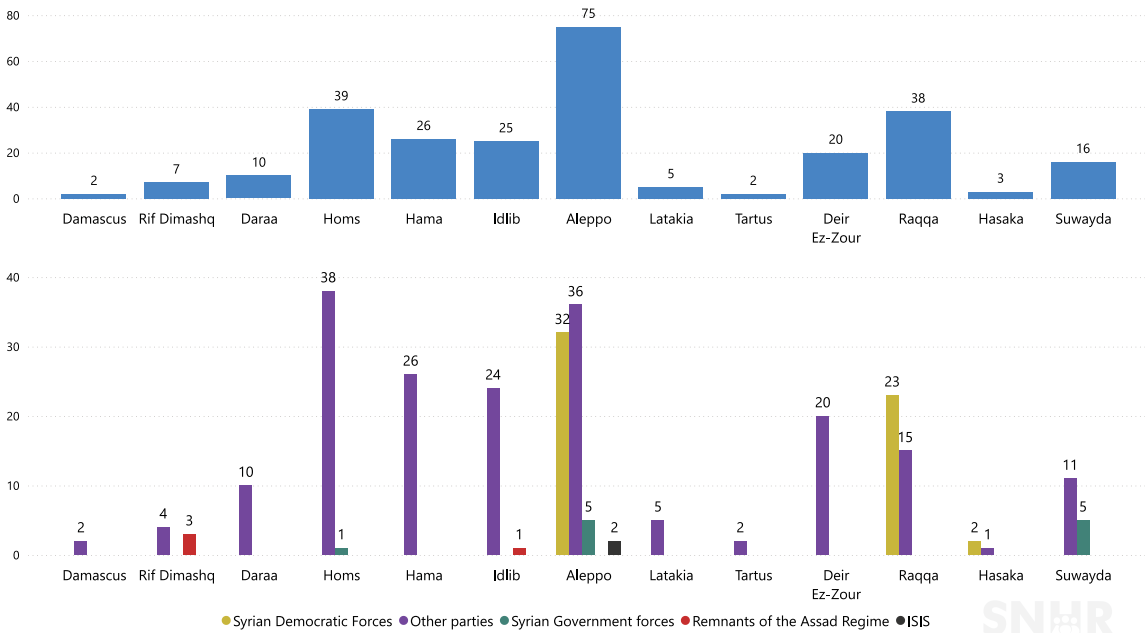
The toll of the victims documented in the first quarter of 2026 is distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces as follows:



- Victims of gunfire from unidentified sources:** We documented the killing of 126 civilians, including 10 children and 15 women, among them 5 medical personnel and 1 media worker.
- Syrian Democratic Forces:** 57 civilians killed, including 5 children and 2 women, and 1 due to torture, including 3 medical personnel, and 1 massacre.
- Victims of landmines (of unknown origin):** We documented the killing of 25 civilians, including 6 children and 2 women.
- Victims of bombings by unidentified perpetrators:** 23 civilians killed, including 11 children, and 1 massacre.
- Victims of killings by unidentified individuals:** 20 civilians killed, including 7 children and 3 women.
- Syrian government forces:** 11 civilians killed, including 2 children and 3 women, and 2 massacres.
- Remnants of the Assad regime:** 4 civilians killed, including 2 children and 2 women.
- ISIS:** Two civilians killed by ISIS.

The figures above illustrate grave violations of the right to life in Syria during the first quarter of 2026, with children and women comprising a significant proportion of victims—approximately 27% of the total (70 out of 268)—reflecting the direct impact of violence on the most vulnerable groups. The data also highlights that the majority of victims were killed by unidentified sources of violence, including unexploded ordnance, landmines, and explosions, indicating the wide range of risks facing civilians. Conversely, the report documents the involvement of controlling forces in the killing of civilians, particularly the Syrian Democratic Forces, including cases of killing due to torture, which constitutes a serious violation of international law and reflects the continued weakness of accountability and protection of civilians.

The toll of the victims documented in the first quarter of 2026 is distributed across the Syrian governorates as follows:



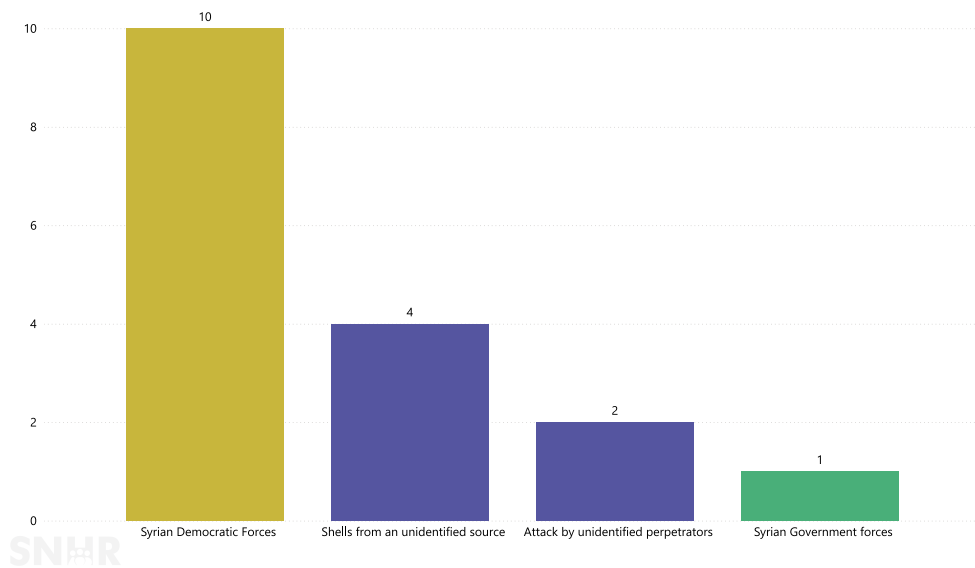
The chart above shows that Aleppo Governorate topped the list with 28% , most of whose victims were killed by the Syrian Democratic Forces and parties we were unable to identify, followed by Homs Governorate with 15% of its victims, most of whose deaths were documented as being at the hands of parties we were unable to identify.

THIRD: THE TOLL OF ATTACKS AGAINST VITAL CIVILIAN FACILITIES IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2026

SNHR documented at least **17 attacks** on vital civilian facilities in the first quarter of 2026. Ten of these attacks were carried out by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), with most occurring in Aleppo Governorate.

These attacks included: three attacks on educational facilities (schools), four on medical facilities, and one on a place of worship (mosque).

These attacks are distributed among the perpetrators as follows:



- Syrian Democratic Forces: 10
- Shelling of undetermined origin: 4
- Attack of undetermined perpetrator: 2
- Syrian government forces: 1

This tally shows the continued targeting of vital civilian centers in the first quarter of 2026, particularly educational and medical facilities and places of worship, which are protected under international humanitarian law. The breakdown indicates that the Syrian Democratic Forces were responsible for the largest number of documented attacks.

According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights database, January 2026 saw the highest number of attacks on vital civilian centers, accounting for approximately 83% of all documented incidents during the year (14 out of 17). The data also shows that Aleppo Governorate was the most affected, recording nine attacks.

FOURTH: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

1. **Attacks against civilians and civilian objects:** Evidence gathered by the Syrian Network for Human Rights indicates that the majority of attacks directly targeted civilians, including the destruction of civilian infrastructure.
2. **Landmines:** A large number of Syrians have been killed by landmines, and none of the forces involved in the conflict have provided maps showing where they were planted. This demonstrates a disregard for civilian lives, especially those of children.
3. **Indiscriminate bombing:** The indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks carried out by the Syrian Democratic Forces and, to a lesser extent, by Syrian government forces, constitute a clear violation of international humanitarian law.
4. **Remote-Controlled Bombings:** The use of remote-controlled bombings in densely populated civilian areas constitutes a clear violation of the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants, as enshrined in Article 48 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, and of the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks contained in Articles 51(4) and 51(5) thereof. These articles prohibit attacks that are not directed at a specific military objective or that are expected to cause excessive harm to civilians in relation to the anticipated military advantage. Such targeting also violates the right to life, guaranteed under Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which obligates all parties to protect this right and not to deprive civilians of it arbitrarily. The execution of these bombings in populated areas demonstrates an intent to inflict maximum harm on civilians, which may amount to a war crime under Article 8(2)(b)(1) of the Rome Statute.
5. Despite the efforts made during the transitional phase, significant gaps remain in the protection of civilians, particularly in areas of tension and military operations. This deficiency, if it persists, violates legal obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and necessitates strengthening preventive measures and effective responses, especially for the protection of women and children.
6. **Continued insecurity despite the change of authority:** Killings and armed attacks continue, indicating that the transitional phase has not yet achieved security stability.
7. **Persistent patterns of violations linked to the post-conflict reality:** The first quarter of 2026 witnessed patterns of killings related to the misuse of weapons and drownings resulting from migration. These indicate post-conflict challenges that require a different response, one that goes beyond documenting violations to include prevention and community education.

Recommendations

These recommendations represent a practical roadmap for addressing the effects of extrajudicial killings in Syria, and contribute to strengthening the path of transitional justice, building institutions that respect human dignity and rights, and preventing the recurrence of violations.

To the Syrian Government:

- **Increase cooperation with international mechanisms.**
- **Protect evidence and crime sites:**
 - Take urgent measures to protect evidence, including documenting the sites of mass graves and prisons, and preventing tampering with or damage to them.
 - Register and clearly mark important sites to ensure their use as legal evidence in the future.
- **Strengthening Justice and Accountability:**
 - Collecting evidence related to violations, including official records and crime sites.
 - Ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and granting the Court retroactive jurisdiction.
 - Adopting comprehensive transitional justice policies that include holding perpetrators accountable, providing reparations to victims, and ensuring transparency and credibility.
- **Protection of Civilians and Cultural Sites:**
 - Ensuring the protection of civilians and minorities and guaranteeing their fundamental rights to live in safety.
 - Prioritizing the removal of mines and explosive remnants of war, while providing the necessary funding and raising awareness of the risks.
 - Protecting cultural and heritage sites from looting or destruction.
- **Governance Reform:**
 - Establishing an inclusive governance structure that represents all sectors of Syrian society, including women, minorities, and civil society organizations.
 - Documenting and protecting abandoned properties to ensure future compensation for their owners.
 - Improving basic services and ensuring their accessibility to all citizens, including people with disabilities.
- **Preventing further violations:**
 - Guaranteeing respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of all without discrimination.
 - Reforming the judicial system, security services, and military in accordance with international human rights standards.
- **Supporting victims and rehabilitation:**
 - Providing psychosocial support to the families of the missing and victims of the conflict.
 - Developing comprehensive rehabilitation programs for survivors and released detainees.

- **To the Security Council and International Community:**
 - **Referring Crimes to the International Criminal Court:**
 - Referring the Syrian case to the International Criminal Court or establishing a special tribunal to try those involved in war crimes and crimes against humanity.
 - Pressuring international actors, including the Russian government, to hand over those responsible for the crimes, including Bashar al-Assad and his family, to international courts.
 - **Freezing and confiscating the funds of the former regime:**
 - Working to freeze the financial assets of the former regime and those close to it, and allocating them to support transitional justice efforts and humanitarian aid for victims and their families.
- **Strengthening Humanitarian Efforts:**
 - Urging UN agencies to scale up the provision of humanitarian assistance, including food and medicine, in affected areas and camps for internally displaced persons.
 - Ensuring humanitarian access to northeast Syria, in coordination with local authorities, to meet the needs of displaced persons and facilities for the detention of former ISIS suspects.
 - Ensuring that assistance provided to the current or future government contributes to respect for human rights and creates the conditions for free and fair elections.
- **Mine Clearance and Removal of War Remnants:**
 - Allocating funding from the United Nations Mine Action Fund to support mine clearance efforts in affected areas, to reduce long-term risks and ensure a safe environment for civilians.
- **Supporting the Issue of Missing Persons and National Reconciliation:**
 - Providing the necessary resources to strengthen the efforts of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), including training local personnel and using advanced technologies to identify missing persons.
 - Supporting initiatives that contribute to achieving national reconciliation and providing psychosocial support to the families of missing persons.
- **Ensuring the Protection of Syrian Refugees:**
 - Calling on countries hosting Syrian refugees to refrain from forced deportations or pressuring them to return.
 - Working to create conditions within Syria to ensure the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of refugees in accordance with international standards, prioritizing infrastructure improvements and security.

To the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:

- Integrate the findings and data contained in this report into the periodic reports submitted by the Office to the Human Rights Council, ensuring that the ongoing violations in Syria are regularly presented to Member States.
- Provide technical support to the Syrian government in investigating violations of the right to life, including building the capacity of law enforcement agencies to document and investigate killings in accordance with international standards, particularly the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Likely Unlawful Killings.

To the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI):

- Pay particular attention in future investigations to patterns of killings related to the transitional phase, including security lapses and killings by unidentified actors, as well as violations attributed to the Syrian Democratic Forces in northeast Syria.
- Include in your periodic reports to the Human Rights Council specific recommendations on mechanisms for the protection of civilians in areas of military contact, based on the patterns documented in this report.

To the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM):

- Collect and analyze evidence related to the crimes documented in this report and preserve it in case files admissible before competent courts, including incidents of targeting vital civilian infrastructure and killings under torture.
- Provide technical support and share expertise with Syrian organizations working in the field of documentation and evidence collection, thereby enhancing their capacity to prepare files that meet the required standards for prosecution.

To the Syrian Democratic Forces:

- Form an internal investigation committee to examine the violations committed by the Syrian Democratic Forces, hold those responsible accountable, and compensate the victims.
- Refrain from establishing military positions in civilian areas, which endangers civilian lives.
- Provide maps showing the locations of mines planted by the forces in civilian areas.

To humanitarian organizations:

- Develop urgent plans to provide dignified shelter for internally displaced persons, especially widows and orphans.
- Intensify mine clearance efforts in conjunction with relief operations.
- Equip vital facilities such as medical centers and schools with clearly marked ambulances that can be identified from a distance.

Acknowledgement and Appreciation

Many thanks to all the families, relatives and friends of the victims, eyewitnesses and local activists whose contributions enriched this report.

APPENDIX: THE MOST PROMINENT TASKS UNDERTAKEN BY THE SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CASE OF EXTRAJUDICIAL AND UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

1. Establishment and Documentation Since 2011:

- Since its inception in 2011, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has dedicated its efforts to documenting all forms of extrajudicial killings in Syria, including summary executions, deaths under torture, massacres, indiscriminate bombing, and the deliberate targeting of civilians.
- The SNHR has developed an advanced electronic documentation system that allows for the archiving and accurate classification of victims' data by gender, age, geographic location, date of death, method of killing, type of weapon, and perpetrator. This system has formed the backbone of the SNHR's work in tracking patterns of violence, analyzing the geographic distribution of victims, and providing accurate data that supports justice and accountability efforts at both the local and international levels.

2. Focus on vulnerable civilian groups and expand documentation categories:

- The Network has given special importance to documenting violations against children and women, as they are groups entitled to enhanced protection under international humanitarian law, and because the scale of violations committed against them reflects the systematic targeting of civilians. The database was later expanded to include victims from the media, medical, relief, and civil defense sectors, who play essential roles in providing humanitarian, medical, and media services to the civilian population.

3. Producing periodic reports and conducting visual and qualitative data analysis:

- The Network has been keen to issue daily, monthly, semi-annual, and annual reports documenting the number of victims, in addition to dozens of reports focusing on specific patterns or entities. In an effort to enhance transparency and public access, the database has been transformed into interactive maps and graphs published on the network's official website and continuously updated, enabling researchers, journalists, and institutions to track the evolution of violations and sort the data according to multiple criteria.

4. International Partnerships and Data Provision to the UN:

- Since the early years of the conflict, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has been submitting detailed reports to the UN Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial killings and torture, after obtaining the consent of victims' families. This coordination continues to this day.
- The SNHR has become one of the most prominent and trusted sources of information for UN agencies, international human rights organizations, and global media outlets. It has also signed Memoranda of Understanding with organizations such as Humanitarian Outcomes within the framework of the Aid Worker Safety Database (AWSDB) project, in addition to other partnerships that strengthen its position as a leading authority in this field.

5. Post-Assad Era – Expanding the Scope of Work:

With the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime in December 2014, the network entered a broader phase in documenting extrajudicial killings. A significant portion of its efforts shifted to monitoring new patterns of violations, no less serious than previous ones, but linked to the post-conflict reality. These include:

- Civilian casualties from remnants of war such as landmines and unexploded ordnance.
- The exposure of additional areas to violations not previously experienced, and the need to build reliable communication networks in these areas.
- The collapse of buildings already damaged by bombing, as happened with Ms. Sanaa al-Darwish in the town of Abu al-Duhur after she returned to her damaged home.
- Killings resulting from the proliferation of weapons and the breakdown of security.
- Killings under mysterious circumstances or by unknown perpetrators.

SNHR expanded its field operations in areas no longer under the regime's control, gaining access to previously restricted locations, reopening pending investigations, reviewing new testimonies, and collecting additional physical evidence. It also strengthened its presence by forming local documentation teams and providing extensive training in documentation, witness collection, and secure data handling.



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No justice without accountability

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