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# The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in December 2021

Millions of IDPs Live in Tents in the Freezing Cold, Refusing to Return to Their Homes in Areas Controlled by the Syrian Regime

Tuesday 4 January 2022

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.

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## I. Introduction and Methodology:

Syria has seen an unprecedented number of violations since the start of the popular uprising for democracy in March 2011. Extrajudicial killings, arrests, torture and enforced disappearances are the violations most frequently perpetrated against Syrian citizens. While the Syrian regime and its affiliated militias were the sole perpetrators of these violations for the first seven months or so of the uprising, other parties subsequently joined in, also violating the rights of Syrian citizens. The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has continued to document every incident that its team members are able to verify, with these violations escalating very dramatically in 2012 and 2013, prompting us to expand our publication of periodic monthly reports recording and highlighting the continued suffering of the Syrian people, which subsequently grew to eight reports on different issues issued at the beginning of each month. In the course of our work, SNHR has compiled a massive database cataloguing hundreds of thousands of incidents, each of which involves a pattern of violations that we have been able to document.

By the end of 2018, with a reduction in the level of violence compared to previous years, we changed our previous strategy and now compile our reports into a single monthly report featuring the most prominent violations in Syria which we have been able to document in the preceding month.

This month's report focuses on the human rights situation in Syria in December 2021, and catalogues the death toll of civilian victims whom we documented killed by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces during this period, as well as providing the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearance. The report also highlights the attacks on civilian objects, which SNHR's team was able to document during these two periods. To find out more about our working [methodology](#) in documenting and archiving data, please visit the following link that explains this in detail.

This report only represents the bare minimum of the actual severity and magnitude of the violations that occurred. Also, it doesn't include any analysis of the profound social, economic, and psychological ramifications.

## II. Summary of the Most Notable Events in December 2021:

### In regard to bombardment and military operations:

December saw the continuation of the military campaign launched in mid-2021 by Syrian-Russian alliance forces in the Idlib region of northwest Syria, during which time, the pace of the Syrian regime's ground attacks decreased, while Russian reconnaissance aircraft continued to carry out overflights of the area. The attacks by Syrian regime forces in December were mostly concentrated in the Jabal al Zaweya district and the surrounding area, along with the towns and villages of the southern suburbs of Idlib, resulting in civilian deaths. Several towns in the western suburbs of Aleppo were also subjected to artillery shelling by Syrian regime forces, targeting residential locations and agricultural lands, with the resulting damage limited to material only. One of these attacks, on the al Wasata area on the outskirts of al Atareb city, resulted in [the death of a child](#) on December 12.

The Russian Air Force continued its periodic attacks in areas of [northwest Syria](#), mostly targeting the areas west and north of Idlib city, on Hay'at Tahrir al Sham's military headquarters. The same aircraft also targeted [poultry barns](#), mostly on the outskirts of Ma'aret Misreen city in the northern suburbs of Idlib and Darat Ezza city in the western suburbs of Aleppo, causing material losses and killing thousands of birds.

On November 4, the Russian forces' [Zvezda TV](#) said that the Russian Air Force and the Syrian regime's air force conducted joint military maneuvers and exercises in Su-24 warplanes; according to the media agency, most of these exercises were flown from the T4 Military Airbase in the eastern suburbs of Homs.

On December 6, the Russian [Sputnik](#) agency reported that the Russian army had begun receiving Mi-8AMTSh-VN helicopters; the agency added, "Their manufacturers have taken into account the experiences of combat use of helicopters in the world in general and in Syria in particular, to increase their effectiveness and enhance their ability to withstand the harshest conditions possible to face on the battlefield."

On December 21, [RT news agency](#) reported that Sergey Shoigu, the Russian Defense Minister, "has briefed Russian President Vladimir Putin on a modern component of the unified system for managing the tactical faction, which was used by the Russian forces in Syria." We note that Russian officials have issued many statements in which they reviewed the impact of Russian forces' military operations in Syria on enhancing these forces' combat capabilities and developing their weapons.

Also in December, intermittent clashes continued between Syrian National Army forces and Syrian Democratic Forces in the villages of Ein Eisa district in the northern suburbs of Raqqa, which are under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces, with both sides using heavy weapons, without any change in the distribution of zones of control. We note that this area has witnessed clashes between the two parties since 2019.

On December 6, the US Central Command announced in a [press conference](#) that it was responsible for an attack that caused civilian casualties in an air strike launched from an MQ-9 unmanned aircraft on December 3 in Syria, targeting an al Qaeda leader. On December 3, [the Syrian Network for Human Rights](#) recorded the killing of a former member of the Guardians of Religion organization (Hurra al Din), when a US-led Coalition drone fired a guided missile at the motorcycle he was riding on the main road between al Mastouma village and Ariha city in the suburbs of Idlib governorate; the same bombardment injured six members of a family of civilians, including two children and three women, as the car they were in passed nearby the motorcycle.

In terms of bombings, over the course of December, we documented several bombings using explosive devices in Daraa governorate and the suburbs of Aleppo, as well as in Ras al Ein city in the suburbs of Hasaka.

December also saw continuing civilian deaths due to explosions caused by landmines and munitions remnants in various governorates and regions of Syria, mostly in the suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, Idlib and Hama. SNHR documented the deaths of 10 civilians, including four children, as a result of landmine explosions in December; the explosion of a landmine in [al Sena'a neighborhood](#) in Deir Ez-Zour on December 11th resulted in the deaths of two children.

December also witnessed killings of civilians in the villages and towns of the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour by unidentified gunmen believed to be affiliated with ISIS. We also recorded killings by persons whose identities we were unable to identify in Daraa, Idlib and Suwayda governorates, in addition to continuing killings in al Hawl Camp<sup>1</sup>; in December, we documented [the deaths of three civilians](#) in al Hawl Camp. On December 2, we documented an attack launched by gunmen, whom we were unable to identify, on al Madhoul road in the badiya (desert area) of the western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which is under the control of Syrian regime forces, targeting a civilian car carrying workers in al Kherata oil field, resulting in [the deaths of six civilians](#).

On December 7, the Israeli Air Force launched a missile attack targeting the container yard in the port of Latakia, according to the [SANA news agency](#), whose report stated that the bombing set a number of commercial containers on fire. On December 16, Israeli forces used several missiles in an attack targeting a number of locations in the southern region of Syria, which resulted in the death of a Syrian regime soldier, according to [SANA news agency](#). On December 28, the Israeli Air Force launched a missile attack targeting the container yard in the port of Latakia for the second time in the month; according to [SANA news agency](#), the missile bombardment led to "fires breaking out in the place and causing great material damage," as well as damaging al Nada Hospital and some buildings and shops adjacent to the targeted area. On December 28, [Reuters](#) quoted sources at the targeted port as stating that Iran was storing ammunition in the port, and that the attack hit the container area where large shipments of Iranian ammunition that arrived the previous month were stored.

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<sup>1</sup> A camp located east of Hasaka city, near the Iraqi-Syrian border, which houses nearly 60,000 people

On December 13, [the Washington Post](#) published a report stating that just after midnight on June 8, 2021, Israeli warplanes targeted three military targets belonging to Syrian regime forces, near the cities of Damascus and Homs, killing seven Syrian regime soldiers. The newspaper report added that, according to Western intelligence sources, this attack targeted sites linked to the Syrian regime's chemical weapons program.

#### **In regard to arrests and enforced disappearances:**

Syrian regime forces continued in December to persecute and arrest individuals who had concluded settlements of their security status with the Syrian regime in areas that had previously concluded settlement agreements with the regime; these arrests have been concentrated in Deir Ez-Zour, Damascus Suburbs and Daraa governorates, with most occurring during campaigns of mass raids and arrests and at checkpoints. We documented arrests targeting university students while they were on their way from their homes in Damascus suburbs to Damascus University in Damascus city. We documented arrests targeting many civilian members of one family from Suwayda governorate, in raids on their tents located between Dael city and Kherbt Ghazala town in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate. We recorded random incidents of arrests of citizens in Damascus Suburbs governorate, with most occurring during campaigns of mass raids and arrests, which we believe were based on malicious security reports issued due to the targeted individuals' opposition to the Syrian regime, including individuals who had concluded settlements of their security status.

Meanwhile, Syrian Democratic Forces continued enforcing the group's policies of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance in December, with the number detained increasing this month as SDF personnel continued carrying out campaigns of mass raids and detentions, targeting civilians on the pretext of fighting ISIS cells, with some of these campaigns backed by US-led coalition helicopters. We also documented arrests targeting civilians from the same family, including a child, with these arrests concentrating in Hasaka and Deir Ez-Zour governorates. We also recorded Syrian Democratic Forces again kidnapping children with the aim of taking them to its training and recruitment camps and forcibly conscripting them, preventing their families from communicating with them, and failing to disclose their fate.

December also saw Hay'at Tahrir al Sham detaining civilians, including media activists and politicians, with these arrests concentrated in Idlib governorate; most of these arrests occurred due to the detainees expressing opinions critical of the HTS's management of areas under its control. These detentions were carried out arbitrarily in the form of raids in which HTS members stormed their victims' homes, often breaking down the doors, or by abducting their victims while they were traveling or passing through temporary checkpoints. We also documented Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel's arrest of a civilian in Salqin city in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate over his criticism of the leadership of the city's police force affiliated with the HTS, before releasing him at a later time.

Meanwhile, all Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army also continued carrying out arbitrary detentions and kidnappings in December, including women, most of which were carried out on a mass scale, targeting individuals coming from areas controlled by the Syrian regime. In addition, we documented detentions carried out under an ethnic pretext, with these incidents being concentrated in areas under all Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army's control in Aleppo governorate. Most of these arrests occurred without judicial authorization and without the participation of the police force, which is the legitimate administrative authority responsible for arrests and detentions through the judiciary, with these arrests also carried out without presenting any clear charges against those being detained. In addition to these cases, we also documented raids and arrests carried out by Syrian National Army personnel, targeting civilians on charges of collaborating with Syrian Democratic Forces. These arrests were concentrated in some villages of Afrin city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

#### Regarding living conditions:

The living conditions and the economic situation have worsened in all regions of Syria, coinciding with heavy rain and wind storms and a sharp drop in temperatures in the region, with the resulting suffering exacerbated by the severe shortage of heating materials and the increase in their prices. In areas under Syrian regime control, the price of a liter of subsidized diesel has reached 2,700 Syrian pounds, according to a report published by [the pro-regime al Watan newspaper](#) on December 6. The newspaper added that many citizens are forced to buy heating oil at these prices due to the delayed arrival of diesel subsidized by the Syrian regime's government.

On December 11, [the SANA news agency](#) reported that the Syrian regime government's Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection had taken a decision to raise the price of a liter of gasoline (octane 90) obtained via the state electronic card system to 1,100 Syrian pounds. We note that the ministry increased the price of subsidized premium gasoline several times during 2021 by a total amount of approximately 230% of its value at the beginning of the year ([475 Syrian pounds / liter](#)).

Regarding the electricity crisis, al Watan newspaper on December 7 quoted a statement from Adham Ballan, the director of the [Ministry of Electricity's Planning](#) division in the Syrian regime government, in which he said, "There are no fixed rationing programs because the available quantities of electric energy determine the programs and hours of rationing." Ballan added that December and the following month would be the most difficult in terms of availability of electricity.

Regarding medicines, on December 17, the [SANA news agency](#) published an announcement from the Higher Technical Committee for Medicine in the Syrian regime's government, which stated that the committee had issued a decision to increase the prices of medicines by 30%; the agency quoted a statement by Obeida Qatee, the Assistant Minister of Health for Pharmacy and Drug Affairs in the Syrian regime's government, in which he said, "Some factory owners demanded an increase in

drug prices by 100 percent, but the Higher Technical Committee for Medicine decided to increase it by 30 percent to ensure the continuation of the production cycle in pharmaceutical laboratories at this stage, taking into account the economic conditions.” In reality, medicines were sold in pharmacies at two or three times the price specified in the decision of the Syrian regime government, according to a report published by [al Watan newspaper](#) on December 22.

In northwestern Syria, the sharp deterioration in the exchange rates of the Turkish lira, which is the currency used in the region, led to further deterioration in the general situation, as the depreciation of the Turkish lira versus the US dollar reached record levels. As a result, the Salvation Government of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham set fuel prices in US dollars, further increasing the suffering of citizens there. In December, the Salvation Government also raised the prices of subsidized bread sold in the region, with the price of a 650-gram bundle of bread reaching five Turkish liras. On December 16, [the local council in Izaz city](#) in the northern suburbs of Aleppo set the price of a bundle of subsidized bread at two Syrian pounds for an 800-gram bundle of bread.

On December 9, a convoy of aid from the UN World Food Program entered northwest Syria from areas controlled by the Syrian regime in Aleppo through the Saraqeb crossing, east of Idlib city. A [tweet](#) by the World Food Program account on Twitter on the same day indicated that this convoy is complementary to cross-border aid, in line with Security Council Resolution [2585](#).

In December, we monitored an escalation of restrictions by the security apparatus of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham and the Office of Media Relations imposed on the work of media activists intended to limit their ability to film and report the events in those areas. We also documented restrictions on the al Ghazawiya and Deir Ballout crossings, separating the Idlib suburbs and the areas of Afrin suburbs in northwest of Aleppo, by members of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, who were checking the amount of fuel in the tanks of vehicles, causing a major traffic crisis and restricting the movement of civilians coming from Afrin to Idlib.

The areas controlled by Syrian Democratic Forces are also witnessing an increase in the prices of basic foodstuffs, in addition to the scarcity of sugar and bread, which exacerbates the deterioration of the already harsh living conditions there. Several demonstrations took place in the cities, towns and villages of Deir Ez-Zour and Hasaka suburbs throughout the month, calling for an improvement in the living situation and the release of detainees. On the medical level, hospitals and pharmacies in the eastern region suffered from a shortage of oxygen cylinders due to the high rate of coronavirus infections, in addition to a shortage of some medicines in pharmacies.

**In regard to the COVID-19 pandemic:**

December saw a decrease in documented COVID-19 infections across Syria compared to November.

The Syrian regime's [Ministry of Health](#) officially announced 2,108 cases of COVID-19 infection and 148 deaths in December, bringing the official total announced to 50,278 cases of infection with 2,897 deaths, as of December 31.

In northwestern Syria, more infections and deaths due to coronavirus were recorded in December, with the [Early Warning Alert and Response Network \(EWARN\)](#) announcing the documentation of 802 infections and 76 deaths related to COVID-19; this brought the total number of infections and deaths announced by EWARN in December, to 92,957 cases of infection and 2,319 deaths.

On December 17, Mark Cutts, the UN Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syrian situation, said in a [tweet](#) on his Twitter account, that the vaccination rate against COVID-19 in north-west Syria is one of the lowest vaccination rates in the world, as less than 2.5% of the population has received full doses of the vaccine.

Regarding northeastern Syria, the Self-Management Authority of Northern and Eastern Syria has returned to publish statistics on the status of infections and deaths from the coronavirus, after it stopped publishing these details the previous month due to the lack of materials needed to conduct tests with the lab suspending its work, as reported by the [FRANCE24 TV](#) website on November 22, quoting a statement by Nechirvan Suleiman, head of the Health Authority's Statistics Office in the Self-Management Authority of Northern and Eastern Syria. As of December 31, a total of 37,189 coronavirus infection cases, including 1,505 deaths, had been announced by [the Health Authority in the Self-Management Authority of Northern and Eastern Syria](#).

**In regard to asylum, displacement and forced displacement:**

In the beginning of December, **the northwest region of Syria** witnessed a [windstorm](#) that caused a number of IDPs' tents to collapse or be blown away and the damage of their properties in nearly 13 camps throughout the region. This makes the IDPs vulnerable to more suffering.

On December 16, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that millions of Syrians living in tents or in dilapidated buildings are about to once again suffer from a freezing winter this year. The OCHA added, in a [tweet](#) posted on its Twitter account, that humanitarian workers are working around the clock to deliver urgent first aid, especially winter aid, including blankets and heating materials.

On December 18, the northwest region of Syria witnessed a heavy [rainstorm](#), which lasted for four days and caused flooding in areas where IDP camps are located, resulting in damage to a large number of tents. We issued an [urgent distress call](#) on behalf of some 3,640 families whose tents were damaged due to the rainstorm in northwestern Syria, in which we emphasized that millions of internally displaced people would not return to their homes, which may be only a few kilometers away, despite the dreadful living conditions they currently face, because of the Syrian regime forces' control over these areas, and their fear of arrest, torture and conscription if they return.

On December 20, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, said in a [briefing](#) to the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria that as winter sets in, millions of people are living in the cold. Internally displaced people living in temporary tents are especially vulnerable, he noted, adding, "I regret to say that the humanitarian operation simply does not have sufficient funds to provide the basic shelter, heating, and warm clothes to all of those in need. As I say, we are failing in our responsibilities to the people of Syria."

In addition, the Idlib region's camps also witnessed [several fires](#), most of which were caused by the incorrect use of heating equipment. One of the incidents in a randomly established IDP camp west of Ma'arret Misreen town in Idlib suburbs on December 29 resulted in [the death of an infant](#).

**In al Hawl Camp**, on December 13, Syrian Democratic Forces allowed a group of IDPs to leave al Hawl Camp in the eastern suburbs of Hasaka and return to their villages and towns, consisting of 51 families or approximately 200 individuals, from Manbej city and its villages in the northern suburbs of Aleppo; this was the 21st such group since the Syrian Democratic Forces' Self-Management Authority's decision to empty al Hawl Camp was announced in October 2020.

Regarding the repatriations carried out by Western countries of their nationals living in the al Hawl Camp in northeastern Syria, the Swiss Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a report on [its official website](#) on December 6, stating that two minor Swiss girls from al Rouj Camp in northeastern Syria had arrived in Iraq and were on their way to Switzerland. We note that foreign nationals living in al Hawl Camp are transferred to al Rouj Camp before leaving for their countries. According to [Reuters](#), it is believed that this was the first such operation carried out by Switzerland to repatriate its nationals.

On December 4, [the Telegraph](#) published an investigation in which it said that "the British government is actively working to establish a Guantanamo Bay for children in Syria," by financially supporting the camps in northeastern Syria, which are detaining families of ISIS members. The newspaper added that although the British government had talked about the resettlement of unaccompanied minors whose parents had British citizenship, an estimated 60 minors in this category are still detained in those camps.

On December 10, the Finnish government's official website published a [statement](#) about the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' repatriation of a Finnish family consisting of a mother and her four children from al Hawl Camp. The statement added that one of the woman's sons has reached adulthood, while the remaining 3 are children. According to the statement, since 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has repatriated a total of 35 Finns, comprising 26 children and 9 adults.

On December 16, Russia's [RT agency](#) reported that Russian authorities had repatriated 8 children from the families of ISIS members, from camps in northeastern Syria.

On December 17, [France 24](#) website reported that the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights demanded "the repatriation of all children and wives of French jihadists detained in camps in northeastern Syria." It pointed out that "the lack of health infrastructure, the lack of water and food, the inadequacy of the tents to protect against the cold and rain, and the absence of any educational support for these children who are left to their fate, add to the tension between the extremist women and the women who distanced themselves from the Islamic State." The website indicated that 80 French women and 200 children are still being held in camps under the supervision of the Self-Management Authority in northeastern Syria.

**In Lebanon**, the Lebanese [al Jadeed TV website](#) reported, on December 30, that a fire broke out in a camp for Syrian refugees in the Dahour Miniye-Markabta area in northern Lebanon due to electrical problems, which led to the burning of a number of tents.

**Regarding Syrian refugees**, [the official website of the Vatican](#) announced on December 1, the arrival of 46 refugees from several countries, including Syrians, to the Italian capital, Rome, coming from IDP camps on the island of Lesbos in Greece, as part of a humanitarian corridors project aimed at enabling the most vulnerable refugees to reach Europe safely.

On December 3, Human Rights Watch issued a [statement](#) calling on the Lebanese Ministry of Education to end its policies that impede Syrian refugee children's access to education. The statement added that thousands of Syrian refugee children have lost their education, due to these procedures that require certified educational records, legal residency in Lebanon, and other official documents that many Syrians cannot obtain.

On December 10, the [Associated Press](#) published an article in which it said that Lebanon, which was a shelter for Syrian refugees during the past years, has now become a transit point for refugees to reach Europe via the Mediterranean. The agency quoted Lisa Abou Khaled, spokeswoman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Lebanon as saying that the number of cruises towards the coasts of Europe had increased from Lebanon starting in 2020, compared to previous years. According to figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 1,570 people tried to leave Lebanon between January and November, with most of these going to the island of Cyprus, and the majority were Syrians.

On December 13, the [Lebanese Presidency website](#) reported a statement by Lebanese President Michel Aoun, in which he said, “The international community must bear its responsibility in facilitating the return of the displaced Syrians in Lebanon to their country, especially since most of the Syrian regions have become safe.” President Aoun made this statement despite a large number of reports having been issued by international and human rights organizations, which confirmed that Syria is wholly unsafe for the return of refugees, and which also reported cases and testimonies of refugees who were arrested and tortured by Syrian regime forces after their return to Syria, especially those returning from Lebanon.

On December 22, [Reuters](#) quoted a report from the Greek Coast Guard which stated that three asylum-seekers had drowned off the Greek island of Folegandros, after a boat believed to be carrying up to 50 people sank. The agency added that the search crews were able to rescue 12 people, most of them from Iraq and Syria, who were transferred to a nearby Greek island, while it is feared that dozens more are missing.

On December 24, [the Greek Coast Guard](#) recovered the bodies of 16 illegal immigrants whose boat capsized off the Greek island of Paros. [The Action Group for the Palestinians of Syria](#) stated that eight of the victims were Palestinians with Syrian citizenship who were on their way from Turkey to Italy.

#### **On the crisis of migrants stranded at the Belarusian-Polish border:**

The tragedy of the refugees stranded on the Belarusian-Polish border, most of whom are from Syria and Iraq, has worsened since September 2021; [the Associated Press](#) reported on December 1 that Polish authorities had declared the area along the border with Belarus a no-go area for anyone except for residents and people living, working or studying in the area for a period of 3 months or longer.

On December 3, the [Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta](#) reported that Syrian refugees at the Belarusian-Polish border had been subjected to threats by two people, one of whom was wearing a military uniform, who came to the camp inhabited by Syrians, telling them that if they did not storm the Polish border in the next three days, they would be deported to Damascus.

Minsk Airport announced on [its Telegram channel](#) that on the morning of December 8, at 8:24 am, a plane belonging to the Syrian Cham Wings Airlines took off from Minsk Airport in the Belarusian capital, heading to Damascus with 96 passengers on board. On the same day, the [local Athr Press website](#) reported, citing a source in the Cham Wings company, that the same flight had taken off empty from Damascus airport to Minsk airport in order to bring migrants stranded in Belarus back to Damascus.

On December 20, [Amnesty International](#) said that it had obtained new evidence of excessive violence by Belarusian forces against migrants stranded at the border; the organization stated that Syrian migrants are threatened with forcible return to Syria, not to the countries from which they came, because of the ban on return.

#### On the political and human rights level:

On November 30, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) released a report entitled '[Common Analysis and Guidance Notes in Syria](#).' The report, which is intended as a tool for policymakers and decision-makers in the context of the [Common European Asylum System \(CEAS\)](#), aims to assist in the examination of applications for international protection by applicants from Syria, and to foster convergence in decision practices across EU Member States. It mainly covers the period between January 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021. The Syrian Network for Human Rights was the second most cited source of information in the report, about which we issued a [statement](#).

On December 2, the [US Department of State](#) published a statement on its official website about the meeting of envoys from the Arab League and representatives of countries from the European Union, Turkey and the United States of America in the Belgian capital, Brussels, to discuss the Syrian crisis. The statement affirmed its support for the implementation of all aspects of UN Security Council Resolution No. 2254, including an immediate ceasefire, the release of detainees, and the safe and unimpeded delivery of aid. The statement stressed the importance of continuing the cross-border aid delivery mechanism, to which there is no alternative, for delivering aid to more than 3 million Syrians.

On December 4, [Joseph Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy](#), said in an interview conducted during the Mediterranean Dialogue Conference in the Italian capital, Rome, that the situation in Syria is completely identical to the situation in Afghanistan, and compared the Syrian regime to the Taliban regime, adding that the European Union does not politically recognize the Syrian regime and does not intend to raise the level of political relations with it.

On December 8, the [United Nations Children's Fund](#) (UNICEF) said in a statement that "more than 13.4 million people, including 6.1 million children, need assistance in Syria." The statement added that there are currently 7 million internally displaced people in Syria, including 3.1 million children, further indicating that an increase in the need for humanitarian assistance has been recorded since 2020, due to the continuation of hostilities in northwest Syria, in addition to the economic crisis and the coronavirus pandemic.

On December 8, Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN's High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, said in a [speech to the Security Council](#), "It is only through complete cooperation by the Syrian Arab Republic with the OPCW Technical Secretariat that all outstanding issues related to the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration can be closed." She added, "The confidence of the international community in the complete elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme depends upon these issues being finalized."

On December 8, [Human Rights Watch](#) issued a report on the attack launched by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces last October on Ariha city in Idlib. The report stated that "The Syrian-Russian military alliance fired at least 14 large-caliber artillery shells into the town of Ariha in Idlib governorate on October 20, 2021, killing 12 civilians and injuring 24. The apparent lack of military targets in the areas that were hit, amid homes, stores, schools, and markets, highly suggests an indiscriminate attack." The report added that the attacks occurred while the children were on their way to school, quoting a local employee in the Ministry of Education as saying that the shells fell near seven schools that collectively serve about 3,800 children.

On December 9, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) announced in a [statement](#) that the organization, with the approval of all its members, had chosen Syria to head the organization's Council of Ministers next year. The statement added that the Arab Energy Conference in 2024 will be held in Damascus. The Syrian Network for Human Rights condemns this election and demands the immediate expulsion of the Syrian regime, noting that the countries that did not object to the regime's candidacy bear direct responsibility for this.

On December 10, the [Operations and Policy Center](#) (OPC) issued a study which warned that Syria is on the verge of experiencing a famine if the necessary measures are not taken to confront it. The study was based on three main factors which the center warned will lead to this famine, the first of which is the severity of the current drought in the region, including Syria, and second the unprecedented food insecurity in Syria, and finally a decline in humanitarian aid funding projects by donor countries.

On December 14, Reporters Without Borders issued a [report](#) revealing that at least 65 journalists and media workers are being held hostage around the world, 44 of whom were kidnapped in Syria.

On December 14, the [Gulf Cooperation Council](#) affirmed in its final statement at its 42nd summit in Riyadh that the political solution in Syria must be based on Security Council Resolution 2254 and the principles of the Geneva Communiqué. The statement also affirmed the council's support for the United Nations' efforts to care for Syrian refugees and displaced persons, work for their safe return to their cities and villages, and reject any attempts to bring about demographic changes in Syria.

On December 14, António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, said [in his report](#) to the Security Council that Cross-border humanitarian assistance delivered to the Syrians without the consent of Damascus, is still necessary. He said: “[Cross-border assistance remains lifesaving for millions of people in need in north-west Syria.](#)” adding that, “[At this point, such cross-line convoys, even if deployed regularly, could not replicate the size and scope of the cross-border operation.](#)”

On December 15, Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the United Nations, said during [his daily press briefing](#) that an estimated 3.4 million people need humanitarian assistance in north-west Syria, stressing that this aid must also be delivered in a more sustainable manner. He added that cross-line convoys, even if deployed regularly, cannot replicate the size and scope of the cross-border operation.

On December 16, the American [Cato](#) Institute and the Canadian [Fraser](#) Institute issued a report on the “[Human Freedom Index](#)”, which placed Syria in last place in the 2021 world rankings in terms of freedoms. The report ranks countries according to several indicators, including personal freedom and rule of law, safety and security, identity and relationships, freedom of movement, speech, assembly and religion, in addition to economic freedom, and the ability of individuals to make their own economic decisions.

On December 17, the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#) issued a special report on Syria, in which it noted that food prices have risen significantly in Syria for several reasons, including disruption of trade routes, security conditions, a decrease in the number of workers in trade, high inflation rates and the significant depreciation of the local currency. The report added that, for example, the cost of 1 kg of flour, which was equal to 35 Syrian pounds in March 2011, rose to 1,868 Syrian pounds in June 2021, an increase of around 53 times the original price.

On December 17, [the Independent](#) reported that Libya, Syria and Afghanistan are the 3 most dangerous countries in the world, according to the [Travel Risk Map](#) index, which assessed nations’ danger level according to five indicators that rank countries from safe to most dangerous, based on the threat posed by political violence and social unrest, which includes sectarian violence and crimes.

On December 20, [Geir O. Pedersen](#), the UN Special Envoy for Syria, said in his briefing to the Security Council that 13 million Syrians are still displaced inside and outside the country, and that conditions for a voluntary and safe return that preserve their dignity have not yet been achieved.

On December 21 and 22, [the 17<sup>th</sup> round of the Astana talks](#) was held in the Kazakh capital, Nur-Sultan, with the participation of representatives of the guarantor countries (Turkey, Russia, and Iran), Geir O. Pedersen, the UN Special Envoy for Syria, a delegation from the Syrian regime and a delegation from the Syrian opposition, in addition to delegations from Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan, and representatives of international organizations. [At the end of this round](#), no new decisions were made.

On December 22, Alexander Lavrentiev, the Russian special envoy to Syria, [said](#) in an interview with Syria TV during the 17th round of the Astana talks conference, "The number of detainees in Syria, which is 980,000, cannot be reasonable given the number of prisons in Syria." We at the Syrian Network for Human Rights believe that this statement aims to undermine the credibility of reporting on the issue of detainees and persons forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime, and we issued a report that outlined the record of the documented enforced disappearance cases by SNHR and confirmed that these represent only the bare minimum number of arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances that we were able to document according to the exacting, officially approved standards.

On December 22, the [Syrian Trust for Development](#) issued a statement announcing that UNESCO had renewed its accreditation in Syria as a non-governmental organization for the next four years. We note that [Asma al Assad](#), the wife of the head of the Syrian regime, who is on the US sanctions list, supervises this association.

On December 24, Dmitry Chumakov, Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations, commenting on the United Nations General Assembly's approval of the budget for the global organization, said, "No consensus has been reached on the issue of financing the mechanism of investigations in Syria, which has no legitimacy in accordance with the international law," according to a report published by the TASS [Russian news agency](#) the next day.

On December 27, [Save the Children](#) said that children around the world will face are 7 main challenges in the coming year; among these challenges, which the organization referred to, is the robbery of children's basic rights under the pretext of combating terrorism, which it noted is happening to children detained in camps in northeastern Syria, under the pretext of their parents being associated with ISIS, with this being used as an excuse to strip these children of their nationalities and subject them to horrific racially discriminatory practices. Save the Children stressed that in 2022, the resettlement of these children and their reintegration into their communities must continue.

On December 27, the [TASS Russian news agency](#) quoted Alexander Lavrentiev, Russia's special presidential envoy for Syria, as saying that the creation of Syria's new Constitution must not be aimed at any change of power in that country, adding that any attempt to change the authority in the country will lead nowhere.

On December 28, [the Guardian](#) reported that the Russian Supreme Court had issued a decision to close the Memorial Human Rights Center (HRC), one of the most prominent and distinguished non-governmental organizations in Russia; the center (in cooperation with other Russian human rights organizations and bodies) had issued a report on April 2, the first of its kind, entitled '[A Devastating Decade](#)', which referred to violations of human rights and humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict in Syria, mainly the violations by the Syrian regime and the Russian regime's extensive support for it. On December 29, the center published a [statement](#) on its official website saying that the judge of the Moscow City Court had approved the closure decision that day.

**On the course of advocacy and the pursuit of accountability:**

On December 2, [the German Federal Prosecutor's Office](#) demanded a life sentence for defendant A.R. at his current trial before the Higher Regional Court in Koblenz, Germany, on charges related to committing crimes against humanity while heading the Syrian regime's al Khatib security branch, according to a report published by DW.

On December 2, the Council of the European Union issued a [decision](#) imposing restrictive measures on 17 individuals and 11 entities responsible for the refugee crisis at the Belarusian border. Among these entities was the Syrian Cham Wings Airlines which was included for its complicity in the aforementioned refugee crisis, with the company increasing the number of flights from the Syrian capital, Damascus, to the Belarusian capital, Minsk, since the summer of 2021, to facilitate refugees' illegal transit to European Union countries. The statement added that the Cham Wings Company has opened two new offices in the Belarusian capital to enable it to organize flights between Damascus and Minsk.

On December 5, the [New York Times](#) published an in-depth investigative report into the drug trade in Syria. The investigation stated that the drug trade, which is managed by individuals close to the head of the Syrian regime, Bashar al Assad, has turned Syria into the largest exporter of drugs in the world after its illegal exports of narcotics exceeded the sum of its other exports. The investigation added that much of the production and distribution operations are carried out under the supervision of the Fourth Division in the Syrian regime army, which is headed by Maher al Assad, brother of Bashar al Assad. The newspaper report added that among the other individuals involved were more figures close to the government, in addition to the Lebanese Hezbollah militia, and indicated that in recent years, large shipments of smuggled narcotics have been seized in several countries, the source of which was a port in Syria controlled by the Syrian regime.

On December 7, the [US Department of the Treasury](#) issued a decision imposing sanctions on some persons responsible or complicit in human rights violations in Syria, and on entities owned or controlled by these persons, including officers in the forces and security services of the Syrian regime. Those subjected to sanctions included Major General Tawfiq Khaddour for his connection to a chemical attack on Eastern Ghouta in April 2018, Major General Muhammad Hasouri for personally carrying out air attacks, some of them chemical, on Syrian civilians, Adib Salameh, assistant director of the Syrian regime's Air Intelligence division for being an integral part of the regime's repressive security apparatus, and Qahtan Khalil, the head of the security committee in southern Syria, as well as Kamal al Hasan, the commander of Branch 227 responsible for joint operations with Hezbollah in Syria.

On December 8, the [US Congress](#) passed a draft resolution demanding the disclosure of the personal wealth of the Syrian regime president Bashar al Assad and his family, during the council's approval of the US Department of Defense budget for 2022. The text of the draft resolution stated that the Secretary of State must submit a report to the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate, on the wealth of the Syrian regime's president Bashar al Assad and his family members, including the wealth of his wife, sons, brothers and cousins on his father and mother's side, including wealth resulting from corruption or illegal activities, assets, investments and other businesses; the draft resolution demanded that this report be submitted within a period not exceeding 120 days from the date of the decision.

On December 11, the [US National Public Radio](#) (NPR) stated that it has sued the US Department of Defense to force it to release documents regarding possible civilian casualties inflicted during the October 2019 military raid in Syria by US forces that resulted in the death of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi.

On December 14, the Odense District Court in Denmark issued a [statement](#) condemning the Danish company Dan-Bunkering for violating European Union sanctions by providing Russian forces with 172 tons of jet fuel for use in Syria. The court also condemned Bunker Holding (the parent company of Dan-Bunkering) and its CEO, Keld Demant, for facilitating eight deals for the sale of this fuel. The court fined the two companies, and sentenced the CEO to a four-month suspended prison sentence.

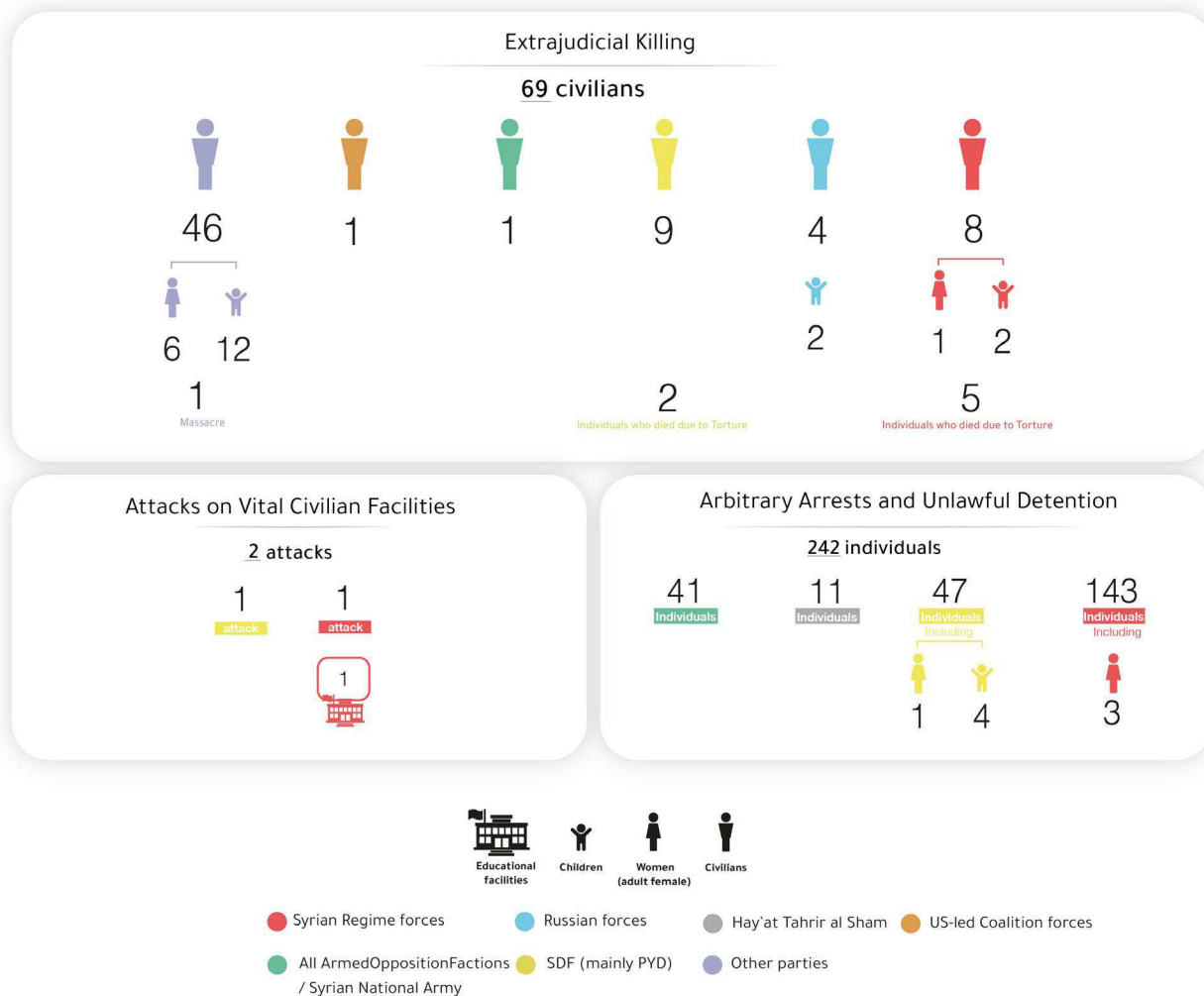
On December 18, the [New York Times](#) reported in an investigative feature article that the leadership of the US Department of Defense (Pentagon) did not publish the true numbers of civilian casualties who died as a result of air attacks by US forces in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, adding that the presence of civilians in buildings identified as belonging to militants was not taken into consideration, with the report finding that the Operations Command had conducted no investigations into such incidents or taken any measures to prevent their recurrence in the future.

On December 26, [France 24](#) TV website quoted another French news agency as stating that French authorities had charged a Frenchman of Syrian origin with "complicity in crimes against humanity and war crimes," following his arrest on suspicion of providing the Syrian regime with ingredients to manufacture chemical weapons used in Syria, through a shipping company owned by him; the accused was placed in pretrial detention.

In December, the Syrian Network for Human Rights briefed the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, as well as briefing the UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health on five cases of enforced disappearance.

### III. The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in December 2021:

This report outlines the most notable human rights violations that were documented by the SNHR in December 2021 at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.



#### A. Extrajudicial killing:

In December 2021, SNHR documented the deaths of 69 civilians, including 16 children and seven women (adult female), the largest percentage of whom were killed at the hands of other parties. We also documented seven individuals who died due to torture. We also recorded at least one massacre.

The death toll was distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces as follows:

A. The main parties:

- **Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):** Eight civilians, including two children and one woman.
- **Russian forces:** Four civilians, including two children.
- **All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army:** One civilian.
- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):** Nine civilians.
- **US-led coalition forces:** One civilian.

B. Other parties:

We documented the deaths of 46 civilians, including 12 children and six women, at the hands of other parties, distributed as follows:

- Landmines whose source we have not been able to identify: 10 civilians, including four children.
- Bombings whose perpetrators we have not been able to identify: Six civilians, including four children and two women.
- Gunfire by parties we have been unable to identify: 18 civilians, including three children and two women.
- Killings by parties we have been unable to identify: 10 civilians, including one child and two women.
- Turkish border guards: Two civilians.

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

In December 2021, SNHR documented at least 242 cases of arbitrary arrests, including four children and four women (adult female), at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria. The largest number of arbitrary arrests was carried out by Syrian regime forces in the governorates of Damascus Suburbs then Damascus.

The record of cases of arbitrary arrests was distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 143, including three women.
- **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** 11.
- **All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army:** 41.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 47, including four children and one woman.

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

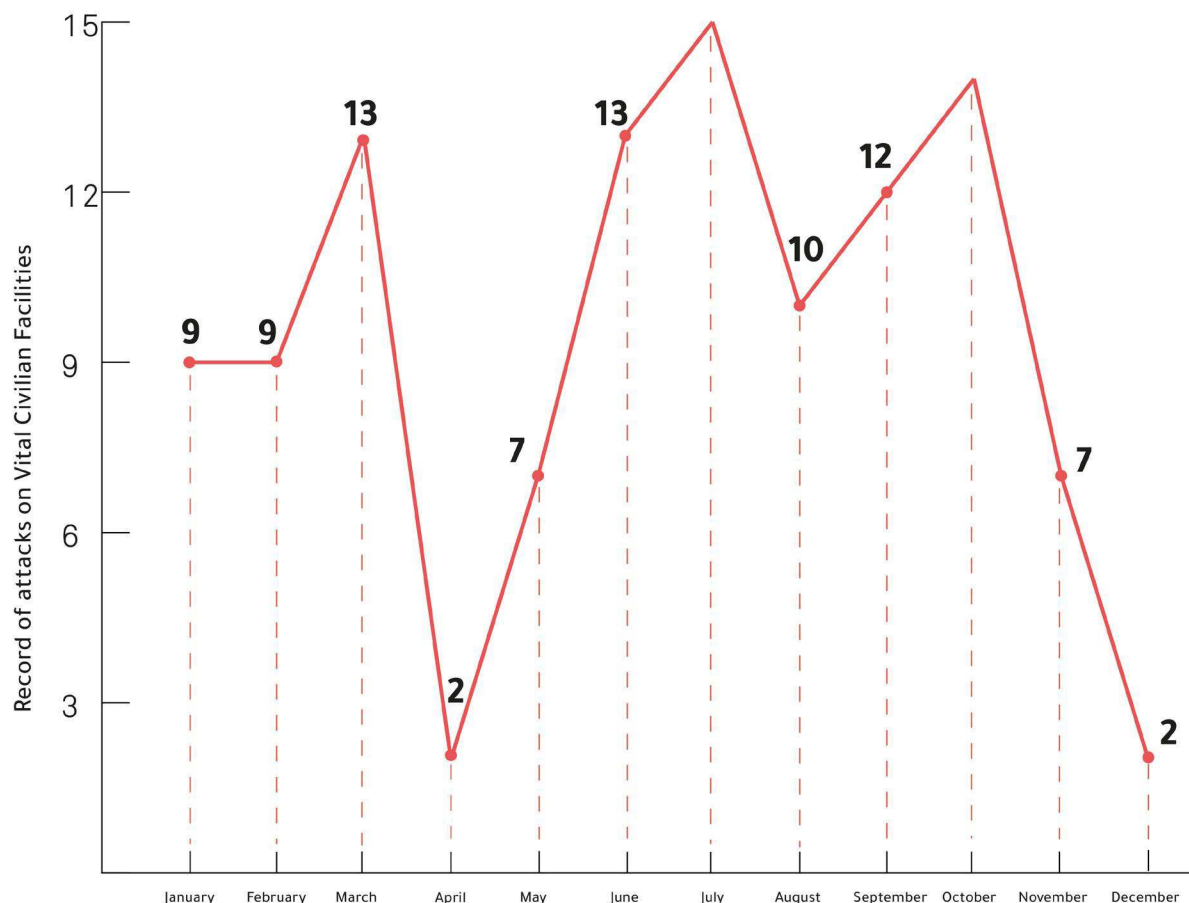
In December 2021, SNHR documented at least two incidents of attacks on vital civilian facilities, one of which was an educational facility. We note that a number of poultry farms in the Idlib region were subjected to air attacks at the end of December, with these attacks still under investigation.

These attacks were distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces as follows:

**Syrian Regime forces:** One incident on a school which is still under investigation, with the primary parties suspected of responsibility for this attack being either Syrian regime forces or Russian Forces.

**Syrian Democratic Forces:** One incident.

Thus, the total documented number of attacks on vital civilian facilities in 2021 reached 113 incidents at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, distributed by month as follows:



The chart above shows that July saw the highest number of attacks on vital civilian facilities recorded in 2021, accounting for approximately 14% of the total, followed by October with approximately 13%, then March and June with approximately 12% apiece. According to the SNHR database, we note that the highest number of these incidents was documented in Idlib governorate, accounting for approximately 42% of the total number for 2021, followed by Aleppo governorate with approximately 31%.

The two attacks on vital civilian facilities documented in December are:

On Tuesday, December 7, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces personnel raided the local office of the Rudaw

Media Network in al Qameshli city in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, and arrested six journalists working for the network, in addition to closing the office without providing any reason. The Syrian Network for Human Rights notes that these forces released the journalists a few hours after their arrest. Al Qameshli city was under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces at the time of the incident. Rudaw Media Network published a [news article](#) about the incident on its official website.

On Monday, December 13, 2021, M'arzaf village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate was subjected to an attack with an artillery shell whose source SNHR hasn't yet been able to identify as of this writing, with the primary parties suspected of responsibility for the attack being Russian or Syrian regime forces, since the shelling emanated from an area controlled by them. The investigation process is still underway to specifically identify the party responsible for the bombing.

The shell used in the bombing landed in front of M'arzaf Primary School in the village, causing significant material damage to its perimeter fence and main gate. The area was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

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

The Syrian Network for Human Rights was unable to document any indiscriminate attacks or attacks using outlawed weapons in December.

## **IV. Attachments:**

(1) [1,271 Civilians, Including 299 Children, 134 Women, and 104 Victims of Torture, Killed in Syria in 2021](#)

(2) [At Least 2,218 Arbitrary Arrests/ Detentions Documented in Syria in 2021, 242 of Them in December: Detainees in 2021 Include 85 Children and 77 Women](#)

## **V. Conclusions and Recommendations:**

### **Conclusions:**

- The evidence we have gathered indicates that attacks continue to be directed against civilians and civilian objects. Syrian-Russian alliance forces have committed various crimes, including extrajudicial killings, arrests, torture, and enforced disappearances. In addition, the indiscriminate bombardment and other attacks carried out caused the destruction of facilities and buildings. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the war crime of attacking civilians has been committed in many cases.
- The Syrian government has not only violated international humanitarian law and customary law, but has also breached a number of UN Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2139, resolu-

tion 2042 on the release of detainees, and resolution 2254, all without any accountability.

- We could find no record of any warnings being issued by the Syrian Regime or Russian forces prior to any attack under the requirements of international humanitarian law. This has been the case since the beginning of the popular uprising for freedom, providing another blatant demonstration of these forces' total disregard for the lives of civilians in Syria.
- The magnitude and frequency of the violations, the disproportionate use of military force, the indiscriminate manner of the bombing, and the coordinated approach of these attacks lead to the inescapable conclusion that these acts are wholly deliberate and based on high-level orders, and as such constitute a part of state policy.
- The indiscriminate and disproportionate bombardment carried out by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces is considered to be a clear violation of international humanitarian law, with indiscriminate killings amounting to war crimes.
- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham has violated international humanitarian law, causing the death of many civilians, as well as damage to vital civilian facilities.
- All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army violated UN Security Council Resolution 2139 through carrying out attacks that are considered to violate customary international humanitarian law, causing civilian casualties or accidental injuries.
- All the attacks documented in this report, particularly bombings, caused massive collateral damage that involved loss of lives, injuries, or significant damage to civilian objects. There are strong indicators suggesting that this damage was excessive compared to the anticipated military benefit.
- The use of explosive arms to target densely populated areas reflects a criminal and wholly deliberate mindset, with the perpetrators clearly intending to inflict the greatest possible number of deaths, which is a clear contravention of international human rights law and a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention (arts. 27, 31, 32).

### **Recommendations:**

#### **UN Security Council**

- The Security Council must take additional steps following its adoption of Resolution 2254, which clearly insists that "all parties immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such."
- The Syrian issue should be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible for violations should be held accountable, while Russia must stop using the veto, as it is a party to the Syrian conflict, and the UNSC states' veto power should be withheld when crimes against humanity and war crimes are committed.
- Ensure peace and security and implement the principle of responsibility to protect civilians' lives and to save the Syrian people's heritage and historical artifacts from destruction, looting and vandalism.
- The Security Council should adopt a resolution banning the use of cluster munitions and landmines in Syria, similar to the existing prohibition on the use of chemical weapons, and include advice on how to safely remove the remnants of such dangerous weapons.

- The four other permanent member states should put pressure on the Russian government to end its support for the Syrian regime, which uses chemical weapons, and to expose its involvement in this regard.
- Request that all relevant United Nations agencies make greater efforts to provide food, medical and humanitarian assistance in areas where fighting has ceased, and in internally displaced person camps, and to follow-up with those States that have pledged voluntary contributions.

### **International Community**

- In light of the split within the Security Council and its utter inability to take any effective action, action should be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people by protecting them from daily killing and by lifting sieges, as well as by increasing support for relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction should be enacted in local courts regarding these crimes in order to conduct fair trials for all those who were involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the 'Responsibility to Protect' in dozens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) after all political channels through the Arab League's plan and then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan have proved fruitless, along with the Cessation of Hostilities statements and Astana agreements that followed. Therefore, steps should be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, while the norm of the 'Responsibility to Protect', which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, should be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.
- Renew pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- Work on fulfilling justice and achieving accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and to activate the principle of universal jurisdiction.

### **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (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 and previous reports since these attacks were perpetrated by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces.

### **Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI)**

- Launch investigations into the cases included in this report and previous reports. SNHR is willing to cooperate and provide further evidence and data.
- Focus on the issue of landmines and cluster munitions within the next report.

### **International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)**

- Collect further evidence about the crimes documented in this report.

**The United Nations Special Envoy to Syria**

- Condemn the perpetrators of crimes and massacres, and those who were primarily responsible for dooming the de-escalation agreements.
- Re-sequence the peace process so that it can resume its natural course despite Russia's attempts to divert and distort it, empowering the Constitutional Committee prior to the establishment of a transitional governing body.

**The Syrian regime**

- Stop indiscriminate shelling and targeting of residential areas, hospitals, schools and markets, and end the use of outlawed weapons and barrel bombs.
- Ensure compliance with UN Security Council resolutions and customary humanitarian law.

**The Russian regime**

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

**The Coalition (US-led coalition and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces)**

- The states supporting the SDF should apply pressure on these forces in order to compel them to cease all of their violations in all the areas and towns under their control.
- Syrian Democratic Forces must immediately stop conscripting children, hold the officers involved in such violations accountable, and pledge to return all children who have been arrested for conscription immediately.

**All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army**

- The Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army must ensure the protection of civilians in all areas under their control. These forces should also take care to distinguish between civilians and military targets and cease any indiscriminate attacks.
- Take punitive action against those who commit violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

**Humanitarian Organizations**

- Develop urgent operational plans to secure decent shelter for internally displaced persons.
- Provide protected facilities and vehicles, such as medical facilities, schools, and ambulances, with distinctive signs that can be distinguished from long distances.

**Acknowledgments**

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to all family members, relatives and friends of the victims, as well as eyewitnesses and local activists whose contributions have enriched this report.



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