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The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in January 2022

Frost Wave Exacerbates IDPs' Suffering in Northwest Syria, with No Return Possible as the Regime Security Services' Inhumane Practices Continue

Friday 4 February 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, which SNHR documented in January 2022, and catalogues the death toll of civilian victims whom we documented killed by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria during this period, as well as the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearance. The report also highlights attacks on civilian objects, which SNHR's team was able to document during this period. 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 January:

In regard to bombardment and military operations:

January saw a military escalation in many areas of Syria, as the military campaign launched by Syrian-Russian alliance forces in Idlib region in northwest Syria since mid-2021 continued, with Syrian regime forces' ground attacks continuing in January, concentrating in the Jabal al Zaweya area and the surrounding area, as well as in the towns and villages of the southern suburbs of Idlib. One of these attacks, on Kansafra village in the southern suburbs of Idlib, on January 8, resulted in the [death of a girl](#). Several towns in the western suburbs of Aleppo were also subjected to artillery shelling by Syrian regime forces.

In Daraa, despite the settlement agreements concluded by Syrian regime forces throughout the governorate in September and October 2021, al Herak city in the governorate's eastern suburbs was subjected to artillery shelling by Syrian regime forces, [injuring three civilians](#), including two women, on January 22.

In the early days of 2022, the Russian Air Force intensified its attacks on areas in northwestern Syria, concentrating on the outskirts of Idlib city and Kansafra village in the southern suburbs of Idlib, al Jadida village and the suburbs of Jisr al Shoghour in the western suburbs of Idlib. The Russian airstrikes' intensity later gradually decreased, as we monitored the absence of Russian warplanes from the region in the last quarter of the month. Most of the Russian raids targeted military headquarters of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, as well as vital facilities and civilian gatherings in northwest Syria. One of the attacks east of Jisr al Shoghour city in the western suburbs of Idlib, near a group of tents inhabited by IDPs, [killed a girl and her mother](#) at dawn on January 1. We also recorded the continuation of attacks targeting poultry farms in the northwest of Syria by the Russian Air Force, which have increased in intensity since November 2021. One of these attacks on a [poultry farm in Armanaz city](#) in the western suburbs of Idlib on January 3, injured several civilians, including children, in addition to causing severe damage to the three-story farmhouse building. Also, Russian airstrikes targeted near [al Arshani Water Station](#), northwest of Idlib city, partially destroyed the building of the station, damaging the main water pipeline and station equipment, and injuring an employee at the station, on January 2.

Several statements were issued condemning the attack on the station. UNICEF issued [a statement](#) on January 4, in which it said that the attack put the station supported by the organization out of service, cutting off the water supply for over 241,000 people, many of whom are internally displaced. The organization did not indicate who carried out the attack. The French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs also condemned the attack on the station, adding that the continuous attacks on civilian infrastructures by the Syrian regime and Russia are flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, according to the official [French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs website's](#) statement published on January 4.

On January 10, the Russian [RIA Novosti news agency](#) reported that Syrian regime forces had conducted military maneuvers under the supervision and with the participation of Russian forces near Suwayda city. These maneuvers included the use of various weapons in addition to including the participation of Russian unmanned aircraft. We note that in recent years, Russia has used Syrian territory to test all types of modern weapons in its massive arsenal, and Russian officials have boasted on more than one occasion about these tests' role in raising Russian forces' combat capabilities.

In the second half of January, the villages and towns of the northern and eastern suburbs of Aleppo were subjected to attacks by Syrian Democratic Forces, which caused [human casualties](#) and [material damage](#) to the facilities there. Afrin city was also subjected to a ground attack on January 20, for which we have been unable to identify the perpetrators, with the primary parties suspected of responsibility for the attack being Syrian regime forces or Syrian Democratic Forces, since the shelling emanated from an area controlled by them. This attack resulted in [a massacre of seven civilians](#), including [five children](#), and damage to [vital civilian facilities](#).

Also in January, intermittent clashes continued between Syrian National Army forces and Syrian Democratic Forces in the villages of the 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. Artillery shelling by Syrian National Army forces on Jabhal village in the suburbs of Raqqa resulted in [the death of a child](#) on January 22.

On January 5, the US-led Coalition forces announced in [a statement](#) that a base belonging to Syrian Democratic Forces, which contains Coalition advisers, had been subjected to a missile attack by Iranian-backed groups who were stationed in the vicinity of al Mayadeen city, east of Deir Ez-Zour city. The statement added that the Syrian Democratic Forces responded to the point of origin of the attack by firing six artillery shells.

In terms of bombings, during the course of January, we documented [several bombings](#), whose perpetrators we have so far been unable to identify, in the governorates of Aleppo and Hama.

January also saw continuing civilian deaths due to explosions caused by landmines and munitions remnants in various governorates and regions of Syria. [SNHR documented](#) the [deaths of four](#) civilians, including [three children](#), resulting from landmine explosions in January.

January 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 the governorates of Daraa, Aleppo, and Deir Ez-Zour, due to the deteriorating security situation, in addition to the [killings in al Hawl Camp; we documented the death of a nurse on January 11](#). On January 12, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Syria issued [a statement](#) condemning the killing of a staff member of a local relief organization in al Hawl Camp on January 11. The statement said that the camp has seen a significant increase in violence during last year, adding that since January 2021 to date, the UN has received reports of 90 murders of Syrian and Iraqi camp residents, including at least two humanitarian workers. On January 14, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) condemned in [a statement](#) the killing of a health care worker in the camp. The statement called for finding solutions that guarantee the safety of camp residents and humanitarian workers alike.

On January 5, [SANA news agency](#) reported that Israeli artillery forces bombed al Ahraj area of al Hurriya town, northwest of Quneitra city, with several shells. On January 31, [SANA](#) reported that the Israeli forces launched a missile attack targeting some points in the vicinity of Damascus city, causing material damage.

The most notable events in the Ghwayran prison operation in Hasaka city:

On January 20, [ISIS](#) blew up two car bombs, one of which targeted the gate of Ghwayran prison (al Sina'a Prison) while the second blew up about 200 meters from the prison, located in the Ghwayran neighborhood of Hasaka city. The two explosions were followed by an attack by ISIS-affiliated gunmen using machine guns, who attacked the prison which is under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces. Clashes between members of the Syrian Democratic Forces and ISIS elements continued for several hours, coinciding with an insurgency within the prison by the ISIS detainees, which ended with ISIS taking control of the prison completely. The clashes then spread to the neighborhoods of Ghwayran and al Zohour in Hasaka city, after ISIS elements spread in these neighborhoods, during which [the US-led coalition warplanes](#) launched [raids targeting the ISIS sites of gathering](#) in the two neighborhoods. The most prominent of these sites was [the building of the Faculties of Economics and Civil Engineering](#)/ al Furat University in Hasaka. On January 26, Syrian Democratic Forces [announced](#) the restoration of full control of Ghwayran prison and the surrender of all ISIS elements.

The clashes caused [the displacement](#) of at least 40,000 civilians from the neighborhoods of Ghwayran and al Zohour, which are under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces, with the displaced civilians heading towards the center of Hasaka city and the eastern suburbs of Hasaka.

On January 23, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, Mr. Imran Riza, and the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, Mr. Muhannad Hadi, confirmed the deterioration of the security situation in Hasaka, as 45,000 people were forced to flee their homes in the area of clashes between Syrian Democratic Forces and ISIS.

On January 25, [UNICEF said](#) in a statement that it had received deeply worrisome reports of fatalities among children held in Ghwayran prison in Hasaka. The report added that almost 850 children, some as young as 12 years old, are currently in detention in northeast Syria, most of them are held in the Ghwayran facility. The majority of these children are Syrian and Iraqi boys while the rest are of 20 other nationalities. The statement added that these children should never have been held in military detention in the first place, and the violence they are subjected to may amount to war crimes. The statement called on all parties in Syria to ensure the protection of civilians in the region and give priority for the safety of children inside Ghwayran prison.

On January 25, Ravina Shamdasani, the Spokesperson for the [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), said during the organization's regular press conference in Geneva that the latest events of Ghwayran prison in Hasaka, northeastern Syria, "highlight the desperate situation of thousands of detainees [...], and dire living conditions continue to affect the camps' residents," in addition to the situation of children caught in the fighting. The Spokesperson added that thousands of people had fled the areas surrounding the location of the military operation for fear of further attacks.

On January 26, the New York Times published a [feature article](#) in which it said that 700 children between the ages of 10 and 18 are being held in the top floor of the prison building, which was witnessing clashes between Syrian Democratic Forces and ISIS members who were seeking to control the prison near Hasaka city. The newspaper quoted Letta Tyler, from Human Rights Watch, who said that she spoke with 3 people, including a child, from inside the besieged prison building, who told her that they had seen dead and injured children, and added that those trapped inside the prison ran out of water and food.

On January 26, [Human Rights Watch \(HRW\)](#) said that ISIS controlled Ghwayran prison in Hasaka city for six days before Syrian Democratic Forces regained control of it. The HRW added, quoting sources in Syrian Democratic Forces, who stated that 284 people were killed as a result of the military operation in the prison and its surroundings, including 250 of the attackers among ISIS elements, 27 members of the Syrian Democratic Forces, and 7 civilians. The HRW added that some of the child detainees in the prison were among the dead and wounded.

On January 27, UNICEF said in [a statement](#) that the violence in the vicinity of Ghwayran prison in Hasaka city, northeastern Syria, forced more than 45,000 people to flee the area, some of whom had already been displaced several times previously from many areas in Syria. The statement called for the immediate release of children held in prison.

On January 29, [Agence France-Presse](#) published a photo taken in Ghwayran neighborhood in Hasaka city, showing an unlocked truck loaded with the corpses of ISIS fighters who were killed by Syrian Democratic Forces in the confrontations of Ghwayran prison events. The Syrian Network for Human Rights condemns this act that violates the sanctity of the corpses and its use to sow terror among the citizens.

In regard to arrests and enforced disappearances:

Syrian regime forces continued in January 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 Damascus Suburbs and Daraa governorates, with most occurring during campaigns of mass raids and arrests and at checkpoints. We recorded arrests targeting civilians in connection with their criticism of the deteriorating living conditions in the regime-held areas.

We also 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. In addition, we documented arrests carried out by the regime's security services of civilians who had previously been released from regime detention centers, with these arrests being carried out with the aim of materially extorting the families of detainees. We also documented arrests targeting a number of returning civilians, all refugees and IDPs, after they returned to their original areas, now back under the control of Syrian regime forces; these were concentrated in Hama and Aleppo. On January 25, 2022, the Syrian regime issued a partial amnesty through Legislative Decree No. 3 of 2022 granting a general amnesty to internal and external crimes of desertion from military service committed before January 25, 2022. The Syrian Network for Human Rights did not document any releases taking place under this decree.

Meanwhile, Syrian Democratic Forces continued enforcing the group's policies of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance in January, with the number detained increasing this month as SDF personnel continued carrying out campaigns of mass raids and arrests, 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 families, with these arrests concentrating in Raqqqa and Deir Ez-Zour governorates. In addition to these cases, we documented an arrest of a member of the Kurdish Yekiti Party, who was released after being severely beaten in Hasaka city.

January 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 arrests carried out by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel of civilians affiliated with Hizb ut-Tahrir in connection with their criticism of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, as well as the arrests of a number of sheikhs from inside a Quran memorization institute in Idlib city.

Meanwhile, all Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army also continued carrying out arbitrary detentions and kidnappings in January, 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 detentions carried out by Syrian National Army personnel, targeting civilians and village headmen on charges of collaborating with Syrian Democratic Forces. These arrests were concentrated in some villages near Afrin city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

Regarding living conditions:

The living and economic situation has worsened in all regions of Syria, coinciding with snow storms and a drop in temperatures to record levels of cold compared to previous years, with the already severe suffering of civilians increasing in light of the harsh weather conditions and the acute shortage and high prices of heating materials. In addition, the allocations of diesel - 200 liters distributed in 4 batches - set by the Syrian regime government for each electronic card this year, were very few and inadequate compared to the snow and rain storms witnessed throughout the region. The [pro-regime al Watan newspaper reported](#) on January 13 that the first batch of diesel fuel allocations - 50 liters - ended immediately 10 days after it was distributed in Suwayda city, which forced most of the people in the city to use sheets and blankets to ensure warmth, in the absence of other sources of heating due to the lack of gas, the high prices of firewood, and the long hours of electricity rationing.

In terms of prices, the prices of basic materials continued to rise. On January 6, [al Watan newspaper](#) said that the Syrian regime government's Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection set the price of an empty gas cylinder of 12.5 kg at 116,000 Syrian pounds, an almost sixfold increase on the previous price of 19,500 pounds. The ministry also set the price of an empty industrial gas cylinder of 16 to 20 kg at 175,000 Syrian pounds, again an almost sixfold increase on its previous price of 30,000 pounds.

The electricity crisis worsened in conjunction with the deteriorating weather conditions in the region in general, with rationing continuing in all areas under the control of the Syrian regime, and with the amount of electricity received being insufficient and unstable, causing malfunctions in electrical devices.

Saleh Omran, director of the Electricity Company in Homs city, [told](#) al Watan newspaper on January 10, "The amount of an hour of electricity is not enough for the ideal investment and to meet all the needs of citizens in various household needs such as cooking, heating water, and heating." The severe electricity crisis was reflected in most aspects of life in the Syrian regime-controlled areas, with [al Watan newspaper](#) also quoting Walid al Daas, Director General of the Drinking Water and Sanitation Corporation in Quneitra governorate on January 19, "The electricity situation in the villages of the governorate has affected many negatively in providing citizens with drinking water due to the low intensity of the electric current, which causes the submersible pumps not to function and thus [results in] a lack of water pumping and a shortage of drinking water reaching the citizens."

In northwestern Syria, the deteriorating economic situation and increases in the prices of basic services led to several demonstrations in the region, with the cities and towns of the northern and eastern suburbs of Aleppo witnessing demonstrations protesting against the rise in electricity prices by companies supplying them from Turkey. The prices of some basic items continued to rise, with the worst affected foodstuff being bread, due to the high price of the bundle of bread and its low weight. We documented overcrowding in bakeries in Idlib suburbs, especially those established by the Salvation Government to sell subsidized bread. On January 11, the local council of Izaz city set the price of a household gas cylinder in US dollars, and according to the [statement](#) published by the council on its Facebook page, the price of a cylinder was set at \$11.80, which constitutes an additional burden on citizens due to fluctuations in the price of the Turkish lira approved in trading in area against the US dollar.

In regard to healthcare issues, an article in [Asharq al Awsat newspaper](#) on January 19, quoted Dr. Salem Abdan, the Idlib Health Director, as saying, "Medical services and a number of surgical operations were recently reduced in a number of hospitals and medical centers in Idlib and northwest Syria," which he attributed "to the fact that the medical stock is nearing depletion of

sterilizers, surgical sutures, blades, gauze, anesthesia drugs, laboratory drugs, and the means for operating laboratory equipment, in addition to the reduction in the number of workers in those hospitals, due to the cessation of support by donors."

On January 20, [Agence France-Presse](#) reported that donors' cuts to the value of support for Darkoush Hospital, northwest of Idlib, which provides free medical services to 30,000 civilians, threaten the continuation of its work. The agency added that the main donor, which provides 80% of the support to the hospital, has fully halted its support for it. The agency quoted Mahmoud Daher, director of the World Health Organization office in the Turkish city of Gaziantep, as saying that "International support is decreasing with the increasing needs." He added, "Some hospitals have already stopped working." We at the Syrian Network for Human Rights warn of the consequences of stopping support for the health sector in an area that is overcrowded with civilians, most of whom are children, women, and elderly people, and of the displaced, who represent the most vulnerable group and need these services, especially in light of the continuing outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

The areas controlled by Syrian Democratic Forces are still witnessing increases in the prices of basic foodstuffs, in addition to bread shortages, which exacerbates the deterioration of the already poor living conditions there. Several demonstrations took place in the cities, towns and villages of Deir Ez-Zour suburbs throughout the month, calling for an improvement in the living situation and the release of detainees. These areas witnessed a cut in the availability of sugar as a result of the closure of the Semalka border crossing with the Kurdistan region of Iraq. On the medical level, hospitals and pharmacies in the eastern region suffer 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:

January saw a decrease in documented COVID-19 infections across Syria compared to previous months.

The Syrian regime government's [Ministry of Health](#) officially announced 1,124 cases of COVID-19 infection and 92 deaths in January (The number of infections this month is the lowest monthly record since July 2021), bringing the official total announced to 51,402 cases of infection with 2,989 deaths, as of January 31.

In northwestern Syria, more infections and deaths due to coronavirus were recorded in January, with [the Early Warning Alert and Response Network \(EWARN\)](#) announcing the documentation of 116 infections and 44 deaths related to COVID-19 as of January 30 (The number of infections this month is the lowest monthly record since August 2020); this brought the total number of infections and deaths announced by EWARN in January, to 93,073 cases of infection and 2,363 deaths.

[The Self-Management's Health Authority](#) announced that it had documented a total of 289 cases of infection and 20 deaths in January (The number of infections this month is the lowest monthly record since July 2021). This brought the total number of infections and deaths as of January 31 to 37,478 cases of infection, including 1,525 deaths.

In regard to asylum, displacement and forced displacement:

The northwestern region of Syria, including the IDP camps, witnessed in January a wave of [frost, snow and rainstorms](#), which caused the collapse of many tents and damaged or destroyed others. The accumulation of snow also caused the closure of roads between the camps, with some of these camps completely cut off from their surrounding areas. On January 21, the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) in Syria published a report on the situation in the camps in northwestern Syria due to the snowstorm that hit the region on January 18 and 19. The report stated that 261 tents had been reported to have collapsed while 914 others were damaged as a result of snow. The report estimated that a total of 100,000 people had been adversely affected by the storm. The [International Rescue Committee](#) also issued [a press statement](#) on January 19, in which it said that 1.7 million of the displaced people, 80 percent of whom are women and children, live in overcrowded informal camps and unfinished buildings. The statement added that as temperatures are set to reach minus five degrees Celsius at night, frost, heavy rain and snowfall threaten to exacerbate the suffering of hundreds of thousands of those living in makeshift tents and in poor housing conditions.

In January, we recorded the outbreak of [several fires](#) in the [IDP camps](#) in [northwestern Syria](#), as a result of the camp residents' dependence on refined and unsuitable fuel for heating, documenting [several deaths, including children](#), as a result of these fires.

In al Hawl Camp, on January 16, Syrian Democratic Forces allowed one group of people to leave al Hawl Camp in the eastern suburbs of Hasaka and return to their villages and towns; this group consisted of 53 families or approximately 217 individuals, from the villages and towns of the suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour. This was [the twenty-second](#) such group since the Syrian Democratic Forces' Self-Management Authority's decision to empty al Hawl Camp was announced in October 2020.

In addition, two fires broke out in al Hawl Camp in January, but we could not determine their cause. The first, which broke out on January 12 in the private sector for foreigners (wives of ISIS members), burnt three tents without causing any injuries. The second, which broke out on January 16 in the third sector of al Hawl Camp for Iraqi refugees, injured three civilians who sustained minor injuries and burnt five tents.

On January 4, [the North and East Syria Information Center](#) said that the Iraqi government had repatriated 95 Iraqi families from al Hawl Camp. The total number of people remaining has not been determined.

On January 9, British newspaper [The Independent](#) said in an article that thousands of foreign children are living in camps in northeastern Syria without any hope of returning to their homes, adding that the British authorities repatriated only seven minors without repatriating any of the British children living with their parents in those camps. The article pointed out that 40,000 children, from Syria and Iraq, and dozens of children from foreign countries, are being held in what look like prisons in camps in northeastern Syria, including 35 children of British nationality.

With regard to Syrian refugees, [France 24 TV](#) website reported, on January 6, that non-governmental organizations have warned of a possible tragedy facing 70,000 Syrian refugees in camps around the town of Aarsal in Lebanon, due to the high prices of heating fuel, coinciding with the heavy snowfall and low temperatures. The website quoted the [Edinburgh Direct](#) Aid organization, operating in Aarsal region, as stating that this winter is different from previous years due to the exceptional cold, which exposes the most vulnerable groups among the refugees to the risk of death.

On January 9, British newspaper [The Guardian](#) reported that it had seen a letter sent by the UK Home Office to a Syrian asylum-seeker, which stated that his asylum application had not been accepted on the grounds that he could return to Syria since it was safe. The newspaper reported that this was the first time that a Syrian asylum application has been rejected in Britain.

On January 10, the [Dutch Trouw newspaper](#) published a feature article in which it said that Denmark's policy towards Syrian asylum seekers, which assumes that parts of Syria have become safe and that it will return asylum seekers from those areas, prompted hundreds of Syrian asylum seekers to leave Denmark and go to other European countries. According to the newspaper, the number of Syrians who left Denmark has reached 400, distributed among Germany, Belgium, Sweden and the Netherlands.

On January 11, the [UK Home Office](#) published a tweet on its official account on Twitter, in which it said, "In the current circumstances we are not returning people to Syria. The UK Government agrees with the UN judgement that Syria remains unsafe for them." In the same context and on the same day, Jonathan Hargreaves, [the UK Special Representative for Syria](#), posted a tweet on his official account on Twitter, in which he stressed that the position of the United Kingdom on the situation in Syria has not changed, that Syria is not considered safe for the return of refugees and that his country will not return anyone to Syria.

On January 11, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) published a [report](#) on the number of illegal crossings to the European Union countries in 2021. According to the report, Syrians remained among the largest number of refugees crossing the European Union through illegal means.

On January 12, the [German news agency](#) quoted the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), as stating that, in 2021, Germany witnessed the highest number of asylum applications since 2017, with 190,800 asylum applications being submitted. The agency indicated that Syrians constituted the largest proportion of asylum seekers in 2021, numbering more than 70,000 people.

On the political and human rights level:

On January 1, [the International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#) issued its eleventh report among a series of global migration reports issued every two years. The latest report stated that Syria contains the largest number of internally displaced persons worldwide, compared to its total population, with 35% of the population displaced due to the violence and conflict in the country. The report also indicated that the escalation carried out by Syrian regime forces on Idlib city in 2020 caused one of the largest displacement movements in the country since the outbreak of the conflict. In terms of asylum, the report said that Syria's border with Turkey is the second largest refugee gateway in the world after the US-Mexico border. The report estimated the number of Syrian refugees around the world at 6.7 million until the end of 2020, an increase of 100,000 refugees from 2019.

On January 5, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu, said during a [Security Council session](#), "Syria's declaration of compliance with Chemical Weapons Convention still inaccurate due to persisting gaps and inconsistencies." She added that so far, 20 of the 24 outstanding issues opened by the Declaration Assessment Team in 2014 remain unresolved.

On January 5, the [World Health Organization](#) issued an emergency appeal to secure urgent health needs in Syria for 2022, as the organization indicated that "In 2022, 12.2 million people will be in need of health services, of which 4.4 million are displaced, 1.33 million will be children aged under 5 years (including an anticipated 503,000 newborns) and 3.38 million are women of reproductive age" According to the health sector dire need scale, five governorates in northwestern and northeastern Syria will continue to be among the most dangerous areas.

On January 11, Stéphane Dujarric, the Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General, announced during his [daily briefing](#) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the extension of the delivery of aid to 3.4 million people in northwestern Syria, as part of the cross-border aid delivery mechanism for another six months under Security Council Resolution [2585](#) (July 2021), adding that the cross-border aid delivery mechanism represents the only lifeline for about 2.4 million people in northwestern Syria, by providing them with food, water and basic humanitarian aid on a monthly basis. The Spokesman also conveyed the assertion of the United Nations Secretary-General that the cross-line deliveries cannot, at this point, replace the massive scale of the cross-border operation.

On January 11, members of the US House Foreign Affairs Committee and the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee sent a [letter](#) to US President Joe Biden calling on his administration to strengthen the US position on not allowing the Syrian regime to be reintegrated into the international community without accountability. The letter added that the crimes committed by the Syrian regime are carefully documented, as the Syrian regime used chemical weapons against civilians with the support of Russia and Iran. The signatories to the letter urged President Biden to take the necessary deterrence mechanisms in the Caesar Act to ensure the international isolation of the Syrian regime.

On January 12, the German [DW](#) website reported that the Cabinet of Germany had agreed to extend the mission of the German forces to combat ISIS. The decision to extend the mission included amendments, including the formal exclusion of Syria as an area of operations for the German army, and keeping the missions of the forces in Iraq for a period of 9 months.

On January 12, the [Israeli Alma Research and Education Organization](#) website published an investigation in which it said that "The area of Mount Muhammad ben Ali, located about a few kilometers north of the city of Palmyra in eastern Syria, serves as a fortified compound of the radical Shiite axis led by Iran. The site is equipped with medium-range and long-range surface-to-surface missiles inside fortified shafts." The investigation added that the radical Shiite axis led by Iran has deployed many forces in the Palmyra area, and that air defense systems "probably made in Iran" were installed to secure the land corridor in general and the surface-to-surface missiles stationed there in particular.

On January 13, Human Rights Watch released its thirty-second annual [report](#) on the human rights situation in more than 100 countries and regions around the world in 2021. [In the detailed paragraph on Syria](#), the report said that the Syrian-Russian alliance forces has conducted "indiscriminate aerial bombing of schools, hospitals, and markets—the civilian infrastructure essential to a society's survival. According to Airwars, a UK-based monitoring group, the Russian air force alone has carried out around 39,000 airstrikes in Syria since 2015." The report added that the number of people in need of humanitarian aid increased by 21% in 2021, bringing the total number

of people in need of aid to 13.4 million, with 1.48 million people in catastrophic need. The report cited several statistics from the Syrian Network for Human Rights, including “nearly 15,000 have died due to torture since March 2011, the majority at the hands of Syrian government forces.”

On January 13, Catherine Marchi-Uhel, Head of UN International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism on Syria, Paulo Pinheiro, Chair of UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria, Hanny Megally and Lynn Welchman, Commissioners at UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria, said that some states continue to put barriers in the way of universal jurisdiction which prevent the prosecution of Syrian war criminals. In a [joint opinion article](#), on Al Jazeera Net, they called on the international community and the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

On January 19, the American [Foreign Policy](#) magazine published an article in which it said that by restoring relations with the Syrian regime, the international community is ignoring one of the most important rules in geopolitics: “Never negotiate with terrorists.” The article added that the US administration must fully enforce the Caesar Act to protect civilians, and must also impose penalties on violators, imposing strict penalties on any activity that would help the Syrian regime maintain or expand its petroleum products sector or energy sector. The article indicated that if the operations of transporting Egyptian gas to Lebanon through Syrian territory require repairing the infrastructure of these pipelines in Syria or building a new structure, then this is considered a violation of Caesar Act.

On January 20, the [New York Times](#) published a feature article on the airstrike that targeted al Tabaqa Dam in al Tabaqa city in Raqqa suburbs on March 26, 2017. The investigation stated that the site was on the list of areas prohibited from being targeted, but a US Special Operation Unit called ‘Task Force 9’ targeted the dam with a fortification-busting bomb, one of the largest in the US arsenal, designed to destroy thick concrete structures. In response to the newspaper’s questions about the targeting, the US Central Command denied targeting the dam, and contented itself with acknowledging the targeting of watchtowers related to the dam and not the dam itself.

On January 21, the [Washington Institute for Near East Policy](#) published a brief analysis on cross-border aid in Syria, stating, “The UN aid mechanism is alive for another six months, but the threat of famine, Russian vetoes, and military escalation will persist unless Washington takes appropriate steps before the next round of renewal negotiations.”

On January 23, [Le Monde newspaper](#) published a press report entitled “Assad Leads Captagon Trafficking in the Middle East,” in which it said that the president of the Syrian regime, Bashar al Assad, adds Assad is convinced of his impunity, and therefore added mass production and aggressive drug marketing to a long list of crimes attributed to him for ten years. The report stated that Maher al Assad, brother of the president of the Syrian regime, and commander of the Fourth Division, accused of committing numerous killings and violations in Syria, assumes executive responsibility in the drug manufacturing and smuggling network in the Syrian regime.

On January 24, at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Syria's human rights record was examined by the Human Rights Council's [Universal Periodic Review Working Group](#) for the third time. The countries participating in the review made many [recommendations](#) to the Syrian regime's delegation regarding the human rights situation in Syria, the most important of which was putting an end to enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and torture in Syria. The participating countries also called on the Syrian regime's delegation to publish official lists of detainees and those who died in detention centers. The Syrian Network for Human Rights had submitted a [report](#) to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, [as part of the contribution of "Other Stakeholders"](#) to the documents of this session, on July 14, 2021.

On January 24, the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) of [the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#) (OPCW), published [a report](#) regarding incidents of alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Marea city, north of Aleppo, in two incidents, on 1 and 3 September 2015. The report concluded that "all the information obtained and analysed by the FFM provides reasonable grounds to believe that sulfur mustard, scheduled chemicals to the Convention, was used as a weapon on September 1, 2015." The report stated that, according to witnesses, the attack was carried out from sites under the control of ISIS.

On January 25, the President of the Syrian regime, Bashar al Assad, issued a legislative decree ([Legislative Decree No. 3](#)) to grant a general amnesty for crimes committed before the date of January 25, 2022, stipulating "an amnesty for the full penalty for the perpetrators of the crimes of internal escape stipulated in Article 100 of the Military Penal Code issued by Legislative Decree No. 61 of 1950 and its amendments."

On January 26, the [United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) and the World Food Program issued an [analytical report](#) entitled '**Hunger Hotspots**' covering the period between February and May 2022. The analysis stated that food insecurity is likely to worsen in 20 countries and regions, including Syria, during the period covered by the analysis, which added that Syria is still on the list of countries of concern in terms of food security, as was the case during the past years, where levels of food insecurity increased as a result of the long years of conflict and the increase in prices. The analysis indicated that 88 percent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are completely dependent on humanitarian aid, because they could not afford the simplest costs of survival needs.

On January 26, [Geir Pedersen](#) said in a meeting of the Security Council that violence in Syria continues, as January witnessed airstrikes in Idlib that killed civilians and destroyed vital civilian centers, in addition to mutual shelling on the contact lines, and many other violations in all parts of the country, but despite the continued violence and suffering in Syria, it is clear that a military solution has become an illusion for any of the parties.

On January 27, UN [Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs](#), Martin Griffiths, briefed the Security Council on developments related to the humanitarian situation in Syria, “We are failing the Syrian people, young and old.” He pointed out that the conflict in Syria continues to cause civilian deaths, as on January 20, six civilians, including 4 children, were killed when missiles landed in Afrin city. He added that at the beginning of January, an airstrike on a main water station serving Idlib city caused severe damaged to the station.

On January 27, the [Wall Street Journal](#) published an investigation in which it said that the United Arab Emirates is leading the efforts made in the Arab world to restore normalization with the Syrian regime. The investigation added that the visit of representatives of the Syrian Central Bank to the Emirates aimed to establish a financial channel through which Syrian importers would pay international suppliers from accounts in the United Arab Emirates to avoid direct transfers that could be hampered by sanctions against the Syrian regime, and the Syrian Cham Wings Airlines, which is on the US sanctions list, started regular flights from Damascus to Abu Dhabi. The report added that the al Qatirji Group, which is on the US sanctions list, uses fake companies in Dubai to buy computers to set up a new bank in Syria.

On January 27, [Human Rights Watch and the Syrian Legal Development Programme](#) said that UN agencies “do not sufficiently incorporate human rights principles in their assessment of UN suppliers and partners in Syria.” and this exposes them to significant reputational and actual risk of financing abusive actors. The two organizations released a report and guide in question-and-answer form about human rights-compliant procurement practices to assist UN agencies in Syria. The guide includes examples of direct procurement from abusive actors involved in committing human rights violations.

On January 27, the Jordanian [Al-Mamlaka](#) TV website said that the Jordanian security services had “thwarted attempts to infiltrate and smuggle large quantities of narcotics, coming from Syrian territory to Jordanian territory.” which led to the killing of 27 smugglers, and the wounding of others, who fled with the remaining smugglers to inside Syrian territory.

On January 28, the [Wall Street Journal](#) published a feature article in which it said that ISIS has been planning for nearly three years to regain control of the areas it lost. The investigation indicated that ISIS members imposed royalties on shop owners and farmers in areas of Hasaka city, in addition to truck drivers coming from the oilfield areas in eastern Syria. The investigation said that nearly 200 ISIS members, including suicide bombers, had attacked Ghwayran prison in Hasaka, which contains thousands of ISIS members. According to the article, the events in the prison led to the killing of at least 100 people, most of them members of the organization, and the displacement of about 45,000 people from the area’s residents in the vicinity of the prison.

On other issues, January also witnessed the signing of several agreements between the Syrian regime and a number of countries supporting it, in violation of international sanctions imposed on the Syrian regime.

On January 12, [SANA news agency](#) reported that Fadi Khalil, the head of the Planning and International Cooperation Authority in the Syrian regime government, and Feng Biao, the Chinese ambassador to Syria, signed a memorandum of understanding within the framework of the "[Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road](#)" initiative. The agency added, quoting Fadi Khalil, "[Syria's accession to the initiative enhances cooperation between Syria and China in several areas, including facilitating trade exchange, rebuilding infrastructure, electric power and alternative energy.](#)" On January 12, [SANA news agency](#) quoted Tariq Ismail, Director General of the Latakia Water Corporation, in which he said that a Russian company had been contracted to implement a project at a cost of 200 billion Syrian pounds to transfer water from Tishreen Dam to Latakia city. On January 15, the Iranian [Fars news agency](#) quoted Rostam Qasemi, head of the Iranian-Syrian Joint Economic Committee on the Iranian side, as saying following a visit to Damascus, that new agreements had been reached, including the opening of a joint bank, and accordingly, branches of local banks would be opened between the two sides.

On the course of advocacy and the pursuit of accountability:

On December 31, the website of the Ukrainian Security Administration published [a statement](#) announcing the completion of investigations into the trial of a group that, through their links, had recruited mercenaries from different parts of Ukraine, to participate in hostilities in Syria alongside Syrian regime forces.

On January 6, [Human Rights Watch](#) issued a question-and-answer document and a feature article on the ongoing court in Koblenz, Germany, against two former officers in the Syrian security services, on charges related to crimes against humanity. The article provides context and highlights the main issues surrounding the trial. [The article](#) also contains audio interviews conducted by Human Rights Watch with Syrians and others related to the trial. [The question-and-answer document](#) provides information about the defendants in addition to the most prominent cases that were raised during the trial. The statistics of the Syrian Network for Human Rights regarding the number of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, in addition to the number of victims of torture, were referred to as part of the charges brought against the defendants.

On January 13, [Le Monde newspaper](#) reported that the person who was arrested by the French authorities at the end of December 2021 and charged with complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity was called Salah H., a Frenchman of Syrian origin, and that among the charges against him was supplying Syrian regime forces and the Syrian regime's Scientific Studies and Research Center with equipment, including materials that could be used in the manufacture of chemical weapons, in addition to accusing him of being part of a circle of businessmen used by the Syrian regime to circumvent international sanctions. The newspaper also indicated that the accused runs a shipping company listed on the US sanctions list.

On January 13, the [Higher Regional Court](#) in Koblenz, Germany, convicted Anwar R., who from January 2011 to September 2012, headed the Investigation Department in Security Branch 251 (Al Khatib Branch) of torture, 27 murders and a case of sexual assault, in addition to the detention and deprivation of 4,000 people of their freedom, sentencing him to life imprisonment. The Syrian Network for Human Rights had shared a file containing data on 58 Syrian citizens who died due to torture in al Khatib branch during the period of the accused Anwar R.'s service with the Investigation Department. The file was handed over to the German Public Prosecutor through our partner, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights. We issued a [statement](#) on the conviction in which we stressed that this trial is a step on the long and thorny path of accountability in Syria. In a statement issued on the same day, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria welcomed the court's ruling and stressed the need for more efforts to achieve justice for Syrian victims and survivors. Michelle Bachelet, the [United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), praised the condemnation, which she described as historic, and urged other countries to investigate and prosecute cases of grave human rights violations that constitute international crimes using the principle of universal jurisdiction.

On January 17, the [Higher Regional Court](#) in Koblenz issued a press release in Arabic about its ruling against Anwar R., a former officer in the Syrian regime's intelligence service, on January 13, sentencing him to life imprisonment. The statement refuted the charges on which the court based its decision, as well as detailing the trial proceedings, witnesses and the mechanism for verifying the charges.

On January 19, the first session in the trial of the Syrian doctor, Alaa M., [began](#) before the Higher Regional Court in Frankfurt, Germany, on charges that fall mostly under the category of crimes against humanity. [The indictment against him, according to the Federal Public Prosecutor](#), included 18 cases of torture of prisoners of the opposition against the Syrian regime in the period from April 1, 2011 until the end of 2012, in military hospitals in Syria, in addition to the charge of premeditated murder of one of the detainees and other charges. [Human Rights Watch](#) said in a statement on the day the trial began, that among the charges against Alaa M. were crimes committed

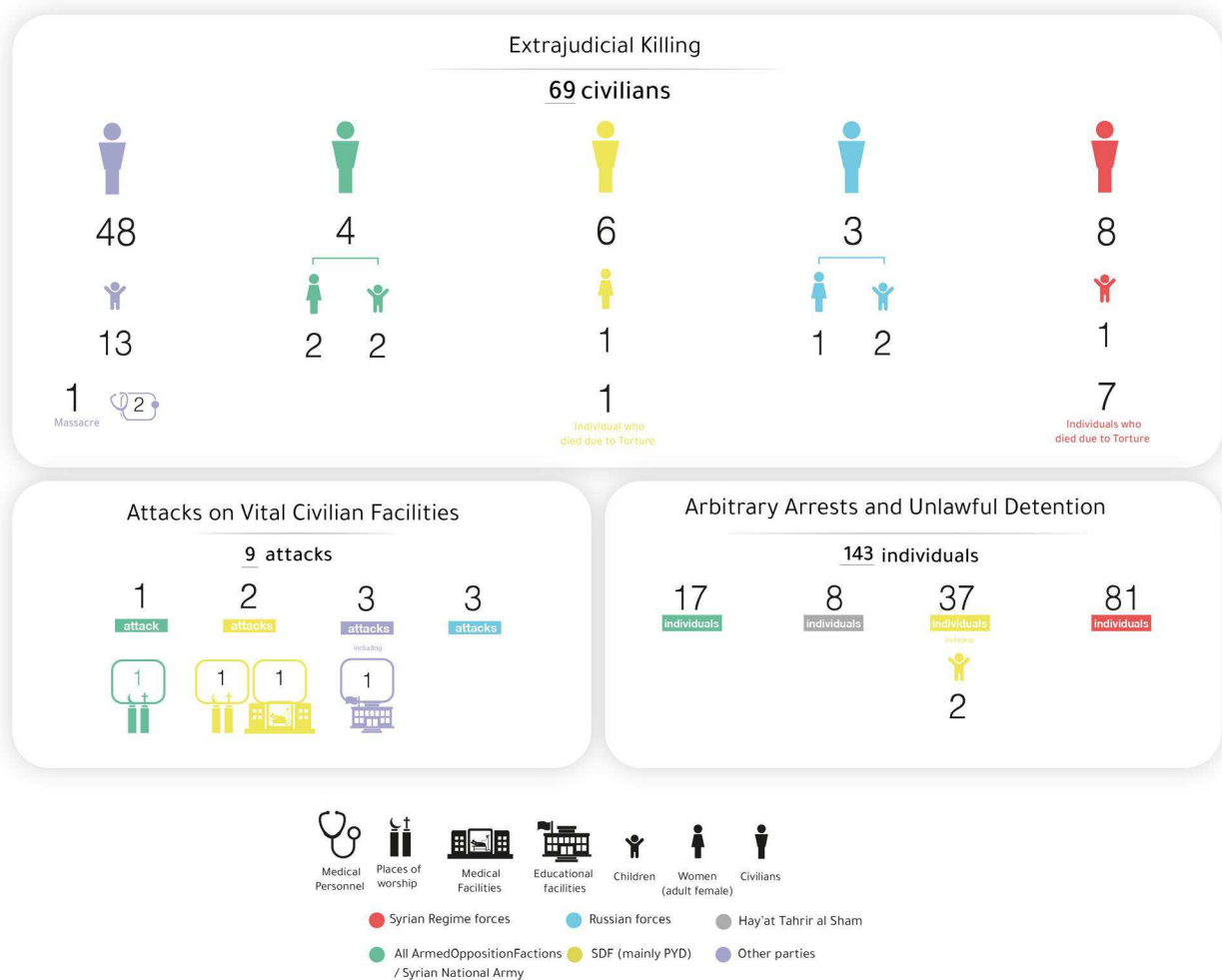
in Military Hospital 601 in Damascus. The statement added that some of the photos in the 'Caesar' file were taken in the garage of this hospital. The Syrian Network for Human Rights, represented by its director, Fadel Abdul Ghany, attended the first opening session of the trial, where we presented paintings drawn by SNHR team members showing seven male/female doctors forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime, in order to compare these innocent people with a doctor accused of committing torture against opposition demonstrators who demanded a change in the dictatorial regime; there's a stark contrast between Doctor Alaa, who tortured those innocent protesters, while doctors who treated their injuries, provided relief services, and expressed an opinions in support of the necessity of moving towards democracy, were forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime in retaliation for doing so. We issued a [statement](#) on this participation on January 25.

On January 29, the [US Department of Justice](#) announced the arrest of an American woman, on charges of organizing and leading a women's military battalion for ISIS in Syria, in addition to planning an attack on an American university. According to the statement, the accused provided training to members of the women's battalion in late 2016 in Raqqa city in Syria when she became the battalion's leader and organizer, and this included physical training and training in the use of several weapons.

In January, 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 four cases of enforced disappearance.

III. The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in January:

This report outlines the most notable human rights violations that were documented by the SNHR in January 2022 at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.



A. Extrajudicial killing:

In January 2022, SNHR documented the deaths of 69 civilians, including 18 children and four women (adult female), the largest percentage of whom were killed at the hands of other parties; among the victims were two medical personnel. We also documented eight individuals who died due to torture. We also recorded at least one massacre. We issued a report on the first of this month detailing the civilian victims documented killed in January at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria. The death toll of civilian victims was distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria as follows:

A. The main parties:

- **Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias)¹** : Eight civilians, including one child.
- **Russian forces:** Three civilians (two female children and one woman).
- **All Armed Opposition factions ²/ Syrian National Army:** Four civilians (two children and two women).
- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):** Six civilians, including one woman.

B. Other parties:

We documented the deaths of 48 civilians, including 13 children, at the hands of other parties, distributed as follows:

- Shells whose source we have not been able to identify: Seven civilians, including five children.
- Landmines whose source we have not been able to identify: Four civilians, including three children.
- Gunfire by parties we have been unable to identify: 24 civilians.
- Bombings whose perpetrators we have not been able to identify: Five civilians.
- Killings by parties we have been unable to identify: Seven civilians, including five children.
- Turkish border guards: One civilian.

B. Arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance:

In January 2022, SNHR documented at least 143 cases of arbitrary arrests/detentions, including two children, 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 Daraa. We issued a report on the second of this month detailing the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearances which we documented in January at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.

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:** 81.
- **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham³** : Eight.
- **All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army:** 17.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 37, including two children.

¹ We generally use the term 'the Syrian regime' rather than 'the Syrian government', because the nature of the ruling power in Syria is a totalitarian dictatorship based on ruling the nation in an authoritarian fashion through a very limited group of individuals, primarily the President of the Republic and his selected leaders of the security services, while the ministers, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior, play a restricted, largely ceremonial role, which is limited to implementing precisely what the ruling regime orders, without any decision-making power or active role; this means that the government's role is wholly subordinate and limited to serving the regime, with all the main powers being concentrated in the hands of the President of the Republic and the security services. Governance in Syria is wholly decided by the autocratic authority of the ruling family and there is no independent decision-making structure. Rather, the government is an empty façade there for show; the Minister of Interior receives orders from the security branches over which he nominally presides which are in turn under the command of the President, while the Minister of Justice cannot summon a civilian-level security agent other than the head of a security branch; the security branches, along with the president, are the true power and the governing regime in Syria.

Although we acknowledge that the United Nations and its agencies use the term 'the Syrian government' in general, we believe that this is a completely inaccurate and misleading term in the Syrian context.

² All Armed Opposition factions: Many of the factions that emerged since 2011 in various neighborhoods and areas in Syria no longer exist, and many of these factions were not under any central command structure. At the end of 2017, the Syrian National Army was established, with the Armed opposition factions, which remained at that point gathered under its command.

³ The United Nations has designated it as a terrorist organization

C. Attacks on vital civilian facilities:

In January 2022, SNHR documented at least nine incidents of attacks on vital civilian facilities, three of which were at the hands of Russian forces.

Among these attacks, we documented one on an educational facility, one on a medical facility, and two on places of worship.

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

A. The main parties:

- **Russian forces:** Three.
- **All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army:** One.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** Two.

B. Other parties:

Other parties perpetrated three incidents, distributed as follows:

- **Attacks whose sources we have not been able to identify:** One.
- **Bombings whose perpetrators we have not been able to identify:** One.
- **Shelling whose source we have not been able to identify:** One attack which is still under investigation, with the primary parties suspected of responsibility for this attack is either Syrian regime forces or Syrian Democratic Forces.

The record of attacks on vital civil facilities documented in January 2022 was distributed according to the perpetrator parties as follows:

Attacked Facility \ Perpetrator Party	Russian forces	All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army	Syrian Democratic Forces	Other parties		
				Bombings whose perpetrators we have not been able to identify	Attacks whose sources we have not been able to identify	Shelling whose source we have not been able to identify
Places of Worship						
Mosques		1	1			
Vital Educational Facilities						
Schools						1
Vital Medical Facilities						
Medical Facilities			1			
Infrastructure						
Water facilities and related resources	1					
Official Headquarters					1	
Livestock farms	2					
Transport features				1		
Total	3	1	2	1	1	1

The most notable attacks on vital civilian facilities documented in January:

On Sunday, January 2, 2022, at around 13:25 local time, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles near [al Arshani Water Station](#) - supported by the GOAL Global humanitarian organization - located on a mountain hill northwest of Idlib city, [severely damaging](#) the [station's structure](#) and its [perimeter fence](#), [in addition](#) to [causing severe material damage](#) to the [main pipeline](#) used for [pumping](#), and [other essential](#) equipment, cutting off water from [the station](#). The bombing also injured one of the employees at the water station. SNHR notes that the bombing of al Arshani Water Station, which is a substation that provides water to Idlib city, temporarily cut off water from Idlib city before pumping was diverted to it from other stations, while al Arshani Water Station is still under maintenance as of this writing. The area was under the joint control of Armed Opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



On Monday, January 3, 2022, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, [fired](#) missiles at a poultry farm, known as Rudwan al Afandi barn, in north of [Armanaz](#) town in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, injuring a number of civilians, including children, [and severely damaging](#) the [three-storey](#) farm [building's structure](#), as well as [causing severe material damage](#) to its [equipment](#). The area was under the joint control of Armed Opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



On Tuesday, January 18, 2022, Syrian Democratic Forces used a missile launcher to fire several missiles at Jarablus city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, with one of the missiles hitting [al Nour Mosque](#) in the city center, located next door to the health center in Jarablus (Jarablus dispensary), [partially damaging](#) the [mosque's furniture](#) and causing moderate material damage to its furniture, while no damage to the health center was recorded. The city was under the control of the Syrian National Army forces at the time of the incident.

On Thursday, January 20, 2022, Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate was targeted with a number of missiles whose source SNHR hasn't yet identified as of this writing, with the primary parties suspected of responsibility for the attack being Syrian regime forces or Syrian Democratic 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.

One of the shells fell on [al Ittihad al Araby School](#) - composed of two buildings within the same wall - in the Villas Street in Afrin city, [partially damaging](#) one of the [school buildings](#), and [causing moderate](#) material damage to [its furniture](#). Afrin city was under the control of the Syrian National Army forces 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 January.

IV. Attachments:

- (1) [69 Civilians, Including 18 Children, Four Women, and Eight Victims Due to Torture, Killed in Syria in January 2022](#)
- (2) [143 Arbitrary Arrests/ Detentions Documented in Syria in January 2022, Including Two Children](#)

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, resolution 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 IV 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/ 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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