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Statement

Condemnation of the Syrian Regime's Russian-Backed Bombing of Four Educational Facilities in One Day

33 Attacks on Educational Facilities Documented Since January 12, Including Seven by Russian Forces



SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Saturday, February 29, 2020

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.



Syrian-Russian alliance forces continue their military operations in northwest Syria, indifferent to their violations of the rules of war, which have become standard features of their operations, including the intense bombing of medical facilities and other vital facilities, and the annihilation of any form of civilian life.

[On February 25, 2020](#), Syrian Regime forces simultaneously targeted four educational facilities (three schools and one kindergarten) in Idlib city, using artillery shells and missiles. We were able to verify that at least one of these missiles was [loaded with cluster munitions](#), which hit al Baraem Model School located in al Thawra neighborhood, and caused material damage; the other missiles also caused significant damage to the Khaled al Sha'ar School, al Hurriya School, and al Manahel Kindergarten. [At least 11 civilians](#) were killed in these attacks, including [one teacher](#) and four children.

The number of attacks we have documented on educational facilities since the beginning of the recent attack on the northwest region of Syria on January 12, 2020, has reached at least 33, of which Syrian Regime forces carried out 26, while Russian forces carried out the other seven.

The Syrian regime has also transformed many schools into military barracks or detention centers in the areas it controls, and bombed hundreds of schools in areas that were outside its control, through air or ground attacks, which caused catastrophic consequences, the most prominent of which was the reluctance of thousands of students to attend school, with schools, in many Syrian children's minds, becoming places of blood and destruction, reminding them of terror and fear, especially because of the death or disability of these children's friends or other children in their families.

Against the background of the displacement of millions of Syrians as a result of one main reason, which is the attacks of the Russian-Syrian-Iranian alliance, a large number of schools have been transformed into shelters for the displaced people, and we have documented dozens of attacks on schools sheltering the displaced; this has also had a catastrophic impact on children, on their view of schools and the wider educational process, with hundreds of thousands of children being left wholly illiterate and thus vulnerable to various kinds of ideological, economic, sexual and political blackmail.



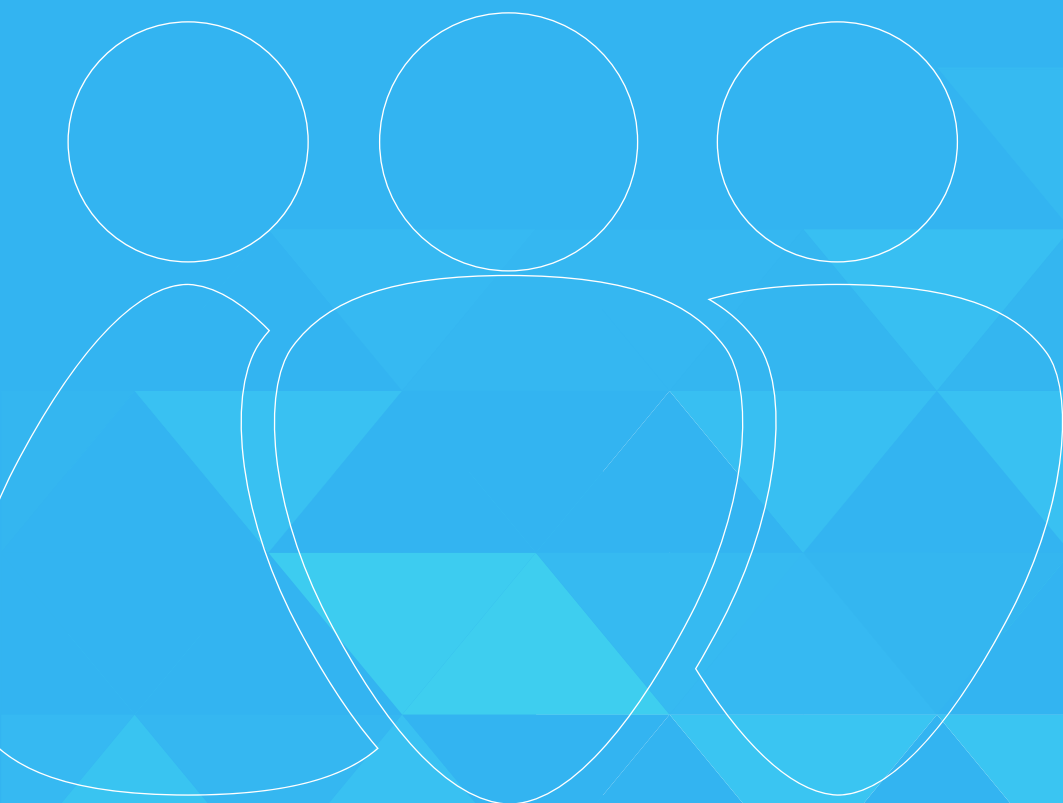
International humanitarian law has emphasized respect for civilian objects and assigned for them a special protection, classifying the targeting of these facilities as a war crime, with Article 52 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions defining Civilian Objects as: “**...all objects which are not military objectives” with Military Objects being categorized as: “those objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage.”**”

Civilian objects include medical facilities, educational facilities, infrastructure facilities, places of worship, and other facilities used for civilian purposes.

It is imperative that the UN Security Council should 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, should find mechanisms to stop bombing schools and kindergartens and to protect them, and work to create a safe educational environment, which is the very least protection it could offer for civilians.

The Syrian-Russian alliance forces must immediately stop targeting educational facilities and other vital facilities, bear all the legal and material consequences, compensate the victims and their families, and restore and rebuild all the damaged centers and facilities and re-equip them at the expense of the Russian state, the primary and direct supporter of the Syrian regime, and the main reason for its continuous committing of war crimes and its impunity.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

