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The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in May 2019

Syrian-Russian Alliance Forces
Perpetrate 29 Attacks on Medical
Facilities, 15 on Civil
Defense Centers, and 58 on Schools
in the Fourth De-Escalation Zone



SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Monday, June 3, 2019

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 at the top of the list of violations suffered by the 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 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 May 2019, and catalogues the record of civilian victims whom during this period we documented killed by the main parties to the conflict, as well as the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearance. The report also highlights indiscriminate attacks and the use of outlawed weapons (cluster munitions, chemical weapons, barrel bombs, incendiary weapons) and attacks on civilian objects.

The report also includes documentation of violations distributed according to the perpetrator parties responsible for each one. Accurately ascribing responsibility sometimes requires more time and investigation than usual, especially in the case of joint attacks. On some occasions, when we are unable to definitively assign responsibility for specific attacks to one particular party, as in the case of air strikes by Syrian or Russian warplanes, Syrian-Iranian attacks, or attacks by Syrian Democratic Forces and International Coalition forces, we indicate that responsibility for these attacks is held jointly by the parties in question until we are able to likely establish which one of the parties was likely responsible, or it's proved that the attack was a joint initiative carried out in coordination between the two parties.

This report draws upon the ongoing daily monitoring of news and developments by SNHR's team, and on our extensive network of relations with various sources that have been built up over the course of our work since 2011. When we receive information or learn some news about violations via the internet or media outlets, our team works to follow up these reports and attempts to verify information and collect evidence and data. In some cases, researchers are able to visit the incident location promptly, although this is a rarity in light of the incredibly high security risks involved, and given the frequency of daily incidents and the scarcity of human and material resources to carry out this work. Therefore, the opportunities available to access evidence vary between one case and another, and consequently the level of certainty in classification of each incident varies. SNHR's customary policy in such cases is to rely on accounts from survivors who experienced the violation firsthand, in addition to analyzing available materials from open sources such as the Internet and media outlets. We also talk with medical personnel who treated the injured in these incidents, examined the deceased victims' bodies, and identified the cause of death.

SNHR also analyzed videos and photographs that our team has documented, or which were posted online, or submitted by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media platforms. These videos and photos show, amongst other things, sites of attacks, and the bodies of the deceased victims and the injured, the scale of destruction, and the remnants of the incendiary and cluster munitions and other munitions used, whilst other photos may show victims killed under torture, and victims amongst medical and media personnel who



died in attacks carried out by parties to the conflict. We also retain copies of all the videos and photographs included in these reports, which are also reviewed in this report, in a confidential electronic database, as well as keeping hard disk backup copies, and we ensure always that all these data are stored with their original source. We do not claim, however, that we have documented all cases, given the severe prohibitions, restrictions and persecution by the Syrian Regime forces and some other armed groups. Readers are welcome to find out more about our methodology¹.

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. May Outline

In May, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) monitored the continued campaign of military escalation by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the fourth de-escalation zone, which began in April 26, 2019, and has reached its most violent point to date since the Sochi Agreement took effect on September 17, 2018. The campaign resulted in the deaths of at least 294 civilians this month, the highest toll of civilian casualties in the area since the Sochi Agreement entered into force.

May saw the highest toll of civilian casualties since the beginning of 2019, during which we documented the deaths of 416 civilians, 76 percent of whom were killed at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance forces.

We have recorded the continuation of bombings and assassinations in areas that are outside the control of Syrian Regime forces, which resulted in the deaths of dozens of civilians and caused damage to vital civilian facilities.

We recorded Syrian Regime forces arresting some of the previously forcibly displaced civilians resettled as part of these settlement agreements, who returned from north Syria to their home towns. Meanwhile, more arrests were carried out by Syrian Democratic Forces targeting IDPs residing in areas under their control, with the Syrian Democratic Forces making various allegations against these individuals, such as suspected kinship relationships between them and members of ISIS or members of Armed Opposition factions. Meanwhile, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham targeted activists in areas under their control, while factions of the Armed Opposition operating in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate arrested the indigenous civilians on many charges.

¹ "Syrian Network for Human Rights Methodology", Syrian Network for Human Rights, <http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR_Methodology_en.pdf>



In May, the highest rate of arrests was at the hands of Syrian Regime forces with 286 arrest incidents out of 394 arrest incidents that were documented in May.

In May, we recorded an unprecedented rise in the record of attacks against vital civilian facilities at the hands of Syrian-Russian alliance forces, documenting 188 attacks this month, including 179 attacks at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance, all of which took place in the fourth de-escalation zone. If we calculate the proportion of the attacks carried out by Syrian-Russian alliance forces in May to the proportion carried out in the targeted area, we find that May saw the highest monthly proportion since March 2011.

We have observed that these attacks deliberately inflict the greatest harm on civilians, terrorizing them and forcing them to flee. We documented 58 attacks on schools, 29 on medical facilities, 37 on places of worship, and 15 on Civil Defense centers (facilities and vehicles). We have issued [a special report](#) on the attacks by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces against medical facilities in the fourth de-escalation zone in this campaign.

In May, we recorded the Syrian-Russian alliance forces using chemical weapons for the first time since the Sochi Agreement entered into force. The chemical attack carried out by Syrian Regime forces on May 19 in Latakia governorate was the first since the attack on Douma city in Damascus Suburbs governorate in April 2018. Also, for the first time since March 2019, we recorded the use of incendiary weapon with unprecedented intensity.

For the second month in a row, the Syrian-Russian alliance forces continued to use cluster munitions in the fourth de-escalation zone relatively intensively. Since April 30, we have also recorded Syrian Regime forces again using barrel bombs as a weapon, all within the context of its deliberate policy of killing and displacing as many civilians as possible, most of whom have already been displaced more than once in an area of 6,800 square kilometers.

May saw the displacement of nearly 230,000 civilians as a result of the military campaign by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the fourth de-escalation zone, thousands of whom are now forced to live without any shelter in the open air on agricultural land, in light of the inability of humanitarian organizations to meet the needs of all displaced.

The SNHR observed in May the outbreak of fires in thousands of hectares of agricultural land, some of which resulted from the bombing by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces on the fourth de-escalation zone, while the eastern region saw the burning of dozens of acres of crops, especially in the governorates of Raqqa and Hasaka, without knowing the cause of the outbreak of the fires up to the moment of preparation of this report amid complaints and resentment from the people because of the failure of Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces to provide adequate support to them to put out the fires. These severe losses in agricultural crops, both for agricultural landowners and those benefiting from their crops, foreshadow a humanitarian catastrophe in the near future.



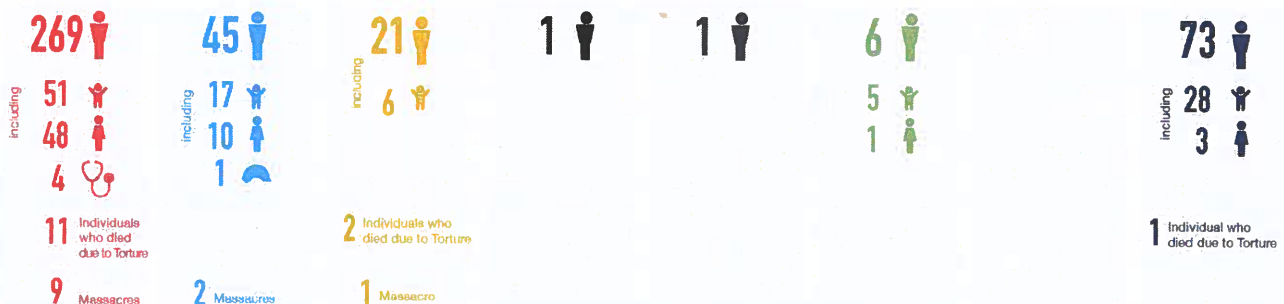
III. The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in May

This report outlines the most notable human rights violations that were documented by the SNHR in May 2019 at the hands of the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria.

Record of the Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in May 2019

Syrian Regime forces	Russian forces	SDF (mainly PYD)	Extremist Islamist groups ISIS Hay at Tahrir al Sham	Factions of the Armed Opposition	International Coalition forces	Other parties
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Extrajudicial Killing



Arbitrary Arrests and Unlawful Detention



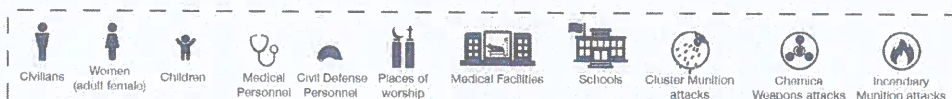
Attacks on Vital Civilian Facilities



Record of Indiscriminate Attacks and Attacks Using Outlawed Weapons



At least 961 barrel bombs were dropped by the Syrian Regime air force, resulting in the deaths of 39 civilians, including 5 children and 12 women (adult female)



SNHR
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As documented by SNHR



A. Extrajudicial killing:

In May 2019, SNHR documented the deaths of 416 civilians, including 107 children and 62 women (adult female), including four medical personnel and one member of the Civil Defense personnel, with the highest rate of killings being carried out at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance forces. We also documented the deaths of 14 individuals due to torture, and at least 12 massacres. We issued a report on the first of this month detailing the civilian victims documented killed in May at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria.

The death toll of civilian victims was distributed by the main perpetrator parties as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):**

269, including 51 children and 48 women.

- **Russian forces:** 45, including 17 children and 10 women.

- **Extremist Islamist groups:** two, divided between:

- **ISIS (the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State'):** One.

- **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition):** One.

- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** Six, including five children and one woman.

- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):** 21, including six children.

- **Other parties:** 73, including 28 children and three women.

B. Arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance:

SNHR documented in May 2019 at least 394 cases of arbitrary arrests, including 21 children and 14 women (adult female), at the hands of the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria. The largest number of arrests was carried out by Syrian Regime forces in the governorates of Damascus and Damascus Suburbs. We issued a report on the second of this month detailing the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearances which we documented in May 2019 at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria.

These arrests are distributed according to the main perpetrator parties, as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 286, including 14 children, and nine women.

- **Extremist Islamist groups:**

- **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** 35.

- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** 21, including two children and one woman.

- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 52, including five children and four women.



C. Attacks on vital civilian facilities:

SNHR documented in May at least 188 attacks on vital civilian facilities, 179 of which were carried out at the hands of the Syrian-Russian alliance forces, all in the fourth de-escalation zone. Among these attacks, 58 were on schools, 30 were on medical facilities and 37 others were on places of worship.

These attacks are distributed by the main perpetrator parties as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 122
- **Russian forces:** 57
- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** One
- **Other parties:** Eight

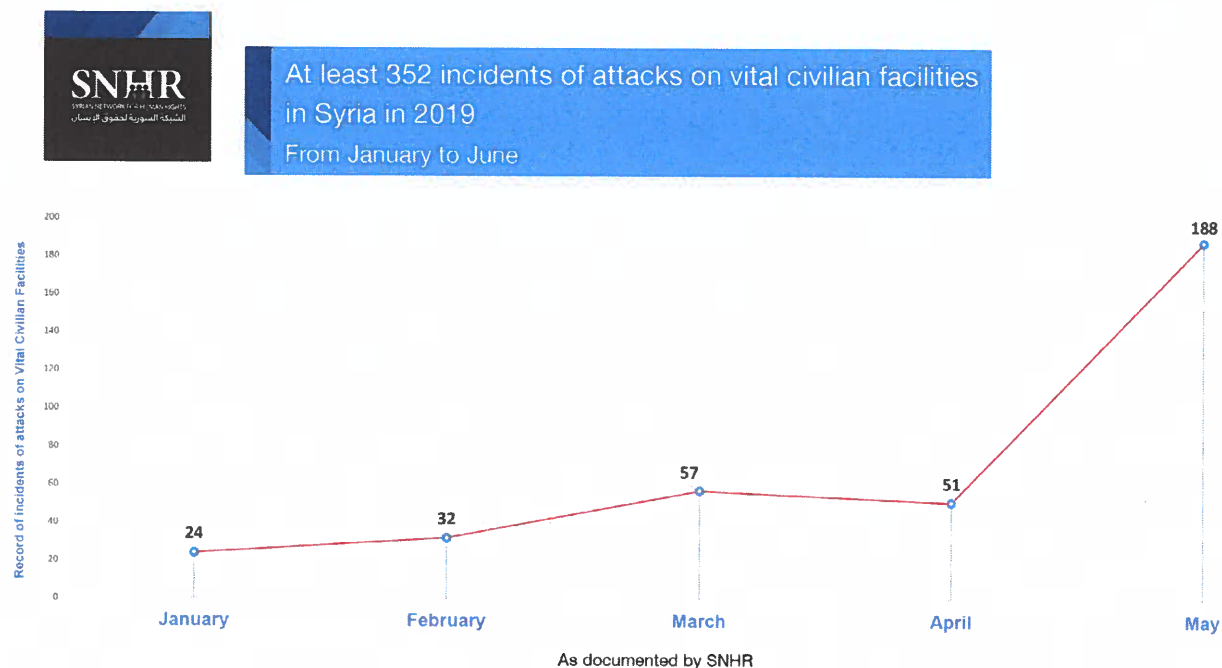


Perpetrator Party	Syrian Regime Forces	Russian Forces	Factions of the Armed Opposition	Other Parties
Attacked Facility				
Places of Worship				
Mosques	32	5	-	-
Vital Educational Facilities				
Schools	40	18	-	-
Universities	1	-	-	-
Nurseries	1	-	-	-
Vital Medical Facilities				
Medical Facilities	16	13	-	1
Ambulances	1	2	-	-
Vital Cultural Facilities				
Archeological sites	-	2	-	-
Communal Facilities				
Gardens	-	-	-	1
Markets	8	-	-	3
Playgrounds and stadiums	1	-	-	-
Infrastructure				
Power stations and energy facilities	1	1	-	-
Civil Defense centers	8	7	-	-
Water facilities and related resources	2	-	-	-
Official Headquarters	1	4	-	-
Means of transport	-	-	1	-
Bakeries	2	3	-	1
Domestic animal farms	-	1	-	-
Grain silos	-	1	-	-
Industrial facilities	1	-	-	-
Civil society organizations	3	-	-	-
Media outlets	1	-	-	-
Refugee Camps				
Refugee camps	3	-	-	2
Total	122	57	1	8



The record of attacks documented in May on vital civilian facilities is distributed according to the perpetrator party as follows:

Thus, the record of attacks on vital civilian facilities since the start of 2019 up to the start of June of the same year at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria has now reached 352 in total, distributed monthly as follows:



The most notable attacks on vital civilian facilities that were documented in May:

On Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at around 01:30, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to shell the '33103' Civil Defense Center located near the Surgical Unit in Kafr Nbouda town in Hama governorate northern suburbs. The shelling partially destroyed the building of the Civil Defense Center, and inflicted moderate material damage to its equipment and furniture, putting it out of service. We note that the same forces repeated their shelling on this site during an attempt by the Civil Defense teams to reach it, causing moderate material damage to two vehicles belonging to the Civil Defense (a service car and an ambulance). Kafr Nbouda town was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

The Syrian Civil Defense published a news report on the targeting of the '33103' Center located in Kafr Nbouda town on its official 'Twitter' account.





Damage in the '33103' Civil Defense Center in Kafr Nbouda town, Hama, in a Syrian ground attack – May 1, 2019

On Thursday, May 2, 2019, at around dawn, fixed- wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles near the [Sarjila historical area](#), which includes ancient Roman-era palaces and tombs, to the east of al Bara village in Jabal al Zaweya area in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, causing [extensive material damage](#) to [the historical facilities](#) in the area. The area was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Damage in Sarjila historical area, Idlib, in a Russian air raid – May 2, 2019



On Saturday, May 4, 2019, fixed- wing Syrian Regime warplanes carried out an airstrike using machine guns on Abu al Walid IDPs Camp in east of Tarmala village in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, causing moderate material damage to a number of tents. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Saturday, May 4, 2019, Syrian Regime forces' helicopters dropped barrel bombs near Ali Bin Abi Taleb High School in [Sfuhun](#) village in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, [partially destroying the surrounding fence](#), and inflicting moderate material damage to the school building and furniture. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Saturday, May 4, 2019, fixed- wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a missile at al Lejj Primary School in al Lejj village in Idlib governorate western suburbs. The missile fell in the middle of the schoolyard, [partially destroying the school building](#), and inflicting moderate material damage to its furniture. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Sunday, May 5, 2019, fixed- wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at the Surgical Unit, the former 'Martyr Hasan al A'raj Hospital', located in a cave, in Kafr Zita city in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, after which Syrian Regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on and around the unit, [partially destroying](#) its structure, as well as [inflicting moderate material damage](#) to the equipment. Kafr Zita city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of both incidents.

On Monday, May 6, 2019, fixed- wing Syrian Regime warplanes fired two missiles at al Zerba Dispensary, supported by the Syrian American Medical Society "SAMS", in al Zerba town in Aleppo governorate southern suburbs, resulting in the death of two civilians who were in front of the center, in addition to partially destroying the [dispensary building](#), as well as inflicting [moderate material damage](#) to its cladding and equipment. The town was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Damage inflicted in a Syrian air attack on al Zerba Dispensary, Aleppo – May 6, 2019

On Tuesday, May 7, 2019, a motorcycle bomb exploded in front of al Omairi Makeshift Hospital in al Keshkiya town in Deir Ez-Zour governorate eastern suburbs, resulting in casualties, in addition to causing minor material damage to the façade of the hospital building. We were unable to identify the responsible party up to the time of preparing the report, given the difficulty in identifying the perpetrators of bombings. The town was under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces at the time of the incident.

On Monday, May 13, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles in two installments directly at the Civil Defense Center in Kafranbel city in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, injuring two Civil Defense personnel, in addition to severely destroying the center's building, as well as inflicting extensive material damage to the furniture, equipment and three vehicles belonging to the center (fire truck, a rescue vehicle and a bulldozer), putting it out of service. The city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

The Syrian Civil Defense published a news report on the targeting of the Kafranbel Center on its official 'Twitter' account.



On Tuesday evening, May 14, 2019, fixed-wing Syrian Regime forces' warplanes fired a number of missiles at the main market, known as al Samak Market, in the middle of Jisr al Shoghour city in Idlib governorate western suburbs, resulting in a massacre, in addition to causing extensive material damage to a number of shops and to the market facilities. The city was under the joint control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham and the Turkistan Islamic Party at the time of the incident.



Destruction in shops in a bombing by fixed-wing Syrian Regime forces' warplanes on al Samak Market in Jisr al Shoghour, Idlib – May 14, 2019

On Sunday, May 19, 2019, fixed- wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, carried out consecutive strikes using missiles near al Huda automatic Bakery in west of Kafranbel city in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, resulting in a massacre, in addition to partially destroying the fence surrounding the building, as well as inflicting moderate material damage to the building and furniture. Kafranbel city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, May 22, 2019, fixed- wing Syrian Regime warplanes fired a number of missiles near Ruqayya Bint Malek High School in Jisr al Shoghour city in Idlib governorate western suburbs, partially destroying the school building, and inflicting severe material damage to its furniture. The city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





Destruction in Ruqayya Bint Malek High School in a Syrian air attack on Kafranbel, Idlib – May 22, 2019

On Tuesday, May 28, 2019, fixed- wing Syrian Regime warplanes fired a missile at the Abu Bakr al Siddiq Mosque in Khan al Sebel village in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, resulting in casualties, in addition to partially destroying the mosque building, as well as inflicting extensive material damage to the furniture, putting it out of service. We note that helicopters of the same forces dropped a barrel bomb in the area around the mosque few hours before fixed-wing warplanes again targeted the area. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Destruction in Abu Bakr al Siddiq Mosque in a Syrian air attack on Khan al Sebel village, Idlib – May 28, 2019



On Tuesday, May 28, 2019, fixed-wing Syrian Regime forces' warplanes fired several missiles coinciding with artillery bombardment using missile launchers by regime ground forces around Dar al Hekma Hospital - a private hospital – in the center of Kafranbel city in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, partially destroying the hospital building, and causing extensive material damage to its furniture, sections and equipment, putting it out of service. We note that the greatest damage in the hospital was caused by the missiles fired by the missile launchers after they fell nearby. The city 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:

SNHR documented in May at least eight cluster munitions attacks, most of which were carried out by fixed-wing warplanes or artillery forces, concentrated in Idlib governorate. These attacks resulted in the deaths of three civilians, including one woman, and injured at least five others. These attacks were distributed as follows:

- Syrian Regime forces: Seven attacks, all in Idlib governorate, resulted in the deaths of three civilians, including one woman.

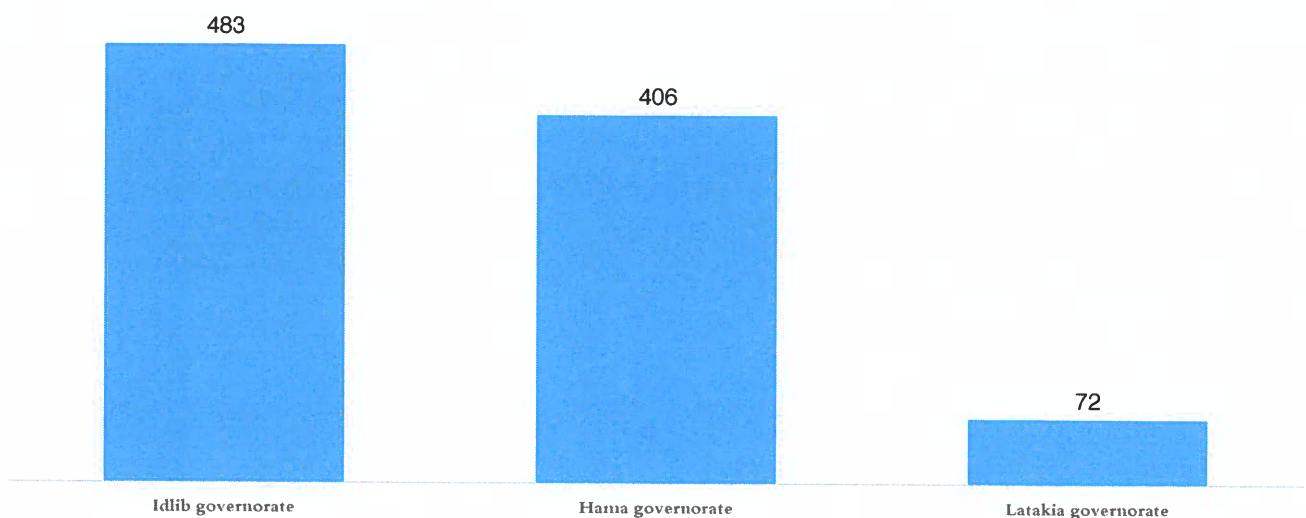
- Russian forces: One attack in Hama governorate

We also recorded in May at least nine incendiary weapons attacks, all of which were carried out by Syrian Regime forces, including five in Idlib governorate and four in Hama governorate.



We also documented Syrian Regime forces using chemical weapon in one attack on May 19 using three missiles loaded with poison gas which targeted a base used by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on a hill in the southwestern outskirts of al Kbaina village in the suburbs of Latakia governorate. This attack resulted in the injury of four of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham's fighters, who exhibited symptoms of breathing difficulty, redness of the eyes and tearing. We issued [a report](#) on the incident.

The Syrian Regime's air force, fixed-wing and helicopters, also dropped at least 961 barrel bombs on the fourth de-escalation zone, distributed as follows:



These attacks resulted in the deaths of 39 civilians, including five children and 12 women, as well as damaging at least 27 vital civilian facilities.

The following are the most notable indiscriminate attacks and attacks using outlawed weapons that we were able to document in May:

On Friday, May 3, 2019, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired an RBK missile loaded with AO-2.5RTM / AO-2.5RT [cluster munitions](#), which targeted residential neighborhoods in al Jamasa village in Hama western suburbs. The explosion of the munitions resulted in material damage to the property. 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.





Remnants of AO-2 5RTM / AO-2.5RT cluster munitions used in an air attack by Russian forces on al Jamasa village, Hama – May 3, 2019

On Friday, May 3, 2019, Syrian Regime forces' helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on [al Sehriya](#) village in Hama governorate northern suburbs, resulting in the death of a female child, and injuring her mother. The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Wednesday, May 8, 2019, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on [Heesh](#) town in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, resulting in the deaths of three civilians from one family, IDPs from Helfaya city in Hama governorate northwestern suburbs, including one female child whose mother was also among the injured. The town was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.

On Thursday, May 23, 2019, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher to fire several missiles [loaded with 9n235 cluster munitions](#), which targeted Kansfara village in Jabal al Zaweya in Idlib southern suburbs. Some of the attack's remnants were deployed in the vicinity of Kiwan Hospital in the center of the village, whose work has been suspended since April 26 as a result of the tactic used by Syrian Regime forces in targeting medical facilities. The shelling resulted in the injury of at least three civilians and material damage to the property. 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.



On Saturday, May 25, 2019, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher stationed in the Braidij camp in Hama governorate northern suburbs to fire [a number of missiles](#) loaded with incendiary substances targeting agricultural lands in Abdin village in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, causing the outbreak of massive fires in nearby agricultural land and houses. 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.



On Monday, May 27, 2019, Syrian Regime forces used a missile launcher stationed in the Braidij camp in Hama governorate northern suburbs to fire at least 40 shells loaded with incendiary substances targeting agricultural land and civilians' houses in Um Zaytouna village near Khan Sheikhoun city in Idlib southern suburbs, causing the outbreak of [massive fires](#) in the area. 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.

On Tuesday, May 28, 2019, Syrian Regime helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on a residential area in [Sfuhun](#) village in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, resulting in the deaths of three civilians, including two women, in addition to severely destroying [houses](#) and [public facilities](#). The village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.





IV. Attachments

416 Civilians, Including Four Medical Personnel and One Member of the Civil Defense Personnel, Documented Killed in Syria in May 2019

At least 394 Cases of Arbitrary Arrests Documented in Syria in May 2019

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, arrest, torture, and enforced disappearance. 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 by Russian or International Coalition forces prior to any attack in accordance with 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 leads 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 alliance of International Coalition forces and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces is considered to be a clear violation of international humanitarian law, with indiscriminate killings amounting to war crimes.
- Extremist Islamist groups have violated international humanitarian law, causing the death of many civilians, as well as damage to vital civilian facilities.
- 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:

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 including the Russian regime whose involvement in war crimes has been repeatedly proven.
- Ensure peace and security and implement the principle of responsibility to protect civilians' lives and to save the Syrian people's heritage and historical artefacts from destruction, looting and vandalism.



- The Security Council should adopt a resolution banning the use of cluster munitions 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 persons 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 lifting sieges, as well as 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.



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 since these attacks were perpetrated by the parties to the conflict.
- Train Syrian organizations to undertake clearance of mines and other unexploded ordnance, and raise local awareness of the dangers of such ordnance.
- Establish a platform that brings together a number of Syrian organizations active in documenting violations and humanitarian assistance, in order to facilitate an exchange of skills and experiences within Syrian society.

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.

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, and empower the Constitutional Commission prior to the establishment of a transitional government.

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.
- End the acts of torture that have caused the deaths of thousands of Syrian citizens in detention centers.
- Reveal the fate of some 82,000 Syrian citizens arrested by the security services whose fate has been concealed to date.
- 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 the 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.
- Stop using incendiary weapons in populated areas, compensate the victims and their families for all human and material damage caused by the use of these weapons, and provide treatment for dozens of civilian casualties.
- Provide detailed maps of sites where Russian forces have launched cluster munition attacks, issue these to the United Nations and inform the Syrian public about them, thus facilitating the safe disposal of unexploded ordnance.
- Begin to achieve a breakthrough in the issue of detainees by revealing the fate of 82,000 people forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime.

The Coalition (international coalition forces and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces)

- The states of the coalition must unequivocally and sincerely acknowledge that some of their bombing operations have resulted in the deaths of innocent civilians. Rather than attempting denial, these states should take speedy steps to launch serious investigations, and immediately compensate and apologize to the victims and all those affected.
- 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.
- All forms of support, military and all others, should be ceased until the SDF commits itself to complying with the previous recommendations. This is primarily the responsibility of the supporting states. Providing the SDF with weapons and support while knowing that these can be used in perpetrating war crimes or crimes against humanity can be seen as a contribution to these crimes.
- 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.



Armed Opposition factions

- Armed Opposition factions 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.
- Pledge to cease any arbitrary arrests, and investigate incidents that have resulted in violations of international humanitarian law.
- Take punitive action against those who commit violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

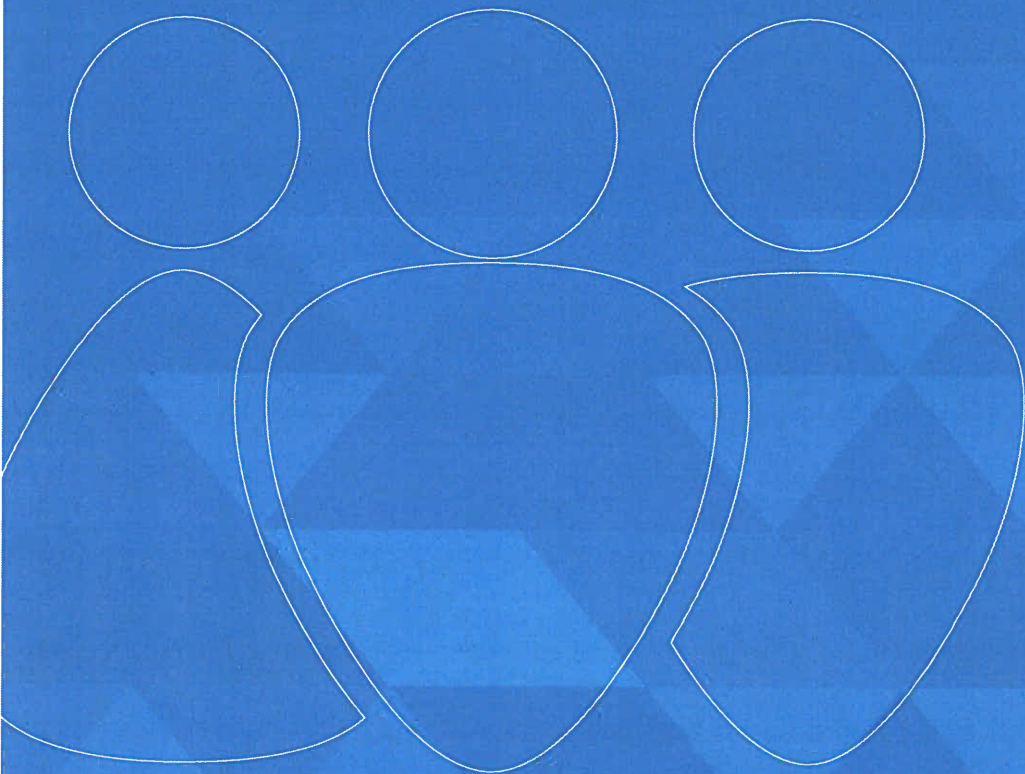
Humanitarian Organizations:

Develop urgent operational plans to secure decent shelter for internally displaced persons.

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We thank all family members, relatives and friends of the victims, eyewitnesses and local activists whose contributions have enriched this report.





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