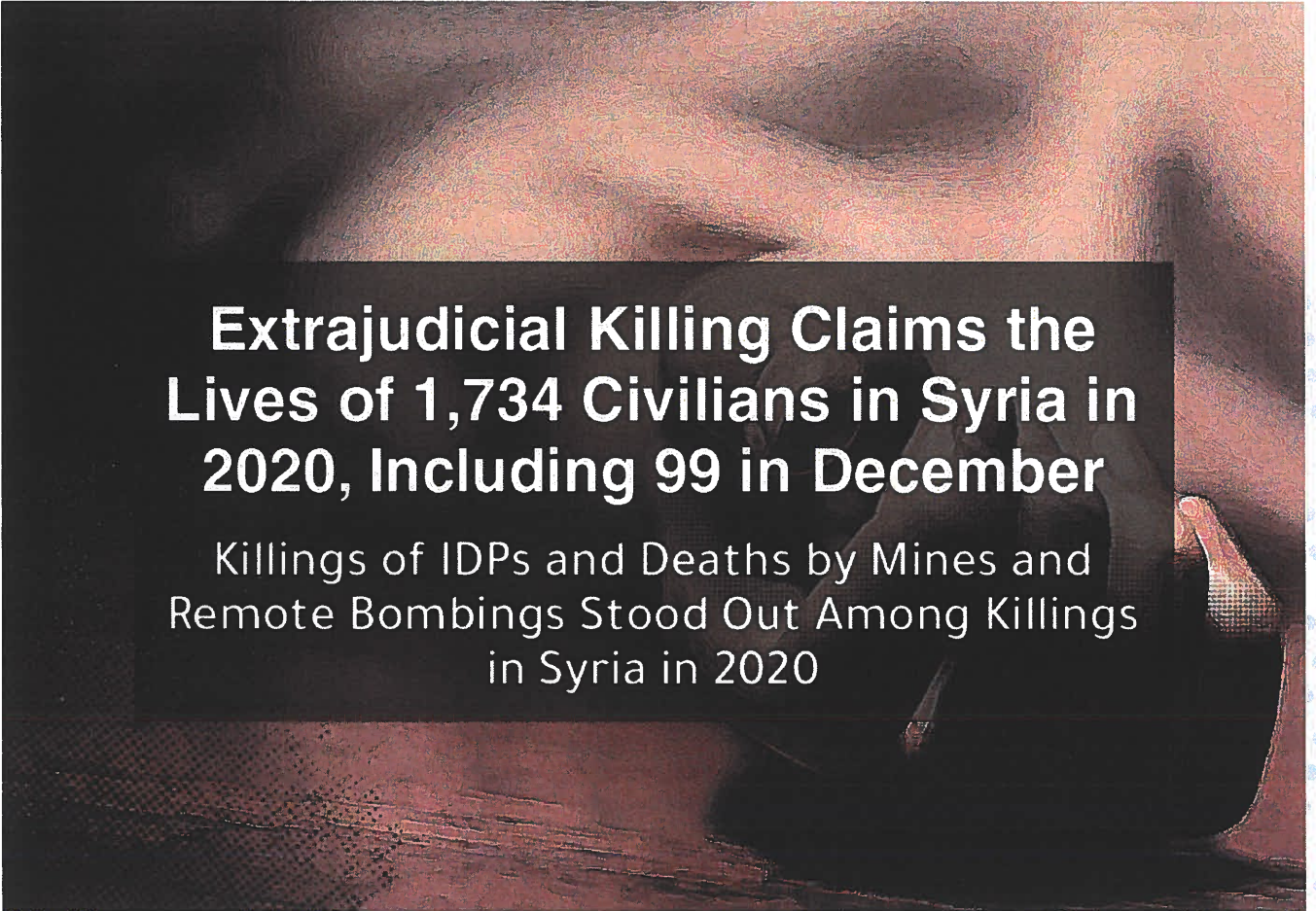


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Extrajudicial Killing Claims the Lives of 1,734 Civilians in Syria in 2020, Including 99 in December

Killings of IDPs and Deaths by Mines and Remote Bombings Stood Out Among Killings in Syria in 2020

Friday 1 January 2021

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. Background and Methodology:

The documentation process to register victims killed in Syria is one of the most important roles performed by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) since March 2011. This is all the more crucial since murder is the most prevalent of all the violations perpetrated, and the one which most profoundly affects the Syrian people, with countless families suffering incalculable and irreparable trauma through the loss of fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, friends, etc.

These violations have become so widespread primarily through Syrian regime forces' and affiliated militias' systematic killing of civilians, who were almost the only perpetrators of killings from the aforementioned date up to the beginning of 2012. The regime began by using tanks and artillery, then proceeded to also use warplanes and helicopter gunships which have deployed barrel bombs, in addition to Scud missiles and chemical weapons.

The entry of several other parties into the Syrian conflict has further increased the importance and complexity of documenting the victims killed in Syria.

We have documented continuing deaths as a result of landmine explosions, with this issue having occurred for several months now without receiving the local and international attention it deserves; in December 2020 alone, we documented the deaths of five victims, including two children, caused by landmines.

The SNHR, as a member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines - Cluster Munition Coalition ([ICBL-CMC](#)), affirms its endeavor within this international coalition to implement a comprehensive ban on the use of landmines and cluster munitions, and to ensure that this becomes a customary law, with this objective now very close to realization; the number of states parties to the Mine Ban Treaty (Ottawa Treaty) now includes 164 member states, with International Humanitarian Law greatly restricting the use of landmines, which are considered to be among the most lethal indiscriminate weapons. The vast majority of landmine victims are civilians, with the threat from the use of landmines affecting local communities for years.

Methodology:

This report records the death toll of victims whose deaths were documented by SNHR as taking place at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria both in the past month of December and in the whole of 2020, particularly focusing on those victims killed under torture, and victims amongst media, medical and Civil Defense personnel, paying particular attention to those massacres committed by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces which the SNHR was able to document in this period.

We should note that in this context we use the term "massacre" to refer to any attack that resulted in the deaths of five or more peaceful individuals in the same incident.

The report also includes an outline of the most notable incidents during this period. Finally, we maintain the full details of every incident on the SNHR database.

The report catalogues the death toll of victims according to the perpetrator parties in the Syrian conflict. Accurately ascribing responsibility sometimes requires more time and investigation than usual, especially in the case of joint attacks.

In addition, in cases where we are unable to definitively assign responsibility for a particular killing to one of two possible parties because of the area's proximity to the lines of engagement, the use of similar weapons, or other reasons, the incident is categorized among 'other parties' until we have sufficient evidence to conclusively assign responsibility for the violation to one of the two parties.

The parties to the conflict who this report documents as committing extrajudicial killings are:

A. The main parties:

- Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias)
- Russian forces
- ISIS
- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham
- The Armed Opposition/ The Syrian National Army
- US-led coalition forces
- Syrian Democratic forces (the Democratic Union Party)

B. Other parties

Through use of SNHR's extensive database, we can catalogue the victims according to the governorate where they were killed, and also by the governorate from which they originally came. This report catalogues the death toll of victims according to the governorate in which they were killed, rather than by the governorate they originally came from.

In this report, we record only the death toll of civilians, whose deaths we were able to document during the last month. SNHR does not document the deaths of fighters and militants killed during the conflict, while some of the victims documented may have been killed months or even years ago, as in some cases of death due to torture; in these cases, where the deaths have only recently been confirmed, we include two dates, the date when we were able to document the victim's death, and the date on which we think the death occurred.

The methodology adopted by the Syrian Network for Human Rights in documenting the victims can be seen at this link¹.

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>

This report draws upon the ongoing daily monitoring of news and developments by SNHR's team, and on information from our extensive network of various sources that has been built up over the course of our work since 2011. Our team follows up on incidents and related reports in a variety of ways in the effort to verify information and collect as much relevant evidence and data as possible. In some cases, researchers are able to visit the incident location immediately. However, this is a rarity in light of the incredibly high security risks, and given the frequency of daily violation incidents. SNHR's customary policy in such cases is to rely on accounts from survivors who experienced the violation firsthand, as we try to reach them promptly, and secondarily on the accounts of those who witnessed or photographed the violation in question, in addition to analyzing available materials from open sources such as the Internet and media outlets; third, by talking with medical personnel who treated the individuals injured in these incidents, examined the deceased victims' bodies, and identified the cause of death. The SNHR also provides [a special form](#) that can be completed by victims' relatives with victims' names and personal information so that the Victims Documentation Department can follow up on the information provided, verify its accuracy and then include it in the database.

SNHR has analyzed videos and photographs documented by our team, which were posted online, or submitted by local activists. We also retain copies of all the videos and photographs included in these reports, which are also outlined in this report, in a confidential electronic database and in 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.

The death toll of victims detailed on SNHR's database includes extrajudicial killings by the controlling forces which occurred as a violation of either international human rights law or international humanitarian law or both, but does not include cases of natural deaths or those which occurred because of disputes between members of society or other such issues.

Our investigations confirm that all of the attacks included in this report that were carried out by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria targeted civilian areas where we documented no military presence or armories before or during the attacks, and in which the perpetrators failed to issue any warnings to civilians prior to any of the attacks as required by international humanitarian law.

This report contains four first-hand accounts that we've collected through speaking directly with eyewitnesses, none of which are cited from any open sources. We explained the purpose of these interviews beforehand to the eyewitnesses, who gave us permission to use the information they provided without us offering or providing them with any incentives. Also, SNHR endeavors always to spare the eyewitnesses the agony of remembering the violations as much

as possible, as well as providing assurances that we will conceal the identity of any witness who prefers to use an alias to protect witnesses' privacy and prevent them from being harassed or prosecuted. All these procedures are carried out in accordance with our internal protocols, which we have worked on for years, and which we strive constantly to develop through our experience in order to keep pace with the highest standards of care and reliability.

The type and level of evidence available varies between one case and another. In light of the aforementioned challenges, the legal qualification of many of the incidents documented may be subject to change based on any new evidence or leads which emerge after the report is released. We automatically update our data archive with any such items of evidence and leads as soon as they become available. Meanwhile, although many incidents don't technically constitute a violation of international humanitarian law under the terms of such legislation, they involved collateral damage, so we have recorded and archived these incidents to document what happened historically and to preserve these as part of the national record, although we don't qualify these specific incidents as crimes.

Also, there is great difficulty in determining which party was responsible for planting landmines, due to the multiplicity of forces controlling the areas in which these explosions occurred, and therefore we [do not attribute the vast majority of deaths caused by landmines to a specific party](#). None of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria have revealed maps of the places where they planted landmines. We have recorded continuing deaths due to landmines despite repeated appeals by the Syrian Network for Human Rights, and urgent requests for the essential intervention of international teams to help uncover the locations where landmines are deployed and to put pressure on the controlling forces in Syria to determine their locations of deployment in order to reduce the number of casualties among civilians resulting from them.

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. The Issues That Characterized 2020 According to the SNHR's Database of Extrajudicial Killings:

The killing of civilians in Syria has continued for the tenth consecutive year, in massive numbers, indicating the instability of the situation in Syria, and underlining the fact that it is still the most dangerous country in the world for civilians, and remains an exceptionally insecure and dangerous place unsuitable for the return of refugees. Although we noticed that 2020 saw a decline in the rates of killings of civilians compared to previous years, with the year seeing an overall rate of more than 80% (the average annual death toll has been about 25,000, if we di-

vide the total death toll by the number of years, so the 2020 figure shows a decrease of more than 80% compared to this average, and of about 50% compared to the 2019 figure or 75% compared to 2018). Despite this, however, SNHR documented the killing of more than 1,700 Syrian civilians in 2020, including 326 children, the highest rate of extrajudicial killings in the world. These statistics include solely the incidents that we at the Syrian Network for Human Rights were able to record; we are very sure that there are dozens more cases which we were unable to document, especially in the category of extrajudicial killings (unlawful executions in detention centers) carried out by Syrian Regime forces.

We believe that the decline in the documented death toll for this year is related to several factors, perhaps the most prominent of which are:

- The displacement of nearly 13 million Syrians, including internally displaced persons and refugees.
- The COVID-19 pandemic, which has reduced the movements of the Syrian regime's army and affiliated Iranian militias.
- The Additional Protocol to the Idlib Agreement between Russia and Turkey, which was signed on March 5, 2020.

The year started with a very high death rate, with SNHR recording nearly a third of the total documented death toll for the whole year in January and February alone. Thereafter, in March, the COVID-19 coronavirus broke out in Syria, while the Additional Protocol entered into force on March 6.

[The largest massacre](#) committed by Syrian Regime forces in 2020 - in terms of the death toll inflicted – took place on Wednesday, January 15, 2020, when fixed-wing Syrian regime (MiG-23) warplanes fired two missiles, targeting the east of Idlib city. This attack resulted in the deaths of 22 civilians, including two children. Among the victims was Muhammad Shadi al Asaad, a member of the Syrian Civil Defense's 'Idlib Center 3'.

Meanwhile, [the largest massacre committed by the Russian forces](#) took place on the 29th of the same month - January - when fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at the main street, located between al Gharbi Mosque and Nouri Hamesho Mosque, in the middle of Kafr Lata village in Jabal al Arba'in area in Jabal al Zaweya in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. This attack resulted in the deaths of 19 civilians, including four children and two women.

Another prominent feature marking 2020 in Syria was the death of a large number of victims due to mines, with a continuous stream of fatalities from this cause in almost every month of the year, with the total death toll as a result of landmines in 2020 reaching 109 civilians, including 23 children, in various regions and governorates in Syria; this death toll is the highest in the world from this cause. This indicates that none of the controlling forces have made any significant efforts in the process of clearing landmines, in trying to determine their locations and fence them off, or in warning the local population about their presence.

2020 also saw many civilians killed by remote bombings, with the vast majority of these cases being concentrated in areas outside the control of the Syrian regime in northwestern Syria.

Deaths among medical, media and Civil Defense personnel continued to take place this year, with SNHR documenting the deaths of:

- 13 medical personnel.
- Five media workers.
- Three Civil Defense personnel.

The Syrian regime was not satisfied with carrying out extrajudicial killing through aerial and ground bombardment alone, adding to this with killings through torture in detention centers, exacerbated by deliberate medical negligence and lack of basic sanitation and cleanliness in detention centers; we have documented the deaths of 130 victims, including one woman, in the Syrian regime's detention centers, constituting approximately 83% of the total death toll among victims documented as dying due to torture in Syria in 2020 at the hands of all the perpetrator parties.

III. Death Toll of Civilian Victims:

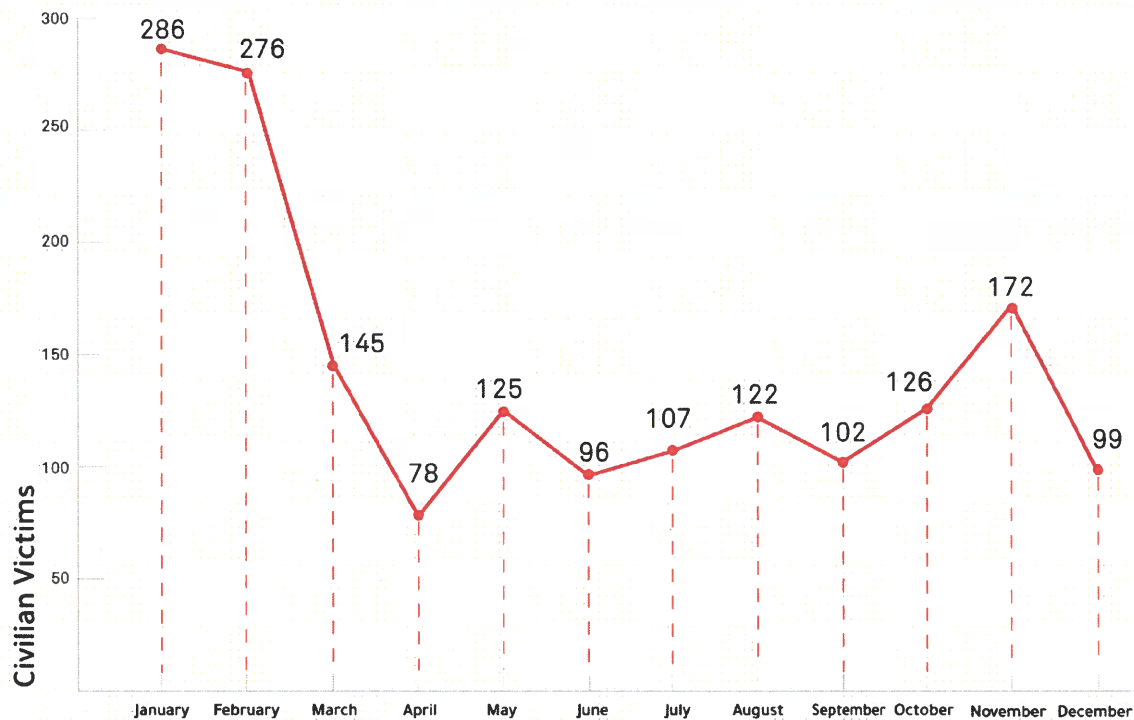
1. In 2020:

The beginning of 2020 was accompanied by a violent military operation led by the Syrian regime and its Russian and Iranian allies against the areas outside its control in and around Idlib. The cities and residential neighborhoods in these areas were subjected to massive and indiscriminate bombardment, which resulted in dozens of deaths and the displacement of residents of entire cities, as happened with Ma'aret al Numan and Saraqeb cities and others. The first and second months of the year also saw a marked increase in the death toll, and at the beginning of March, the Russian-Turkish ceasefire agreement entered into force.

Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has spread extensively in most countries worldwide, including Syria, where the pandemic appears to have affected the capabilities of the Syrian regime's army and affiliated Iranian militias, with this factor contributing to a reduction in bombardment against civilians, which reduced the death toll in recent months compared to the first three months of the year.

SNHR documented the deaths of 1,734 civilians, including 326 children and 169 women (adult female), killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria in 2020.

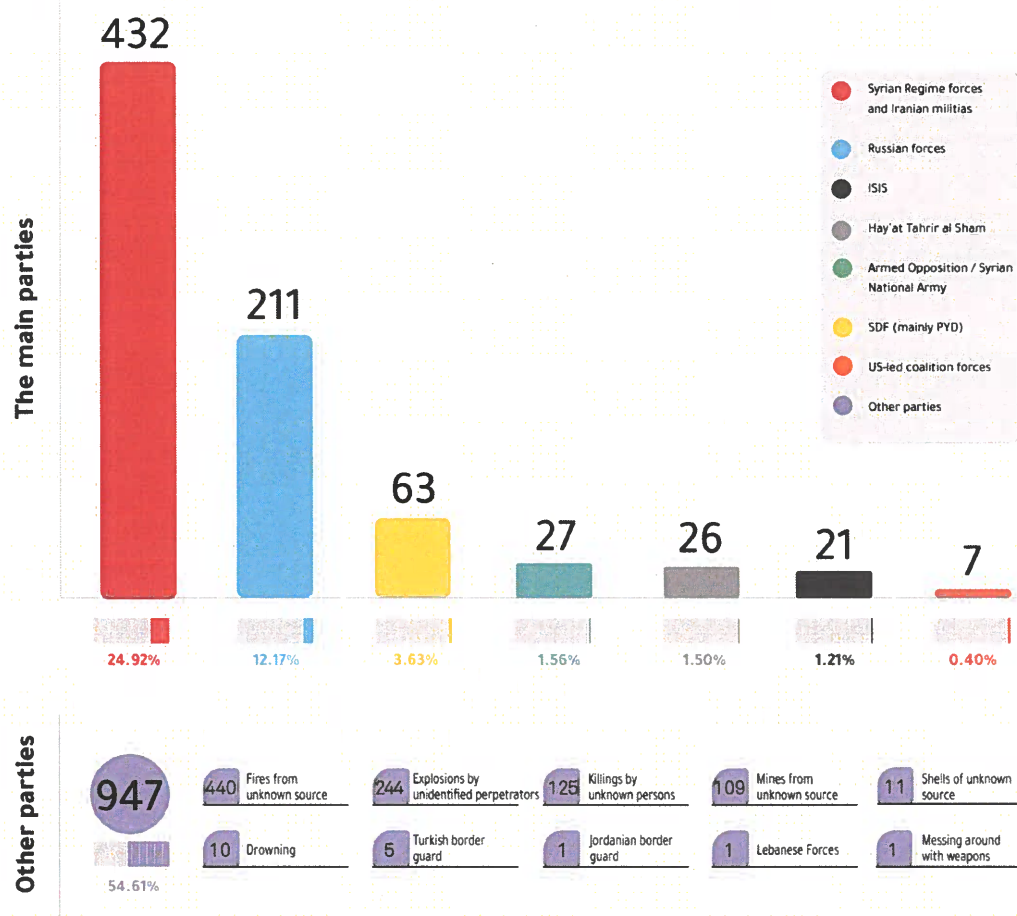
The death toll of civilian victims killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria in 2020 was distributed as follows:



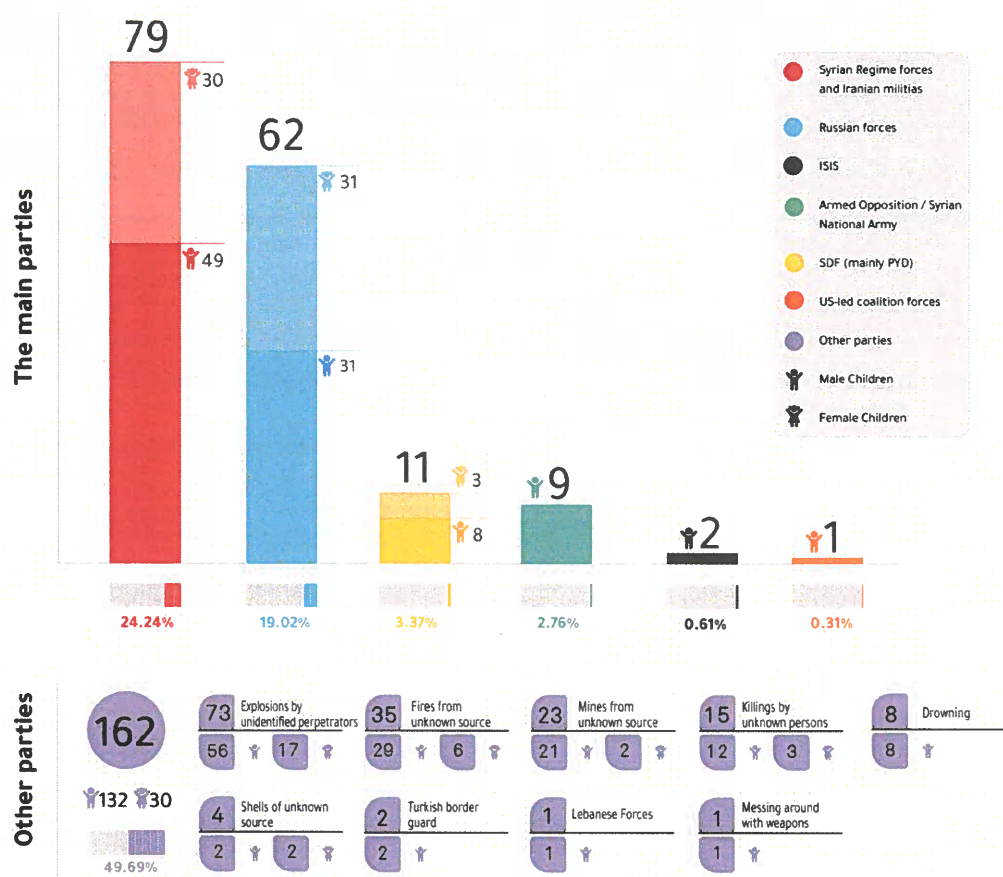
There is no doubt that the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ceasefire agreement that came into effect on March 6 of 2020 have played a major role in weakening the capabilities of the Syrian regime's army and affiliated Iranian militias, which contributed to a decrease in the death toll this year compared to previous years. However, the insecurity seen in most governorates, including those under the control of the Syrian regime, has caused an increase in killings, mainly through [bombings](#) and shootings by unknown persons, and we were unable to identify the perpetrators of these violations in many cases, with these practices causing the large number of casualties this year compared to last year, 2019; we have also continued to document cases of deaths and injuries due to landmines since the beginning of the year to date.

The death toll we documented in 2020 was distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces as follows:

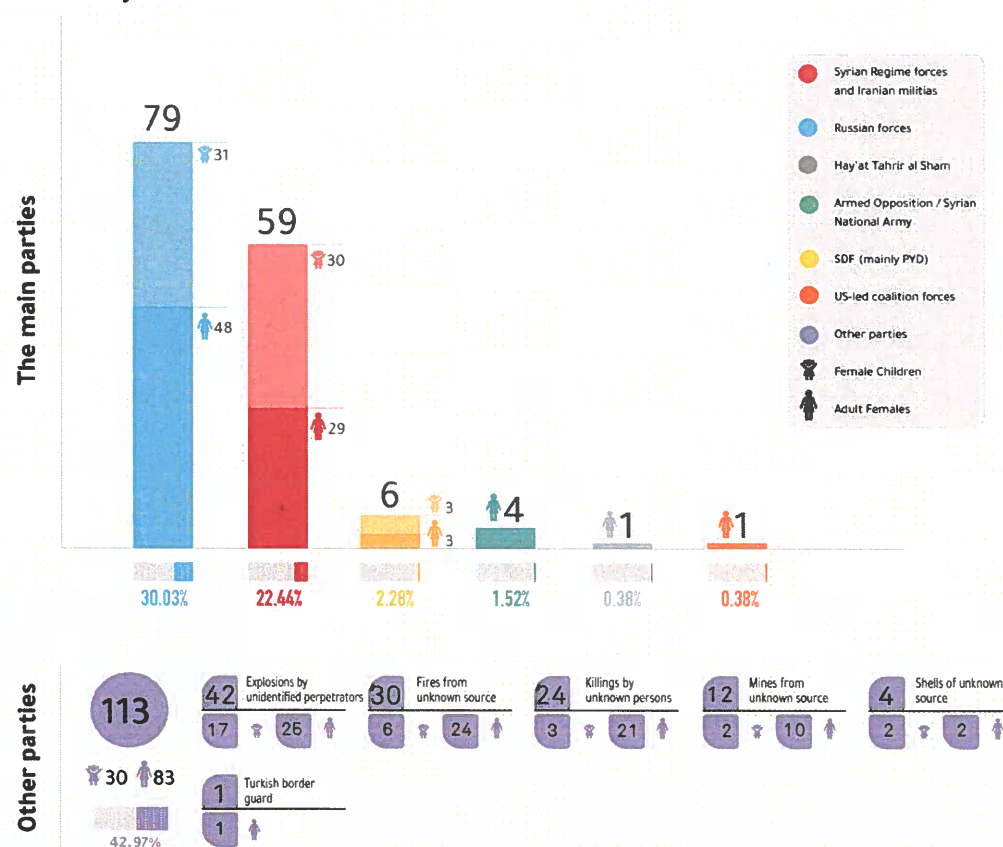
1734 civilians were killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria in 2020



326 children were killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria in 2020



263 females were killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria in 2020



A. The main parties:

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

We documented the deaths of 432 civilians at the hands of Syrian Regime forces, including 79 children and 29 women (adult female).

- Russian forces:

We documented the deaths of 211 civilians, including 62 children and 48 women, as a result of bombardment by forces which we believe were Russian.

- ISIS:

We documented the deaths of 21 civilians, including two children, at the hands of ISIS.

- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:

We documented the deaths of 26 civilians, including one woman, at the hands of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.

- The Armed Opposition/ The Syrian National Army:

We documented the deaths of 27 civilians, including nine children and four women, at the hands of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army.

- Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):

We documented the deaths of 63 civilians, including 11 children and three women, at the hands of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

- US-led coalition forces:

We documented the deaths of seven civilians, including one child and one woman, at the hands of the US-led coalition forces.

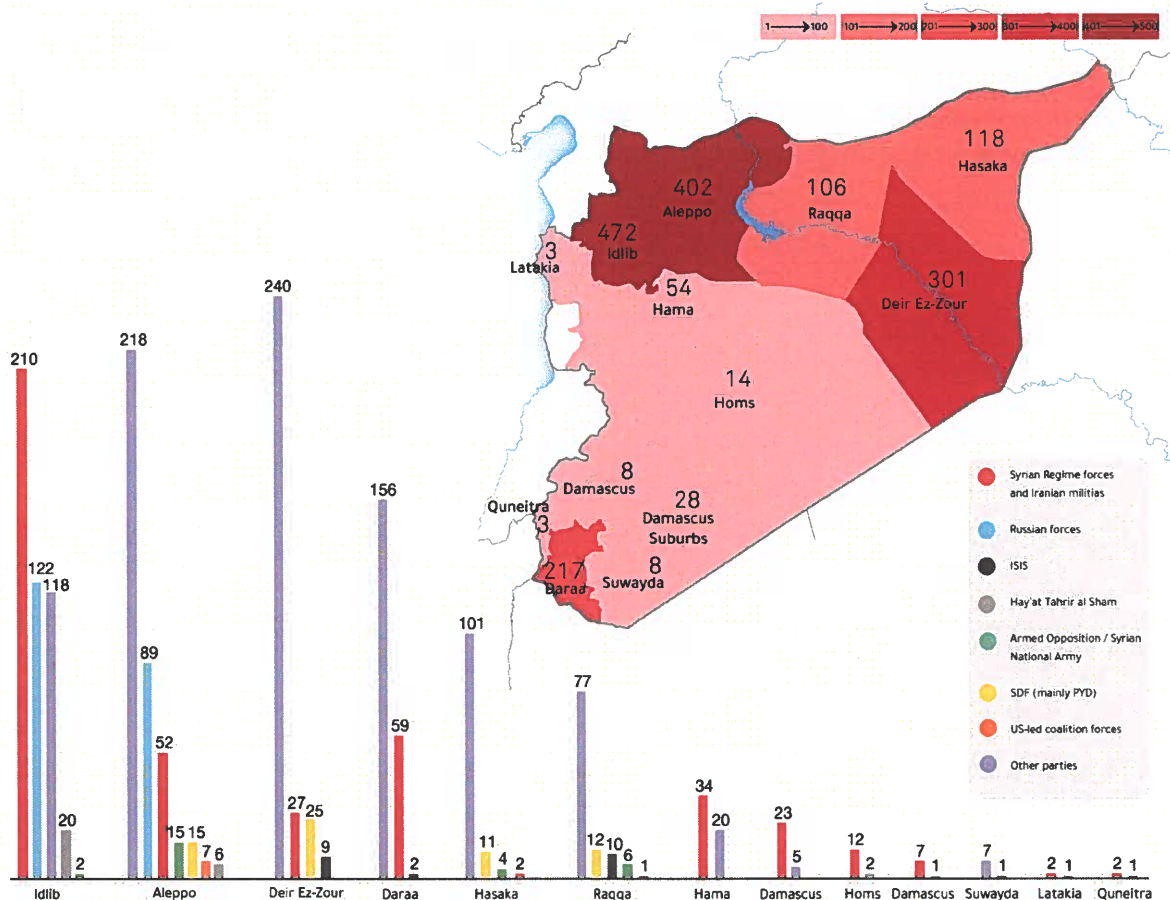
B. Other parties:

We documented the deaths of 947 civilians, including 162 children and 83 women, at the hands of other parties, distributed as follows:

- Gunfire of unknown source: 440 civilians, including 35 children and 24 women.
- Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified: 244 civilians, including 73 children and 25 women.
- Killings by unknown persons: 125 civilians, including 15 children and 21 women.
- Landmines of unknown origin: 109 civilians, including 23 children and 10 women.
- Shelling from unknown source: 11 civilians, including four children and two women.
- Drowning: 10 civilians, including eight children.

- Turkish border guards: Five civilians, including two children and one woman.
- Lebanese border guards: One child.
- Jordanian forces: One child.
- Messing around with weapons: One child.

The death toll of civilian victims killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces documented in 2020 was distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

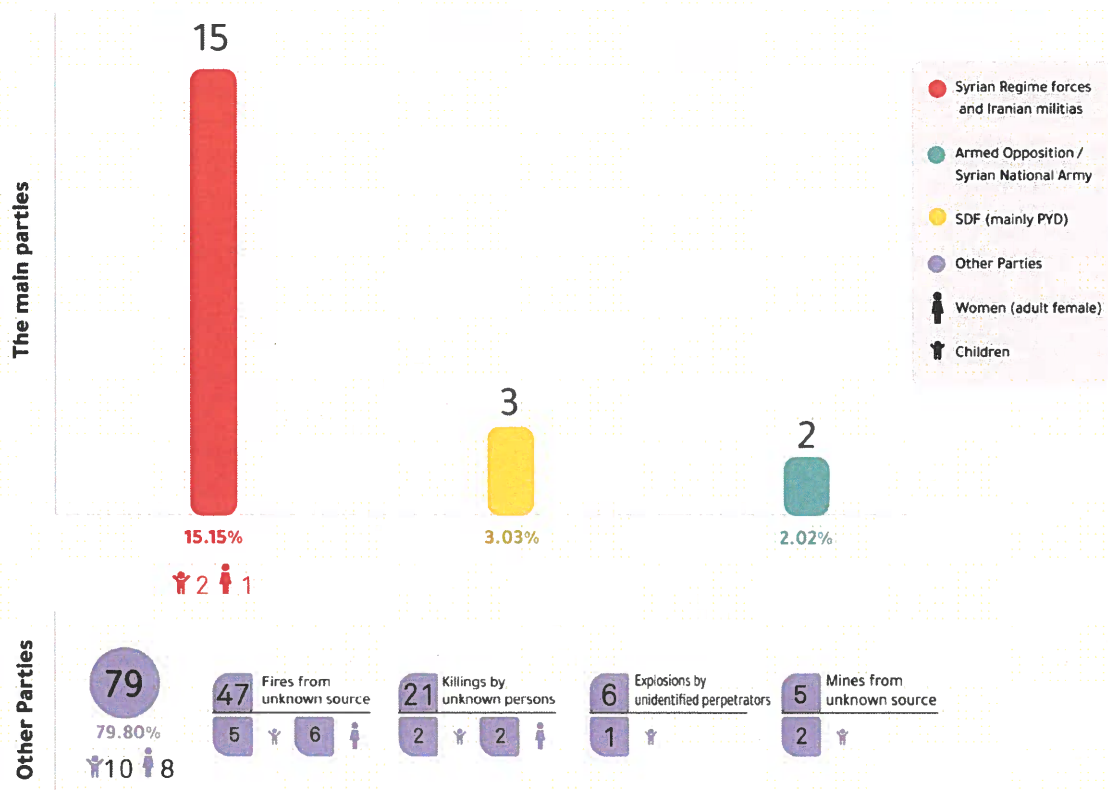


We noticed that the largest death toll in 2020 was documented in Idlib and Aleppo governorates, which account for 50.40 percent of the total death toll of victims in Syria; that is to say that half of the victims in 2020 were killed in these two governorates, followed by Deir Ez-Zour governorate with 17 percent, then comes the governorates of Daraa, Hasaka, Raqqqa, then the remaining governorates, while we recorded no victims in Tartus governorate.

2. In December 2020:

SNHR documented in December 2020 the deaths of 99 civilians, including 12 children and nine women, killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.

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



A. The main parties:

- Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias²):

We documented the deaths of 15 civilians at the hands of Syrian Regime forces, including two children and one woman.

- The Armed Opposition/ The Syrian National Army:

We documented the deaths of two civilians at the hands of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army.

² 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 authorities 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.

- Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):

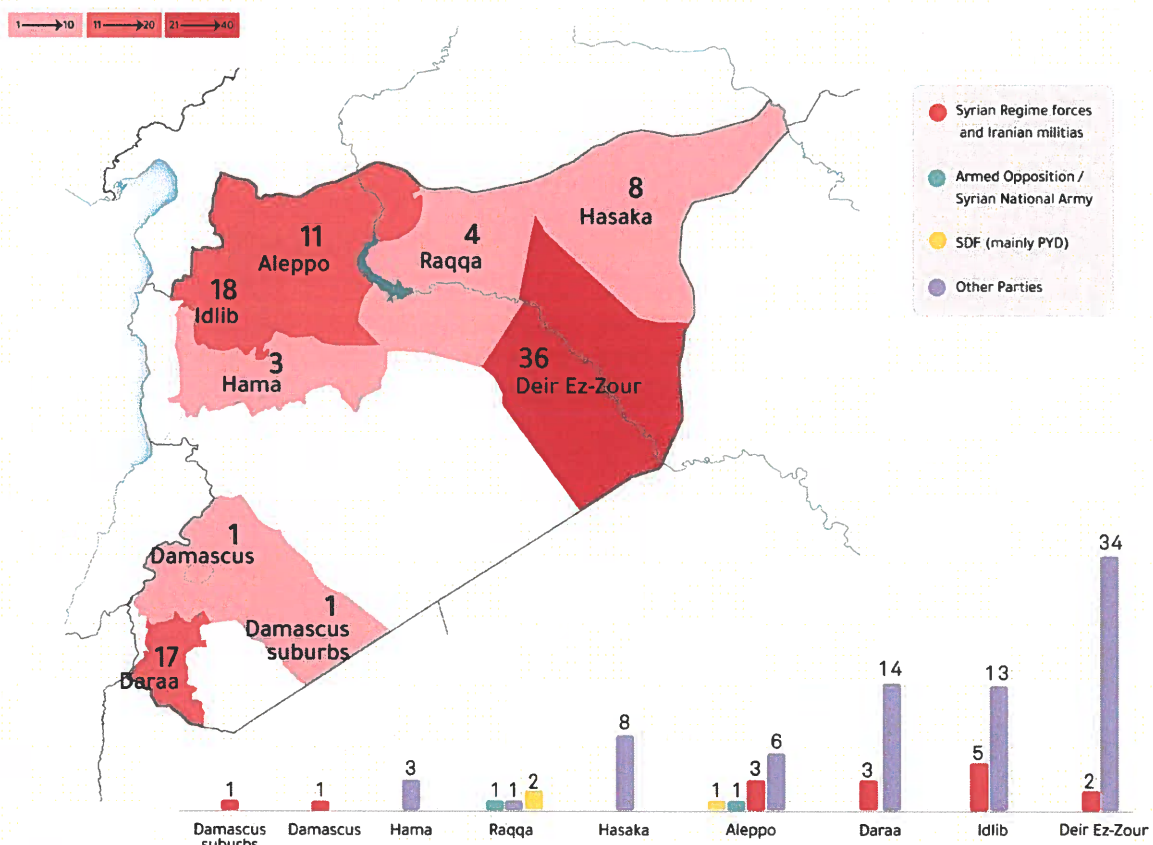
We documented the deaths of three civilians at the hands of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

B. Other parties:

We documented the deaths of 79 civilians, including 10 children and eight women, at the hands of other parties, distributed as follows:

- Landmines of unknown origin: Five civilians, including two children.
- Gunfire of unknown source: 47 civilians, including five children and six women.
- Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified: Six civilians, including one child.
- Killings by unknown persons: 21 civilians, including two children and two women.

The death toll of civilian victims killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces documented in December 2020 was distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



The map above shows that nearly 36 percent of the victims were killed in Deir Ez-Zour governorate, most of whom at the hands of other parties, followed by the governorates of Idlib, Daraa, then Aleppo.

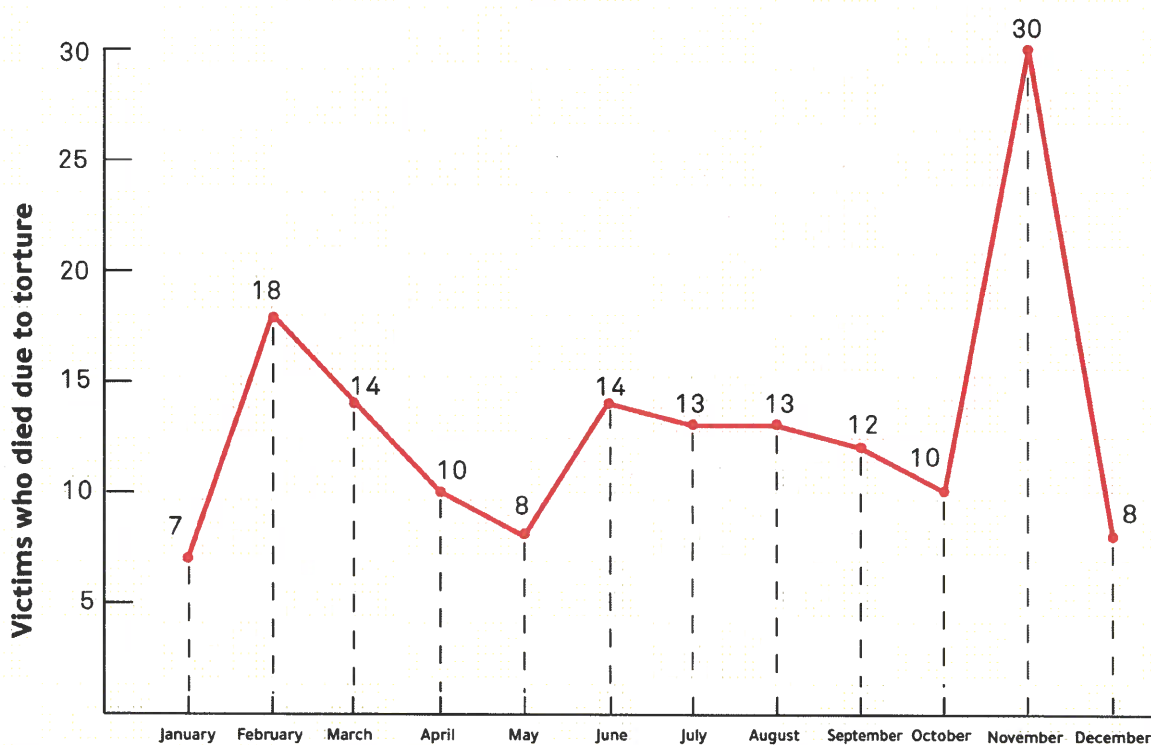
IV. Death Toll of Victims Who Died Due to Torture, and Victims Amongst Media, Medical and Civil Defense Personnel:

A. Death toll of victims who died due to torture

1. In 2020:

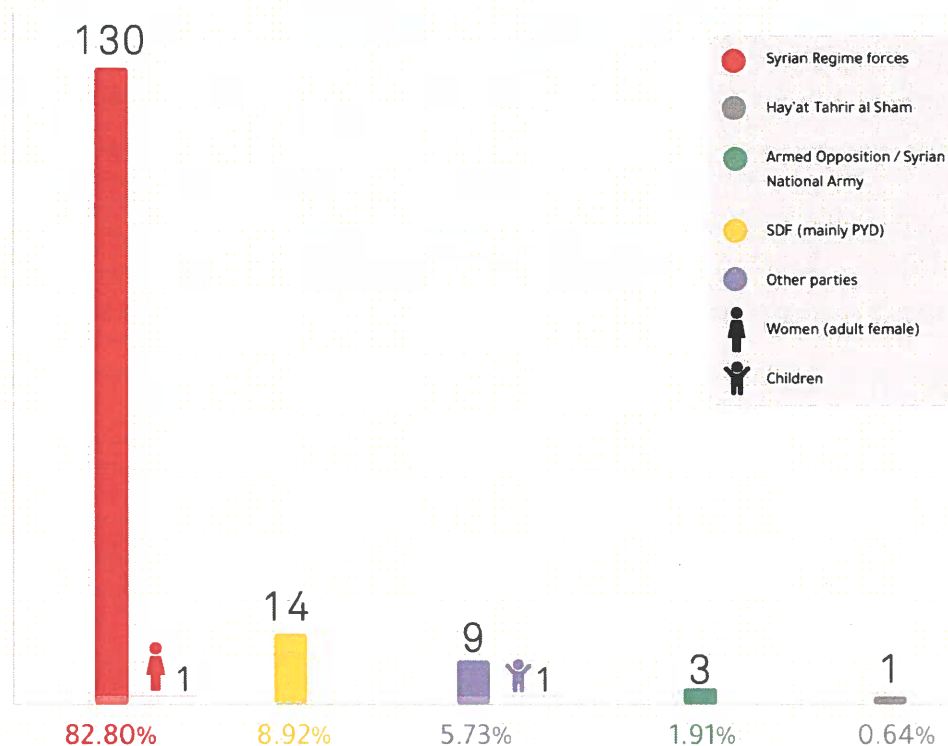
SNHR documented the deaths of 157 individuals due to torture, including one child and one woman, in 2020 at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.

The death toll of victims whom SNHR documented their death due to torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria in 2020 was distributed as follows:



The chart above shows that the largest death toll among torture victims recorded in this period was documented in November, accounting for 19.10 percent of all torture victims documented in 2020.

The death toll of victims whom SNHR documented their death due to torture in 2020 was distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces as follows:



A. The main parties:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 130, including one woman.
- **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** One.
- **The Armed Opposition/ The Syrian National Army:** Three.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 14.

B. Other parties: Nine, including one child.

The most notable cases of death due to torture documented in 2020 are:

- Syrian Regime forces:

[Omar Muhammad Ghannoum](#), born in 1992, whose mother is Nawal Abdul Karim Ghannoum, was a university student at the Faculty of Human Medicine at Tishreen University in Latakia city, from al Hamidiya village, which is administratively a part of al Qsair city, west of Homs governorate. Omar was arrested by Syrian Regime forces on Wednesday, May 1, 2013, at Tishreen University in Homs. On Friday, January 17, 2020, his family learned that he had been registered at the Civil Registry Department as having died on Monday, November 24, 2014. SNHR believes that it is most probable that he died due to torture in one of the Syrian regime's detention centers. We can also confirm that Syrian Regime forces failed to hand Omar's body over to his family.



Duraïd Mustafa Haj Ibrahim, born in 1992, was a student at the History Department at the faculty of Arts in Aleppo University. Duraïd, who came from Jarjanaz town in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was arrested in 2013 by Syrian Regime forces at the Immigration and Passport Department in Idlib city. On Wednesday, February 19, 2020, his family learned that he had been registered at the Civil Registry Department as having died on Wednesday, December 10, 2014. SNHR believes that it is probable that he died due to torture in one of the Syrian regime's detention centers. We can also confirm that Syrian Regime forces failed to hand Duraïd's body over to his family.



Hussam, Ahmad and Haitham Muhammad Abu Halaweh, born in 1968, 1983 and 1988 respectively, from Ibta' town in the north of Daraa governorate, were arrested in July 2018, by Syrian Regime forces in Ibta' town. The three brothers were among those who had previously made a settlement of their security status. On March 19, 2020, their family learned that they had been registered at the Civil Registry Department as having died. SNHR believes that it is probable that the three brothers died due to torture in Seydnaya Military Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate. We also stress that since Syrian Regime forces failed to hand their bodies over to their family, they are still classified as forcibly disappeared.



Hussam, Ahmad and Haitham Muhammad Abu Halaweh

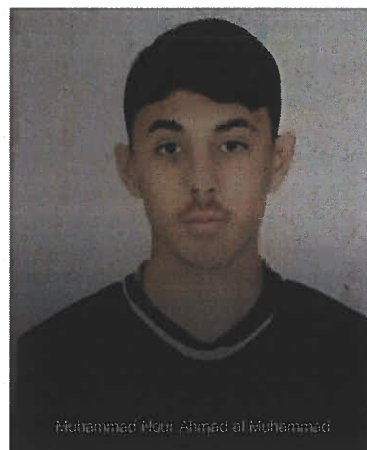
[Radwan Rezq Srour](#), a dissident conscript from al Sheikh Maskin city in northern suburbs of Daraa governorate, who had defected from Syrian Regime forces, was arrested by Syrian Regime forces on Sunday, October 28, 2018, in a raid on his home in al Sheikh Maskin city, after which he was tortured to death. On Wednesday, April 1, 2020, his body was handed over to his family, bearing signs of torture. We note that Radwan was among those who had previously settled their security status with the regime.



Radwan Rezq Srour

Mrs. Heyam Muhammad al Nafea, born in 1985, came from al Qouriya city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. SNHR documented that she was arrested on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, by Syrian Regime forces at the Immigration and Passport Building in Damascus city, and was taken to the regime's infamous Palestine Branch in the city. Almost since that date, she had been classified as forcibly disappeared, with nobody, including a lawyer, being allowed to visit her. On Monday, May 11, 2020, Syrian Regime forces notified her family of her death 10 days earlier on Friday, May 1, 2020, informing them that they could collect her body from the Tishreen Military Hospital in Damascus city. According to information SNHR has received, she was in a good health at the time of her arrest, indicating that she probably died due to torture and medical negligence.

Muhammad Nour Ahmad al Muhammad, a high-school student from Kafr Zita city in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, was arrested by Syrian Regime forces on Sunday, July 13, 2014, in Hama city. Almost since that date, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On Thursday, August 27, 2020, his family learned that had been registered the Civil Registry Department as having died on Wednesday, July 15, 2015. SNHR believes that it's probable that he died due to torture in one of the regime's detention centers. We also confirm that Syrian Regime forces failed to hand over his body to his family.



Rateb al Ali, a university student at the al Ba'ath University's Faculty of Law in Homs city, from Teir Ma'la village in the northern suburbs of Homs governorate, was arrested by Syrian Regime forces on Wednesday, January 30, 2013, while he was passing through one of the regime's checkpoints in Homs city. Almost since that date, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On Friday, October 2, 2020, SNHR received information that he had been executed in a Syrian regime detention center, following a sentence issued against him by the Military Field Court (al Midan Court) in Damascus on Saturday, June 1, 2013. SNHR confirms that Syrian Regime forces failed to hand over his body to his family.



[Khaled al Rajab](#), a special needs person from al Rastan city in the northern suburbs of Homs governorate, who worked for the city's local council, was arrested by Syrian Regime forces in al Rastan city in 2018, despite being amongst those who had previously agreed on a settlement of their security status with the Syrian regime. Almost since that date, he had been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On Friday, November 13, 2020, Syrian Regime forces notified his family of his death and handed over his body to them. SNHR has received information confirming that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture and lack of healthcare.

- The Armed Opposition/ The Syrian National Army:

Fares Karraf al Hamidi, a 43-year-old man from Hawija Abdi village, which is administratively a part of Tal Abyad city in the northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, was arrested by Military Police personnel affiliated with the Syrian National Army forces on Monday, June 1, 2020, after being summoned to one of their detention centers in Tal Abyad city. Almost since that date, he had been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian National Army preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him or revealing his fate. On Saturday, August 1, 2020, his body was handed over to his family bearing signs of torture.



- Syrian Democratic Forces:

Ali Hasan Sheikh Muhammad, born in 1977, from Raqqa city, was arrested on July 6, 2015, by Syrian Democratic forces at the Marash Binar crossing in Ein Arab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, while he was travelling with two other civilians through the crossing on their way to Turkey. Almost since that date, Ali has been classified as forcibly disappeared, as Syrian Democratic Forces preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him or revealing his fate. At the beginning of May 2020, his family received information confirming his death due to torture in a Syrian Democratic Forces' detention center at the end of July 2015. SNHR confirms that Syrian Democratic Forces failed to hand over his body to his family; this failure to hand over the bodies of those who die in SDF detention centers to their families is commonplace, with any person whose body has not been handed over deemed to be still classified as a forcibly disappeared person.



Hassan Abdul Aziz al Ajrawi, an Arabic teacher, from al Tebni town in the western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel on February 2019, near al Baghouz town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. On Wednesday, November 25, 2020, the SNHR received information that he had died due to torture in an SDF detention center in Hasaka governorate. We have received information confirming that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture.



2. In December 2020:

SNHR documented in December 2020 the deaths of eight individuals due to torture, all at the hands of Syrian Regime forces.

The most notable cases are:

Ismail Ahmad Ibrahim al Shamali, a Palestinian with Jordanian nationality, born in 1953, who had been living in Tafas city in the west of Daraa governorate and worked in trading prior to his arrest, was arrested by Syrian Regime forces in 1995, and sentenced to life imprisonment by the Supreme State Security Court (an exceptional political security court that lacks the most basic principles of fair trials) for alleged possession of secret documents and confidential information, supposedly to ensure the safety of the state, in accordance with Article 272 of the Syrian Penal Code. This sentence was subsequently commuted to 20 years.

Ismail was transferred between several prisons during the period of his detention, including Seydnaya Military Prison, where he was prevented from contacting his family, then Adra Central Prison, before being transferred to the last one, al Suwayda Central Prison. Ismail's health deteriorated throughout the time of his imprisonment, and he was denied essential medical care, up until Tuesday, December 22, 2020, when warders from al Suwayda Central Prison took him to the National Hospital in al Suwayda governorate, where he died two days later on December 24, with his body being handed over to his family on December 25. SNHR has received information confirming that he died due to the medical negligence he suffered in al Suwayda Central Prison, although we have received no information confirming that he or any criminal prisoners held in that prison died due to infection with COVID-19.

According to information received from his family, Ismail wrote several political books, but was unable to have any of them published due to his detention, with the Syrian regime refusing to release him despite the end of his sentence.

We note that a release warrant had been issued in mid-December for Ismail al Shamali in relation to the main charges against him, while another warrant was issued on December 20, 2020, in relation to another case filed against him by al Suwayda Central Prison. In the days before his death, Ismail was waiting at the prison for the arrival by mail of the warrant for his release.



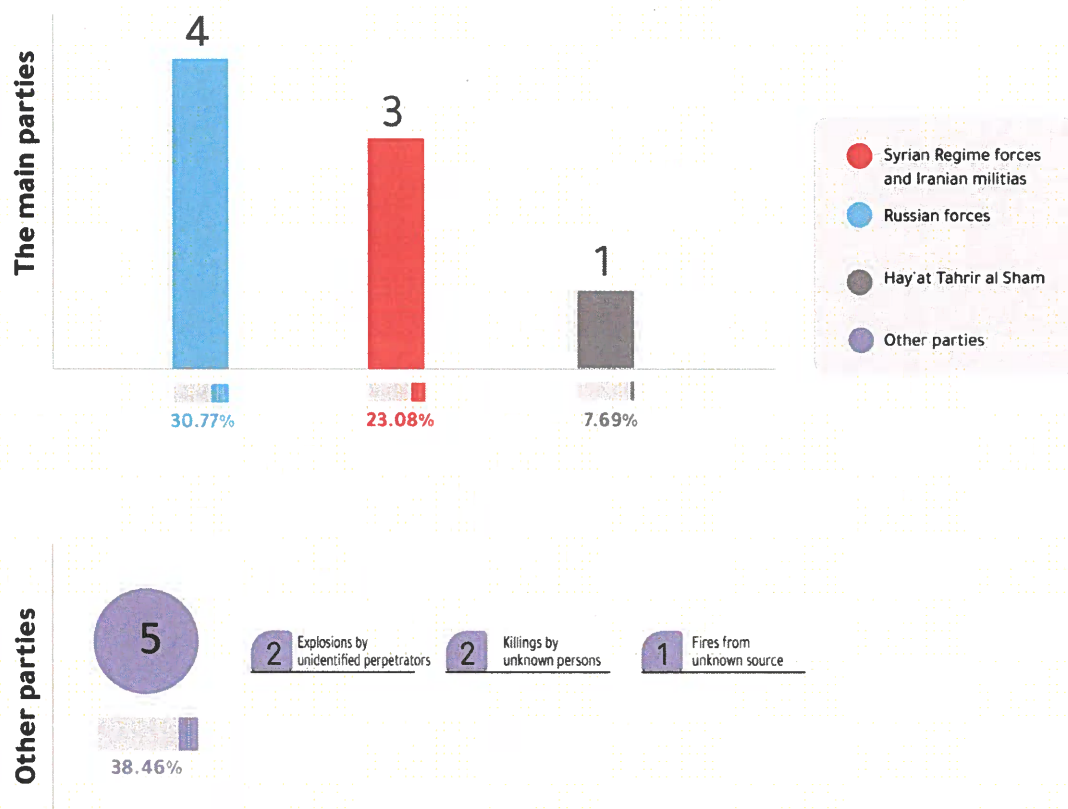
Ismail Ahmad Ibrahim al Shamali

[Muhannad Qasim Muhamad Saeed al Shouli](#), born in 1991, was a college student at Damascus University's faculty of engineering, who originally came from Nawa city in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate. Muhannad was arrested by Syrian Regime forces on Wednesday, January 9, 2013, while he was passing through one of the regime's checkpoints in Damascus city. Almost since that date, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On Thursday, December 24, 2020, SNHR received information confirming his death in custody. We have received information confirming that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture in a regime detention center.

B. Death toll of medical personnel

1. In 2020:

SNHR documented in 2020 the deaths of 13 medical personnel, killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces, distributed as follows:



A. The main parties:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** Three.
- **Russian forces:** Four.
- **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** One.

B. Other parties:

We documented the deaths of five medical personnel at the hands of other parties, distributed as follows:

- Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified: Two.
- Killing by unknown persons: Two.
- Gunfire of unknown source: One.

The most notable cases are:

A. The main parties:

- Syrian Regime forces:

Ibrahim al Saedou, a pharmacist and the director of the dispensary in Ma'aret al Na'san village in the northeastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, worked in Taftanaz Hospital in Taftanaz town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. He was killed on Tuesday, February 18, 2020, when fixed-wing Syrian-Russian alliance warplanes fired missiles at Ma'aret al Na'san village, while he was in the village.



- Russian forces:

Zakwan Tammaa, from Ariha city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was an anesthesia technician and the administrative director at al Shami Hospital, also known as Ariha Surgical Hospital, north of Ariha city. Zakwan, who was born on June 15, 1977, died on Saturday, February 1, 2020, due to wounds sustained on Wednesday, January 29, 2020, in the blasts from three airstrikes launched by fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, when they used missiles against al Shami Hospital and the surrounding area in Ariha city.



- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:

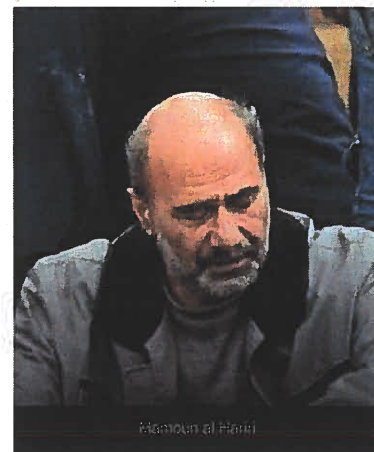
[Muhammad Haj Zakkar](#), an ambulance driver with the Qatar Red Crescent, from al Atareb city in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, died on Saturday, March 14, 2020, due to wounds sustained on Tuesday, March 10, 2020, when members of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham opened fire at him when they raided his brother's house in al Atareb city, with the motives for the raid being unknown. We note that HTS members arrested Muhammad's brother, who was also shot.



B. Other parties:

Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified:

[Mamoun Qasem al Hariri](#), a general practitioner and radiologist, from Busr al Harir town in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate, born in 1966, was both the director of Busr al Harir field hospital and deputy head of the 'Free' Daraa Health Directorate. He was killed on Sunday, January 19, 2020, as a result of the explosion of an IED of unknown origin in front of his clinic in Busr al Harir. We are still trying to contact witnesses and survivors of the incident to obtain more details.



Gunfire of unknown source:

[Muhammad Abdul Rahim al Bardan](#), a [gynecologist](#), from Tafas city in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate, [was killed](#) on Saturday, February 1, 2020, when unknown gunmen shot him in front of his clinic in Tafas city. SNHR is still trying to contact witnesses of the incident to obtain more details.



[Dr. Emad Taher Ismail](#), aged 56, was [the head of the radiology department](#) at [al Basel Hospital](#) in al Qerdaha city in the western suburbs of Latakia governorate. On Wednesday, March 11, 2020, local pro-Syrian regime media outlets reported that the body of Dr. Emad, who was married with children, had been found on the road to Joubet Berghal near the junction of the al Areza village in al Qerdaha city, and that he appeared to [have been killed](#) by a gunshot wound to his head. SNHR is still trying to contact witnesses of the incident to obtain more details.

[Mehmet Arif Kızıman](#), a Turkish employee of the Turkish Red Crescent Society was killed on Monday, September 14, 2020, and another staff member from the same organization was injured, when unknown gunmen opened fire at the vehicle belonging to the humanitarian organization which they were in whilst it was in the Tal Battal area in the suburbs of al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo. The area was under the control of the Syrian National Army at the time of the incident. The SNHR is still trying to contact witnesses and survivors of the incident to obtain more details.



[The Turkish Red Crescent Society published](#) an obituary mourning Mehmet Arif Kızıman on its official account on the 'Twitter' social networking platform.

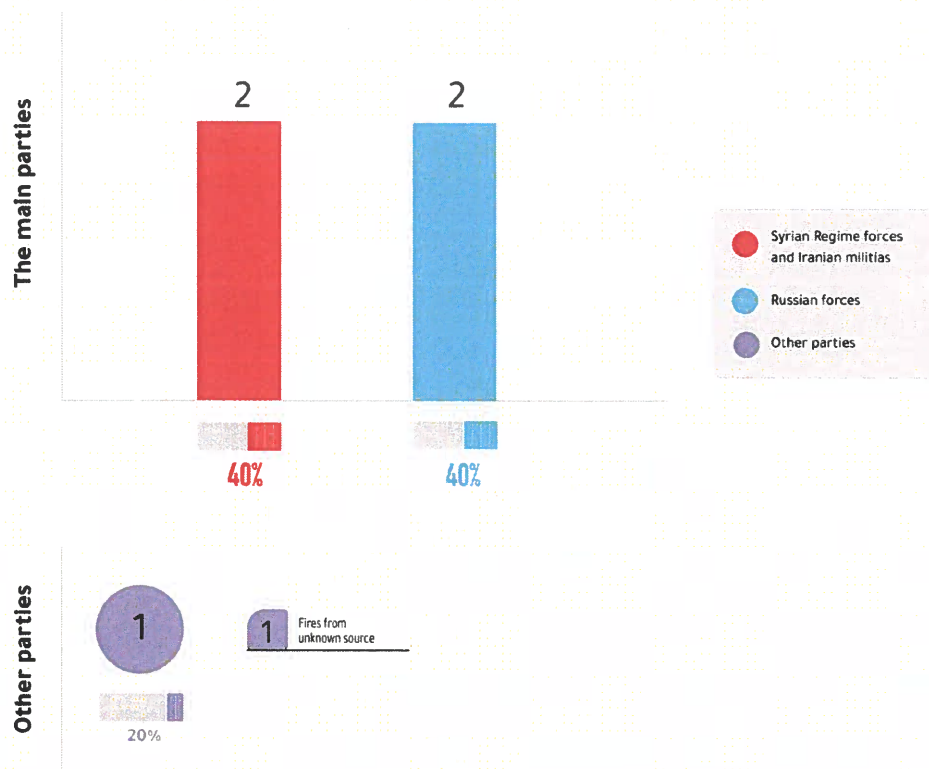
2. In December 2020:

SNHR didn't document any deaths among medical personnel in December 2020.

C. Death toll of media workers

1. In 2020:

SNHR documented in 2020 the deaths of five media workers, killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces, distributed as follows:



A. The main parties:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** Two.
- **Russian forces:** Two.

B. Other parties:

We documented the death of one media worker as a result of gunfire from an unknown source.

The most notable cases are:**A. The main parties:****- Syrian Regime forces:**

Jihad Muhammad Jamal, from Aleppo city, was a media activist in addition to his activism in the Syrian popular uprising. Nicknamed 'Milan', Jihad, born in 1972, was a qualified lawyer, having obtained his law degree from Aleppo University.

He was arrested for his activism by Syrian Regime forces for the fourth and final time on Wednesday, March 7, 2012, in the Ninar Café in the Bab Sharqi neighborhood of Damascus city, along with a number of other activists, and taken to the regime's infamous Palestine Security Branch '235' in the city. During his interrogation at the Palestine Branch, Jihad was severely tortured and accused of treason; Jihad was subjected to a trial in the Military Field Court in December 2012. After this, he was detained in Seydnaya Military Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate, where his family managed to visit him for the last time at the beginning of 2016.



On April 13, 2020, the SNHR obtained information indicating that he had died, with his family obtaining a document on Saturday, March 7, 2020, stating that he had died on Friday, November 2, 2016, according to the records of the Civil Registry Department. Since the regime has not handed over his body to anyone, he is still classified amongst those 'disappeared' by the Syrian regime.

SNHR spoke with Noura al Jizawi, Jihad's colleague who worked with him, who said, **"Jihad worked on many societal, legal and political issues before the start of the revolution, such as campaigns for organ donation and against the law of honor crimes. With the start of the revolution, he participated strongly in organizing and coordinating protests and sit-ins in both Aleppo and Damascus. He also worked on producing a documentary film about the sit-in in al Sa'a Square (New Clock Tower Square) in Homs city."**

Noura was arrested 19 days after Jihad's arrest, learning during her own interrogation that he was being held in the Palestine Branch; the investigating officer told her the charges against Jihad in an effort to extract information from her and was tortured when she denied them.

SNHR also spoke with Mansour al Omari, another friend of Jihad who worked with him, says, **“Jihad was a media activist and he reported the news of the revolution in Syria to many channels, such as the BBC and others. I was helping him in editing the reports he was filming and sending them to news channels like Orient and others.”**

We note that Jihad Jamal had previously been detained three times before his last arrest by Syrian Regime forces. The first time he was arrested was in the Milano Cafe in Aleppo city on May 5, 2011, after which he was released on June 4, 2011; the second was in Damascus city on August 4, 2011, after which he was released on October 2, 2011; and the third time was on October 14, 2011, after which he was released on December 29, 2011.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights on several occasions called on the Syrian regime to reveal Jamal's fate, and highlighted his condition among the groups of portraits that were exhibited in advocacy events in several countries, which were outlined in [a report we previously issued](#). Jamal's portrait can be seen at [this link](#).

- Russian forces:

On Tuesday, February 4, 2020, at around 07:00, media activist Amjad Muhammad Anas Aktalati, was killed when fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired a number of missiles targeting al Midan neighborhood in Ariha city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

Amjad, a photographer with the General Media Center, was a married father of three from Ariha city. Born in 1992, he had been a third-year student at the Faculty of Education - Department of Psychology - University of Damascus.

The SNHR contacted the media worker, Anas Tracy, a friend of Amjad, who told us: **“When I heard the news of Amjad's death, I contacted one of the Civil Defense personnel who was at the site of Amjad's death, who told me that the Russian warplanes launched several missile airstrikes targeting the al Midan neighborhood in Ariha city, one of which targeted the house of Fadi Rahal, a friend of Amjad, in whose house Amjad spent the night, which resulted in the death of Amjad and his friend Fadi.”** Anas added that the bodies of the two martyrs were not retrieved until the next day because of the intense shelling that day and the great destruction in the area.

2. In December 2020:

SNHR documented the death of one media worker as a result of gunfire of unknown source in December 2020.

Media activist [Hussein Ibrahim al Khattab](#) was killed on Saturday, December 12, 2020, after being [shot in the chest](#), heart and head by [unidentified gunmen](#), whilst he [was filming](#) a report on the COVID-19 pandemic near the northern cemetery in al [Bab city](#) in the [eastern suburbs](#) of Aleppo governorate. The city is under the control of the Syrian National Army. Hussein, a married father-of-four, who was born in 1983, and who was also known as Kara al Safrani, was a photographer who worked with the TRT Arabi channel, from al Sfeira city in the southern suburbs of Aleppo southeastern suburbs. He was also a third-year student of Mass Communication.



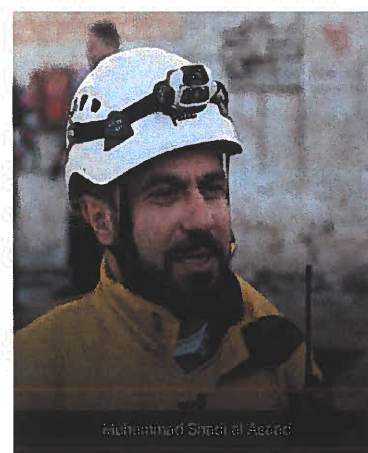
The SNHR contacted media activist Abu Shadi al Safrani³, a friend of Hussein, who heard the details of the incident from residents of the neighborhood who had witnessed it. Abu Shadi recalled, **“While Hussein was preparing a report on the coronavirus pandemic near the northern cemetery in al Bab city, he was shot directly with a military pistol by two unidentified gunmen on a motorcycle; he was hit by several bullets in the chest, heart and head. He was immediately taken by the people of the area to al Bab Hospital, but he died before reaching it,”** Abu Shadi added, **“This was not the first time that Hussein had been subjected to an assassination attempt. The first was on September 23, 2020, when unknown gunmen shot him while he was driving his car near the Tarhin area near al Bab city, but he was not injured on that day.”**

D. Death toll of Civil Defense personnel

1. In 2020:

SNHR documented in 2020 the deaths of at least three Civil Defense personnel, all at the hands of Syrian Regime forces.

[Muhammad Shadi al Asaad](#), a member of the [Syrian Civil Defense's 'Idlib Center 3'](#), from Idlib city, [was killed](#) on Wednesday, January 15, 2020, in bombardment by fixed-wing Syrian regime (MiG-23) warplanes using one missile that hit the middle of the industrial zone, east of Idlib city, resulting in a massacre. [The Syrian Civil Defense](#) published an obituary and tribute to Muhammad on their official Twitter account.



³ Via his personal account on Facebook on December 19, 2020

Othman al Othman, a member of the Civil Defense- Bazabour village's Center, from Nahla village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [was killed](#) on Monday, January 27, 2020, in bombardment by fixed- wing Syrian regime warplanes which fired missiles at Sarja village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, while he was with the Civil Defense's team heading to the site of previous bombing of the village by fixed- wing warplanes which we believe were Russian.

[The Syrian Civil Defense](#) published an obituary and tribute to Othman on their official Twitter account.



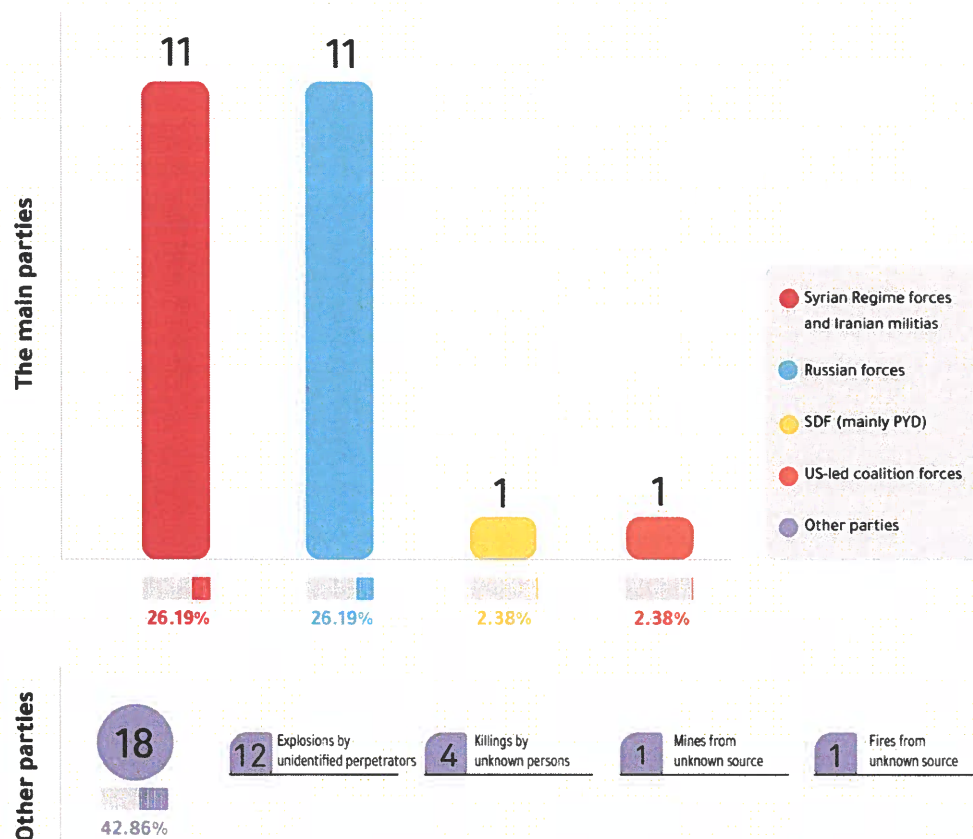
2. In December 2020:

SNHR didn't document any deaths among Civil Defense personnel in December 2020.

V. Record of Most Notable Massacres:

1. In 2020:

SNHR documented at least 42 massacres in 2020, distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces as follows:



A. The main parties:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 11.
- **Russian forces:** 11.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** One.
- **US-led coalition forces:** One.

B. Other parties:

We documented 18 massacres at the hands of other parties, distributed as follows:

- Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified: 12.
- Killing by unknown persons: Four.
- Gunfire of unknown source: One.
- Landmines of unknown origin: One.

The massacres perpetrated by Syrian Regime forces in 2020 were distributed according to areas of control as follows:

- Areas under the control of Syrian Regime forces: One.
- Areas under the joint control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham: Seven.
- Areas under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham: Three.

According to the SNHR's Victim Documentation team, the massacres documented in 2020 resulted in the deaths of 392 civilians, including 106 children and 44 women (adult female). This means that nearly 38 percent of all the victims were women and children, a very high proportion, and a clear indication that civilian residents were specifically targeted in most of these massacres.

The death toll from these massacres was distributed according to the perpetrator parties as follows:

A. The main parties:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 107 civilians, including 33 children and five women.
- **Russian forces:** 99 civilians, including 36 children and 31 women.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** Five civilians, including two children.
- **US-led coalition forces:** Five civilians.

B. Other parties:

176 civilians, including 35 children and eight women, distributed as follows:

- Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified: 135 civilians, including 30 children and six women.
- Killings by unknown persons: 31 civilians, including five children and two women.
- Landmines of unknown origin: Five civilians.
- Gunfire of unknown source: Five civilians.

The most notable massacres documented in 2020 are:**A. The main parties:****- Syrian Regime forces:**

On Wednesday, January 1, 2020, at around 11:43, Syrian Regime forces used [a missile](#) platform, which we believe [was stationed](#) in Jabal Azan area in the western suburbs of Aleppo, to fire a Tochka 9M79 missile loaded with 9N24 [cluster munitions](#), which fell on [al Sharqi neighborhood](#) of [Sarmin](#) city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib. Most of [the submunitions](#) spread across a civilian area that includes a school, a Sharia institute and a shelter center for IDP families from southern suburbs of Idlib. The shelling resulted in the deaths of [12 civilians](#), [including seven](#) children and [three women](#), and injured at least 20 others.

Some submunitions also spread in the main market of Sarmin city and near al Fardous and Othman bin Affan Mosques, with their explosions causing varying material damage to the market facilities and the two mosque buildings. 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.



On Tuesday, February 11, 2020, at around 12:10, fixed-wing Syrian regime (MiG-23) warplanes fired a number of missiles at Idlib city, two of which fell in an area crowded with civilians in the industrial zone to the east of the city, with [the impact site of one missile](#) being approximately 50 meters from [the other missile](#), [resulting](#) in [the deaths](#) of [12 civilians](#), [including seven](#) male children, and [injuring](#) around [33 others](#). Idlib city was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



On Sunday, March 1, 2020, fixed-wing Syrian regime warplanes fired a number of missiles at houses in Kafrantin village located in east of Darat Ezza city in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, resulting in [the deaths](#) of [five civilians](#), [including one child](#), most of [whom came](#) from [one family](#). We note that the targeted area is located near a site where Turkish forces are stationed. Kafrantin 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 Tuesday, September 29, 2020, gunmen affiliated with Syrian regime forces and affiliated militias attacked al Fasda village in al Badiya area, southeast of al Se'in town in the eastern suburbs of Hama governorate, inhabited by the Arab al Shahrat and Arab al Ma'ata families. These gunmen randomly opened fire at civilians there, [killing nine civilians](#). The area was under the control of Syrian Regime forces at the time of the incident.

- Russian forces:

On Tuesday, January 21, 2020, at around 11:45, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at a house on the outskirts of [Kafr Ta'al](#) village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, [resulting in the deaths](#) of [nine civilians](#) from [one family](#), [including](#) six children ([three males](#) and [three females](#)) and [one woman](#). Kafr Ta'al 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, January 29, 2020, at around 17:00, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at the main street, located between al Gharbi Mosque and Nouri Hamesho Mosque, in the middle of [Kafr Lata](#) village in Jabal al Arba'in area in Jabal al Zaweya in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, resulting in [the deaths](#) of [19 civilians](#) including four children ([three males](#) and [one female](#)) and two women, in addition to injuring 30 others. Kafr Lata village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Video showing the operation to recover victims from under the rubble of a house following an aerial attack by the Syrian regime on Kafanin village, Aleppo, which caused a massacre - March 1, 2020

On Wednesday, January 29, 2020, at around 22:40, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, launched three consecutive missile strikes on al Shami hospital, known as Ariha Surgical Hospital, and the surrounding area, north of [Ariha](#) city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate; some of the missiles hit residential buildings adjacent to the hospital, [resulting in the deaths](#) of [six civilians](#) from one family of IDPs from Jabal al Zaweya area in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate- namely a male child and five women. We note that the bombardment also resulted in the death of one of al Shami hospital's medical personnel, as the hospital's building was directly hit by some of the missiles. Ariha 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 Thursday, February 27, 2020, fixed-wing warplanes, which we believe were Russian, fired missiles at houses in Shellakh village in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, resulting in the deaths of five civilians (one female child and four women), most of whom were members of one family. Shellakh village was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

- Syrian Democratic Forces:

On Wednesday, March 18, 2020, Syrian Democratic Forces fired artillery shells at Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, with some of the shells targeting Villas Street in the city center, resulting in [the deaths](#) of [five civilians simultaneously](#), [including](#) two [children](#). Afrin city was under the control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army at the time of the incident.

B. Other parties:

Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified:

On Monday, February 10, 2020, [a car bomb](#) of unknown origin exploded in [the popular market in Rajo Street](#) in the center of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, [resulting in the immediate deaths of five civilians](#). The Syrian Network for Human Rights is still trying to contact witnesses and survivors of the incident to obtain more details. Afrin city was under the control of the Syrian National Army at the time of the incident.

On Tuesday, March 3, 2020, an explosion of an unknown source, believed to have been caused by a missile fired by Syrian-Russian alliance forces, rocked al Thalathin Street, southwest of Idlib city; the explosion occurred in an area crowded with civilians and street vendors in front of residential buildings, which are under refurbishment, where IDPs from the suburbs of Idlib were sheltering, resulting in the deaths of [12 civilians, including nine children](#) (eight males and one female). The Syrian Network for Human Rights is still trying to contact witnesses and survivors of the incident to obtain more details. 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.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, April 28, 2020, [a car bomb of unknown origin exploded](#) at the entrance to a local market in a public thoroughfare, known as Rajo Street, in the center of [Afrin city](#) in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, with fires resulting from the explosion spreading across a large area due to the presence of a truck loaded with fuel at the site of the explosion. We documented [the deaths of at least 44 civilians](#) as [a result of the explosion](#), most of whose bodies were [severely charred](#), including [nine children](#) and three women, while about 55 others were injured and sustained burns. The Syrian Network for Human Rights is still trying to contact witnesses and survivors of the incident to obtain more details. Afrin city was under the control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army at the time of the incident.

On Thursday, July 30, 2020, a car bomb of unknown origin exploded at a checkpoint jointly run by Syrian National Army forces and members of the Civil Police near the entrance to Tal Halaf town, which is administratively a part of Ras al Ein city in the northwestern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, [resulting in the deaths of six civilians](#), including [three members](#) of the Civilian Police, in addition to the deaths of two Syrian National Army fighters, and injuring 10 others. SNHR is still trying to contact witnesses and survivors of the incident to obtain more details. Tal Halaf town was under the control of the Syrian National Army forces at the time of the incident.

On Tuesday, October 6, 2020, [a car bomb of unknown origin exploded](#) in Othman bin Affan Street on the northeastern outskirts of al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, resulting in the deaths of 20 civilians, including five children and one woman, and [injuring nearly 30 others](#), including [three medical](#) personnel who were traveling in an ambulance belonging to the Syria Relief and Development Organization (SRD) that was at the site of the bombing. The SNHR is still trying to contact witnesses and survivors of that incident to obtain more details. Al Bab city was under the control of the Syrian National Army at the time of the incident.

On Tuesday, November 24, 2020, an explosion of unknown source occurred near the Northern Ring road in al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, resulting in the deaths of six civilians, including the head of police for [Baza'a town](#) and [one female](#) child, and injuring nearly 15 others. The SNHR is still trying to contact witnesses and survivors of [that incident](#) to [obtain more details](#). Al Bab city was under the control of the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army at the time of the incident.

Killing by unknown persons:

On Tuesday, January 14, 2020, local residents found the dead bodies of seven civilians, including two children, all relatives from Ayyash village in the western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate; all the victims had been executed by shooting by unknown gunmen in the Badiya of al Terfawi, located to the south of Deir Ez-Zour city. The Syrian Network for Human Rights is still trying to contact witnesses of the incident to obtain more details. The area was under the control of Syrian Regime forces at the time of the incident.

On Friday, February 21, 2020, unknown gunmen attacked a group of shepherds in the Badiya of Ghanem al Ali village, which is administratively a part of al Sabkha town in the eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, shooting at them using machineguns, resulting in the deaths of nine shepherds, including three male children. The area was under the control of Syrian Regime forces at the time of the incident.

On Friday, April 3, 2020, local people discovered [the bodies of eight civilians](#), including two women, all relatives from Ma'dan Atiq village, which is administratively a part of al Tebni district. They had been shot dead by unknown gunmen who attacked the camp site where they were sheltering while grazing their sheep in the Badiya of al Tebni district, in the southwestern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The Syrian Network for Human Rights is still trying to reach witnesses or survivors of the incident to obtain more details. The area was under the control of Syrian Regime forces at the time of the incident.

B. In December 2020:

SNHR documented one massacre in December 2020, perpetrated by Syrian Regime forces, resulting in the deaths of five civilians.

On Saturday, December 26, 2020, members of Syrian Regime forces, stationed in Tanjara village in Salh al Ghab in Hama suburbs, used an [anti-tank missile](#) to target a [car and a farm tractor](#) carrying civilians near al Zaqqoum village in the western suburbs of Hama - about 4 km away from the contact line – resulting in [the deaths](#) of [five civilians](#), [whose bodies were burned](#) due to the resulting fire in the farm tractor and the car. The area was under joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

VI. The Syrian Regime Bears Primary Responsibility for the Deaths of Syrian Citizens Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic:

This report does not include all deaths, including those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as we mainly document extrajudicial killings, but there is no doubt that the negligence shown by the Syrian regime and its disastrous mismanagement of the Syrian state in recent years are the primary factors behind the massive numbers of deaths from the COVID-19 pandemic and other disease outbreaks and illnesses, as seen in the regime's neglect of public healthcare and indifference towards citizens' wellbeing, with the state's only genuine protection reserved for the ruling family, its entourage and the regime elite. It should always be remembered that the Syrian regime and its Russian ally have repeatedly been documented as having targeted, bombed and destroyed most medical facilities in Syria, and killed hundreds of medical personnel, according to the SNHR's database, with dozens of these lifesaving medics still classified as having been forcibly disappeared at the regime's hands. The Syrian regime's Ministry of Health [has announced](#) the deaths of 696 cases in Syria due to the COVID-19, meaning that 283 victims had died in one month as of December 29; while this already seems to be an alarmingly high number, we believe that this statistic is actually inaccurate and that the real number of deaths is actually far higher due to the regime's weak medical capabilities; since there is no medical examination to confirm or deny a patient's infection with COVID-19, it seems probable that a large number of deaths [due to COVID-19](#) are being deliberately ascribed to other causes without the real cause being disclosed. Concern over a probable regime cover-up of the real COVID-19 death toll is exacerbated by the absence of any transparency in the various government ministries, and in view of the security services' control over any data issued by these ministries, as is usually the case with totalitarian regimes of this nature.

The regime's failure to release arbitrarily detained individuals, particularly the elderly and individuals detained with no charges, [most notably around 3,327 medical personnel](#), provides further clear evidence of the Syrian regime's primary responsibility for the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Syria. The regime, which controls and manages state institutions, has completely failed to provide even the most rudimentary protection to Syrian civilians, but has instead exploited the state institutions to protect and benefit the ruling family in order to ensure their continued rule, even if 13 million Syrian citizens are displaced from their homes to achieve this, with most of those displaced unable to return home since their homes have been ransacked and subjected to widespread looting and destruction by regime forces and affiliated militias.

VII. The Most Notable Work Carried Out by SNHR on the Extrajudicial Killing Issue:

Since 2011, the SNHR has created complex electronic programs to archive and categorize the victims' data, which the team collects and verifies, enabling us to catalogue the victims according to their gender, age, the date and place of death, method of killing used, the type of weapon used, and the perpetrator party, and to make comparisons between these parties. We can also distribute the death toll according to the governorate in which the incident of death occurred, and according to the governorate from which the victim originated, in order to show the extent of the loss suffered by the people of that governorate, and to enable us to accurately ascertain the highest rates of violence documented in the case of each violation. SNHR's Victim Documentation Department team constantly updates its comprehensive database, with all the data added to the SNHR's database being retained securely, and several backup copies being stored in different locations.

Since 2011, we have also been exceptionally concerned about incidents involving the killing of children and women; there is hardly a statistic recorded on our database that does not include either, category due to the vulnerability of these groups in the community, and because they give an indication of the rate of targeting of civilians. We later added other civilian groups which have played a key role in the initial popular uprising and subsequently in the armed conflict, such as media, medical, relief and Civil Defense personnel.

For nearly nine years, we have issued [daily death toll of victims](#), as well as [daily news](#) on killing incidents. We also issue a monthly report detailing the death toll of victims, whose deaths were documented in Syria during the previous month, amongst civilians, as well as of those [who died due to torture](#), in addition to issuing a biannual report and annual report, as well as dozens of other special reports [documenting the total death toll or the death toll](#) at the hands of one of the parties to the conflict in particular, in addition to a [monthly report](#) and special and periodic reports documenting the [massacres](#) committed on Syrian soil.

Also, SNHR periodically sends a special form to the United Nations [Special Rapporteur](#) on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, submitting cases of killings on which we were able to document all of the available data, having obtained the consent of each victim's family members before submitting them.

It should be noted that the United Nations has relied on the Syrian Network for Human Rights for all the statistics it has used in its analysis of victims in the conflict, given SNHR's prominent role as one of the most credible information sources. SNHR has also partnered with numerous United Nations bodies, in addition to governments of states, to provide them with statistics from our databases, in order to serve the path of justice, and ultimately to ensure the accountability and prosecution of criminals. SNHR is also used as a trustworthy source by a large number of Arab and international news agencies and many international human rights organizations.

VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Conclusions:

- The evidence we have collected indicates that the attacks documented were directed against civilians and civilian objects. Syrian-Russian alliance forces have committed various crimes ranging from extrajudicial killings to detention, torture and enforced disappearance. Their attacks and indiscriminate bombardment have resulted in 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.
- A large proportion of Syrians have been killed as a result of landmines, with none of the perpetrator forces in the Syrian conflict revealing maps of the locations where landmines were planted.
- 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 and resolution 2042 on the release of detainees, as well as resolution 2254, all without any accountability.
- ISIS has violated international humanitarian law, causing the deaths of many civilians.
- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham has violated international humanitarian law, causing the deaths of many civilians.
- The indiscriminate and disproportionate bombardment carried out by the alliance of US-led coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces is considered a violation of international humanitarian law, with the crimes of indiscriminate killing amounting to war crimes.
- The Armed Opposition/ 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.
- The use of explosive arms to target densely populated areas reflects a criminal and wholly deliberate mentality intended to inflict the greatest possible number of deaths, which is a clear contravention of international human rights law and a flagrant violation of the four Geneva Convention (articles 27, 31, 32).

Recommendations:

Security Council

- The Security Council must take additional steps following its adoption of Resolution 2254, which clearly states that "all parties immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such."
- The Syrian case should be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible 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.

- The Security Council should 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 in Syria, similar to the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons, and include advice on how to safely clear 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 expose its involvement in this regard.
- The Security Council should 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 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 at 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 through increasing support for relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction should be enacted in local courts regarding these crimes in order to ensure that all those involved are brought to justice following fair trials.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine 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 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. By failing to do so, 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.
- Work to launch projects to create maps revealing the locations of landmines and cluster munitions in all Syrian governorates. This would facilitate the process of clearing them and educating the population about their locations.

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 and the controlling forces.
- 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 providing humanitarian assistance, in order to facilitate an exchange of skills and experiences within Syrian society.
- Work on preparing a special report on the use of landmines in Syria and the risks they pose to civilians, and identify the most prominent locations where landmines were planted.

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.
- Focus on the issue of landmines and cluster munitions within the next 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.
- Revive 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 use of prohibited 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 84,000 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.
- Provide detailed maps of the locations where the regime planted landmines, especially in civilian areas or near residential communities.

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 people involved accountable.
- Compensate all the damaged centers and facilities, rebuild and rehabilitate them, and compensate all the victims' families, 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 the 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 allow the unconditional passage of humanitarian aid to besieged areas.
- 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 disposal of unexploded ordnance.
- Begin to achieve a breakthrough in the issue of detainees by revealing the fate of 84,000 people disappeared by the Syrian regime.

The Coalition (Us-led coalition and 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.
- The states supporting the SDF should cease all forms of support until the SDF commits itself to complying with the rules of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. This is primarily the responsibility of the supporting states. Providing the SDF with weapons and support while knowing that the SDF is engaged in violating the rules of international humanitarian law can be seen as a contribution to these violations.
- The SDF should form a special committee to investigate incidents of violations committed by SDF personnel, disclose the details of their findings and apologize for them, hold those responsible accountable, and compensate the victims and affected.
- Provide detailed maps of the locations where the SDF has planted landmines, especially civilian sites or near residential communities.

The Armed Opposition/ The Syrian National Army:

- 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.
- Provide detailed maps of the locations where the Armed Opposition/ Syrian National Army planted landmines, especially civilian sites or near residential communities.

Humanitarian organizations:

- Develop urgent operational plans to secure decent shelter for internally displaced persons.
- Exert efforts in landmine clearance operations in parallel with relief operations whenever the opportunity arises.

Thanks

The Syrian Network for Human Rights extends its sincere thanks to everyone who sent news and information, especially survivor victims, eyewitnesses, and local activists, whose information has contributed to substantiating and strengthening the available data and the evidence in the various incidents included in this report.



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