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SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SNHR's 14th Annual Report

on the State of Human Rights

in Syria for the Year 2024

**The Fall of the Assad Regime: Remembering
Violations and Accountability Prospects**

Monday 19 May 2025





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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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Syria While the end of 2024 carried a new hope for the future of Syria, ended well, 2024, in a broader sense, saw further serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law across Syria. Although the various parties to the Syrian conflict committed serious violations, the Assad regime, alongside its Russian and Iranian allies, were responsible for about 90 percent of these violations, with some of the violations committed by the Assad regime amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Indeed, despite the Assad regime's fall in December 2024, Syria is still suffering from the impact of the conflict whose catastrophic ramifications have affected the lives of millions of Syrians. Humanitarian, economic, and security conditions have deteriorated steadily, with humanitarian needs reaching their worst levels since the start of the conflict.

In this context, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has continued to uphold our mission in documenting and reporting human rights violations to the highest standards possible. In line with this mission, this report, the 14th annual report since the beginning of the popular uprising in March 2011, provides a record of the most notable violations documented in 2024, with the objective of presenting a comprehensive analysis of the state of human rights in Syria over the course of the past year, focusing particularly on ongoing violations and the prevalent issues that still affect the lives of the Syrian people.

Violations continue

Violations against civilians continued across Syria throughout 2024, most notably:

- **Civilian casualties and targeted attacks:** Aerial and ground attacks on residential areas resulted in massive human casualties. Many of these attacks were indiscriminate, in blatant violation of international humanitarian law, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.
- **Enforced disappearance and arbitrary arrest:** These practices persisted as a primary instrument of repression by all parties to the conflict. These practices have created a terribly massive psychological and physical burden on the families of the missing, who live in a state of constant anxiety and uncertainty over the fate of their loved ones.
- **Torture:** We documented many deaths due to torture in detention centers. Systematic torture remained a manifestation of the culture of fear and repression which prevailed under the former regime.
- **Attacks on vital facilities:** Attacks on civilian infrastructure resulted in widespread destruction and denied millions of people essential healthcare and education services, further fueling social chaos.

The fall of the Assad regime

The most crucial development that took place in 2024 was beyond doubt the fall of the Assad regime on December 8, 2024, following the launch of Operation Deter Aggression on November 27, which aimed to liberate the areas under regime control. Despite the ultimate collapse of the Assad regime, nonetheless, the Assad regime and its allies committed serious violations in the course of the military clashes that ensued, most notably:

- **Indiscriminate attacks:** These resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths and injuries, as well as the destruction of vital facilities.
- **Mass arrests and conscription:** Conscripted men were taken directly to battlefronts immediately after their arrest.
- **Use of indiscriminate weapons:** Such as barrel bombs, cluster munitions, and incendiary munitions, which resulted in many civilian casualties.

The humanitarian catastrophe in the aftermath of the fall of the Assad regime

With the fall of the Assad regime, the issue of forcibly disappeared persons came under the spotlight as one of the gravest national disasters faced by the country in this period. Despite the release of thousands of detainees in the last weeks of 2024, around 112,000 of the Syrian citizens arrested by the former regime since 2011 are still classified as forcibly disappeared, with hundreds of thousands of families still left in limbo, clinging to the faint hope of finding their loved ones.

In this climate of desperate hope among victims' families for any news of missing loved ones, rumors of secret detention centers have driven families and activists to flock to the sites of these alleged secret detention centers, giving rise to further problematic issues, including tampering with crime scenes and destruction of criminal evidence. Part of the philosophy behind the phenomenon of enforced disappearance is to perpetuate the psychological, emotional, and physical agony of victims' families by systematically spreading rumors and confusion to heighten their suffering. SNHR believes that protecting these crime sites and preserving evidence should have been an urgent priority after the liberation of detention centers.

Development following the fall of the Assad regime

For the first time since 2011, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI) has been able to enter Syria. Similarly, the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) and the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic (IIMP) finally began operating in the country.

Report message

This report is intended to serve as a historical document providing a record of the extent of violations against the Syrian people. It is, at the same time, a testimony to the Syrian people's immense resolve and steadfast determination to achieve justice, dignity, and freedom in the face of unimaginable tyranny. The findings of this report underline the terribly high costs that Syrians had to pay to achieve their rightful demands. As the documentation of violations and exposing of perpetrators continues, the primary goals among those still to be achieved are to ensure that the perpetrators of all the crimes committed against the Syrian people and nation are held accountable, especially those involved in crimes against humanity; to ensure that the symbols of the former regime are not reproduced in the new Syrian administration, and to eventually realize a fully democratic Syria that represents and protects all of its people.

As Fadel Abdulghany, SNHR Executive Director, says:



This report is released at a historical and pivotal moment for the Syrian nation with the fall of the Assad regime, one of the most brutal regimes in the history of Syria and the region. The Assad regime has left a blood-soaked and terrible legacy of suffering and millions of victims. At SNHR, we believe that justice and accountability are not mere options, but essential necessities to achieve civil peace and build the new Syria upon. Therefore, we call for a path of transitional justice that ensures justice for all victims and puts an end to impunity. We need urgent international and United Nations support to achieve this complicated task. This is an earnest call to anyone who believes in a stable and prosperous Syria that is built on the foundations of achieving justice for the victims and holding perpetrators of violations accountable.



BACKGROUND

Founded in June 2011, a few months after the beginning of the popular uprising, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) is an independent human rights organization which monitors and documents human rights violations in Syria, mobilizing our efforts and capabilities towards limiting these, contributing to the protection of the victims' rights, and exposing the perpetrators of violations as an essential step to holding them accountable. The group also aims to raise awareness amongst Syrians of their rights, and to advance transitional justice and democratic change in order to achieve justice and peace in Syria, as well as to preserve and chronologize the historic events that have transpired.

Based on these objectives, SNHR maintains detailed archives of all the violation incidents it documents on an extensive database that serves as the foundation for the periodical reports, statements, and studies released by the group on a regular basis.

SNHR's stature

SNHR is [an active member](#) of the:

- International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICR2P);
- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience;
- International Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC);
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL); and
- Every Casualty Worldwide (ECW) initiative

In addition, SNHR is a co-founding member of the [Global Alliance on War, Conflict & Health](#), and a member of the [Chemical Weapons Convention Coalition \(CWCC\)](#), and the Alliance [Against Genocide](#)

It should also be noted that the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#) has relied on SNHR as the primary source for all of its statistics related to the analysis of victims of the conflict in Syria. SNHR also works in cooperation with the COI and has signed a data-sharing agreement with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM). Furthermore, the group works with many other distinguished international organizations such as the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and Amnesty International.

SNHR has also been one of the most important data sources for the Syria situation reports [issued by the foreign ministries of many countries worldwide](#), with a large number of Arab and international news agencies relying on SNHR's reports and statistics for their coverage of and reports on Syria.

SNHR's efforts in 2024

In 2024, SNHR continued working tirelessly, releasing a large number of reports, statements, and news items concerning various human rights issues and violations, including:

- Extrajudicial killing.
- Arbitrary arrest, torture, and enforced disappearance.
- Forced displacement.
- Use of prohibited munition and destructive weapons

These reports draw upon hundreds of first-hand accounts collected from the victims of violations, survivors, eyewitnesses, and emergency services personnel, as well as the analysis of hundreds of photos and videos. SNHR adheres at all times to strict protocols to ensure the authenticity and reliability of our information, while continuously striving to enhance our methodology to keep pace with the latest international standards.

To find out more about SNHR's methodology, please visit [this link](#).

Report contents

This report outlines

1. **Account of 2024's violations:** Outlining the most prominent violations documented by SNHR throughout the year.
2. **Context of violations:** Links incidents with the political, human rights, and military developments in Syria over the past year.
3. **Legal framework:** The report draws upon international humanitarian law and international human rights law to evaluate violations, while also referencing how the Assad regime's violations contravened the constitution and domestic laws.

Limitations

This report covers the bare minimum that SNHR was able to document of the volume and severity of the violations that took place. It should be noted that the cumulative effect of these violations, which have been going on since March 2011, makes it difficult to separate current violations from the accumulative effects of previous crimes. To get a better sense of these violations over the years, please refer to [the annual reports](#) released by SNHR in March of every year since 2011, with the most recent one prior to this being released in [March 2024](#).

Closing remarks

This report does not provide any analysis of the social, economic, and psychological aspects and effects of these violations, but focuses solely on directly documenting crimes and abuses. Despite the substantial challenges, SNHR remains committed to its mission of documenting violations and promoting justice in order to realize a democratic, just and free future for all Syrians.

I. GENERAL SITUATION IN SYRIA THROUGHOUT 2024



A victim's body being retrieved by rescue workers. He was one of the victims of a massacre inflicted in an airstrike by Russian forces on a furniture workshop located on the western outskirts of Idlib city - October 16, 2024

The year 2024 witnessed a seismic development in course of Syrian history. Namely the downfall of the Assad regime at dawn on Sunday, December 8, 2024, after a radical change in the balance of military control. The Military Operations Command launched Operation Deter Aggression on November 27, 2024, with the aim of retaking areas from the Assad regime. This operation resulted in large-scale changes in the situation on the ground, paving the way for a major political transition by the end of the year.

Violations continue despite shifts

Despite this development, serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law have continued across Syria since the beginning of 2024. The various parties to the conflict and controlling forces committed serious violations, some of which were systematically and widespread, amounting to crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Deteriorating humanitarian and economic situation

Syrians have suffered from a worsening humanitarian situation, with humanitarian needs peaking since the beginning of the conflict. The suffering of the population has been exacerbated by the deteriorating economic and security conditions, with continued hostilities and unlawful attacks targeting populated areas. These hostilities have resulted in large numbers of civilian deaths and injuries, with attacks described as war crimes committed on various battlefronts.

Israeli airstrikes

Israeli airstrikes targeting Iranian officers and positions belonging to the Assad regime and its allies have escalated across Syria. These attacks sometimes targeted civilian buildings, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries, with the nature of these attacks noting a change in the nature of these attacks following the fall of the Assad regime.

Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance

Arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances continued, with new cases of deaths in custody recorded. Despite political changes, the Assad regime remains at the top of the list of parties responsible for violations, by a wide margin. As of the end of 2024, the total toll of those who remain forcibly disappeared by the Assad regime since 2011 stood at **112,000 forcibly disappeared** persons. This toll reflects an ongoing humanitarian catastrophe, as the fate of forcibly disappeared persons has not been revealed despite the opening of all detention centers operated by the Assad regime and the release of thousands of arrested in the last weeks of the year.

Displacement

Nearly half of the Syrian population are still IDPs or refugees abroad, reflecting the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe plaguing the country. Moreover, until its fall, the Assad regime continued to pass laws that enabled an increase in violations against the Syrian people, especially against the most vulnerable, exploiting state resources for the manufacture and trade of drugs, which has witnessed remarkable growth in the last three years.

Below is an outline of the most notable events observed by SNHR in 2024

A. Humanitarian and living situation in Syria

The year 2024 witnessed a continued sharp deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation, as well as a worsening economic and political crisis. [According to UN Secretary-General António Guterres' statement on 9 March](#), as the conflict enters its 14th year, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is at an all-time high, with 3 out of 4 in need of assistance, and more than half of the population suffers from hunger. Nearly half of Syria's pre-conflict population remains IDPs or refugees abroad.

On 21 March, [during her briefing to the Security Council](#), [Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs](#), noted that the rate of acute malnutrition among children under five years in Syria has tripled over the last five years, leaving more than half a million children in need of emergency treatment for acute malnutrition during the year.

Health Sector

According to [the World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), **15 million** people are in need of health assistance, about 65 percent of the population. [Dr Hanan Balkhi, WHO Regional Director](#), [stressed](#) that the rapid deterioration of the socio-economic situation, as well as factors such as climate change, poverty and food insecurity, has a direct impact on public health.

Northwest Syria: A Crippling Humanitarian Crisis

General conditions

At the beginning of the year, [the humanitarian situation](#) in northwest Syria was at [its worst](#):

- **Number of IDPs:** 3.4 million people.
- **People in need:** 4.2 million people, half of whom are children.
- **Children's need for protection:** 89 percent of the region's children.

Health Sector

[The health system deteriorated sharply](#), with many health facilities forced to scale back operations or close their departments entirely due to lack of funding. [Dozens of facilities, including hospitals](#), have also ceased to function.

Humanitarian delivery efforts

Agreements to extend the entry of cross-border aid

The UN has played a pivotal role in securing humanitarian aid to northwest Syria through border crossings, in cooperation with the Assad regime:

- **January 11:** Aid entry through Bab al-Hawa crossing has been [extended](#) for an additional six months.
- **February 12:** It was agreed to [extend](#) the mandate to use the Bab al-Salam and al-Rai crossings for an additional three months, especially following the devastating earthquake that struck the area in February 2023.
- **May 10:** The Assad regime agrees to [extend](#) the use of the crossings until August 13.
- **July 10:** [Approval for aid to enter through Bab al-Hawa crossing has been extended until January 13, 2025.](#)
- **August 12:** Use of the Bab al-Salam and al-Rai crossings [has](#) been extended until 13 February.
- **October 24:** [The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\) report indicated that](#) 483 humanitarian aid trucks from seven UN agencies entered northwest Syria between January and October 2024.

Living and service situation in northwest Syria

The suffering of civilians continued to worsen as the living and service situation deteriorated:

1. Economic conditions

- Widespread unemployment and high poverty rates, especially in IDPs camps.
- The depreciation of the Turkish lira, the currency used in the region, has affected purchasing power.
- Low wages for daily labor.

2. Basic Services

- Significant lack of water access due to the weakness of the main water network.
- Frequent and continuous power outages.

Violations against civic activists, peaceful protests

Protests in HTS areas

Since February 2024, popular protests have been monitored in areas under the control of HTS in Idlib governorate and western rural Aleppo. These protests came to demand the release of detainees held in HTS detention centers, as well as to call for a change in the group's policy towards civilians. These protests continued sporadically for several months, with HTS personnel dispersing some demonstrations by shooting in the air.

According to a September 2024 [report](#) by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI), the protests coincided with arrest campaigns carried out by HTS targeting members of other opposition factions, political parties, and civilians.



Protest held by women demanding the release of the Tahrir Party detainees from HTS prisons. The protest was held by mothers and wives of Tahrir Party members in Idlib city – March 10, 2024



Attacks on civilian workers

SNHR documented several incidents of verbal and physical assault on medical, media and service workers by armed opposition factions personnel, including SNA and HTS. Among the most prominent of these incidents are:

• **March 15 - Idlib:**

During a demonstration in Idlib city to mark the 13th anniversary of the popular uprising, HTS security personnel verbally and physically assaulted four journalists and media activists working for local and international agencies. SNHR issued [a statement](#) the next day condemning the incident.

- **March 21 - Tal Abyad:**

In the city of Tal Abyad, north of Raqqa, doctor Abdullah al-Ibrahim was beaten and insulted by a patrol of the military police of the Syrian National Army forces while performing his work inside his clinic. The doctor was arrested in a manner described as «barbaric» before being released three hours later. [A statement](#) issued by the head of the Military Police Branch indicated that the incident was under investigation and an alert was issued to the elements involved.

Regulatory decisions that sparked controversy

- **Decision of the Minister of Justice No. 29/2024:**

On May 14, 2024, the Minister of Justice of the Syrian Interim Government issued [a decision](#) to cancel the lawyers' branches of the Free Syrian Lawyers Association in northwestern Syria that do not achieve the quorum specified in Article 46 of the Law Regulating the Legal Profession. The decision stipulated the inclusion of lawyers registered in the canceled branches to the branches that achieve quorum, while the organization of judicial agencies for them until they are registered in the new branches.

Despite the regulatory nature of the decision, SNHR considered it an infringement on the competence of the syndicate council, and demanded in [a statement](#) released on May 31 to cancel the decision, calling for respect for the independence of unions and non-interference in their affairs, as one of the gains of the popular uprising of 2011.

- **Decision of the Salvation Government - August 29:**

The HTS' Salvation Government issued a decision prohibiting the holding of any event without the prior approval of the Events Office of the General Directorate of Political Affairs. SNHR believes that this decision reflects a deliberate policy of harassment of humanitarian organizations, and issued a statement condemning it.

Areas that were under the control of the Assad regime

- **Economic and living conditions**

Economic and living conditions continued to deteriorate in areas that were under the control of the Assad regime of Bashar Assad during 2024, including:

- **The depreciation of the Syrian pound against the dollar:** This led to a sharp rise in [the prices of basic commodities, including meat and vegetables, which negatively affected the purchasing power of citizens.](#)
- **High fuel prices:** [Fuel prices have witnessed frequent increases throughout the year,](#) along with a scarcity in their availability.
- **The transportation crisis:** The internal transport problem has worsened, especially in Damascus, [where citizens queued for long hours](#) waiting for transportation, as a result of fuel shortages and congestion of lines.

- **Electricity rationing policy:** The Assad regime's [government continued to implement the electricity rationing policy](#), which increased the suffering of citizens.
- **Lawlessness:** [Several areas witnessed attacks and robberies on public institutions and facilities, which contributed to the deterioration of services.](#)

• UN report

On March 21, 2024, the OCHA issued [a report](#) on the humanitarian situation in the governorates of Swayda, Daraa, and Quneitra. The report examined the impact of the ongoing conflict on these governorates and their populations, explaining that the deteriorating economic and living situation exacerbates the suffering of the population.

• Violations against Suwayda protests

Since the beginning of the year, peaceful protests have continued in Suwayda governorate, with protesters demanding that Bashar Assad be held accountable for the decline of the country's economic and living situation, as well as calling for regime change. These protests came in the context of an unprecedented economic and human rights crisis.

• The Assad regime response to protests

The Assad regime has responded to protests with violence and repressive measures, including:

• February 28:

[During the dispersal of](#) a civilian protest in front of the settlement center in downtown Suwayda, [Assad regime forces opened fire](#) indiscriminately, killing a 52-year-old civilian and wounding another. [The US Embassy in Damascus expressed concern on its official X account](#) over the Assad regime's use of excessive force against peaceful protesters.

• March 20:

Teacher Lamis Riad Melhem was¹ arbitrarily dismissed from her job as computer secretary at the Technical Institute in Suwayda Governorate. This decision came on the pretext that she had stopped working, despite having taken a documented health leave (February 21-March 21, 2024). Melhem suggests that the real reason for her dismissal is her participation in the ongoing protests in Suwayda.

1. Ms. [Lamis](#), from the Bard village in southern rural Suwayda governorate, taught English between 1997 and 2018, before working as the secretary of the Technical Institute.



Civil protests against Bashar Assad's regime continue for the seventh consecutive month in Suwayda city – Photo from a demonstration in the city - February 23, 2024

Northeastern Syria

Humanitarian and living conditions

The humanitarian situation in northeast Syria, particularly in the governorates of Hasaka, Raqqqa and Deir Ez-Zour, continued to deteriorate during 2024. [The suffering of the population has been exacerbated](#) by ongoing hostilities and deteriorating economic conditions. Aspects of this suffering included:

- **Underlying crises:**

- A severe crisis in water, fuel and electricity has negatively affected the daily life of the population.
- High rates of malnutrition, especially among children under five, pregnant and lactating women.

- **Cholera outbreak:**

On 26 September, [the International Rescue Committee \(IRC\) expressed concern](#) about the cholera outbreak, with more than 170 suspected cases of cholera detected in Hasaka, Raqqqa and Deir Ez-Zour.

- **High prices:**

[Foodstuffs](#), vegetables, meat, and [fuel](#) have witnessed a continuous rise in prices, as a result of:

- Lack of effective control from the parties controlling the movement of buying and selling.
- [Clashes](#) and military escalation between the various parties continue, affecting the provision of water, fuel and basic necessities.

Basic Services

The region suffers from a significant shortage of public services:

- The main water network is weakened, resulting in limited access to water for the population.
- Frequent power cuts continue, adding to the suffering of residents.

Violations against civic activists, peaceful protests

Multiple attacks were monitored in areas of northern and eastern Syria under the control of the SDF, targeting civilian actors and media personnel. Among the most prominent violations:

- **March 1 – Ein al-Arab (Kobani):**

SDF's Revolutionary Youth [attacked](#) a civilian gathering in the KDP-Syria office during a ceremony organized by the Kurdish National Council to mark the 45th anniversary of the passing of Mullah Mustafa Barzani.

- **March 15 - Raqqa:**

Two members of SDF attack media activists and demonstrators during a protest at Al-Naim roundabout to mark the 13th anniversary of the start of the popular uprising. The two officers verbally insulted the participants and confiscated the equipment of some of the activists.

Prisoner Intractability Incidents

The prisons of the Internal Security Forces (Asayish) of SDF (Asayish) witnessed intractable incidents, which were met with violent measures. Among the most prominent incidents:

- **March 24 - Raqqa prison:**

Five prisoners were killed inside a prison designated for drug offenders after an attempted escape and intractability. Security officers opened fire on the prisoners, resulting in casualties.

- **March 28 - Juvenile Prison in Raqqa:**

Two prisoners were killed and others injured during an intractable attempt at the Juvenile Prison. Protection forces shot at prisoners after a clash inside the prison. The incident is still under investigation.

Humanitarian catastrophe continues after the fall of the Assad regime

Despite the downfall of Bashar Assad's regime, the humanitarian catastrophe in Syria has remained one of the worst globally as a result of [the protracted conflict](#) and grave violations that lasted for nearly 14 years. Key indicators include:

- 17 million people (more than 70 percent of the population) are in need of humanitarian support.
- More than 7 million people have been internally displaced.
- Nearly 6 million Syrian refugees live in other countries.
- 13 million people are severely food insecure.

B. Military operations and use of unlawful weapons

Military escalation and targeting of civilians

Since the beginning of 2024, SNHR has monitored a significant escalation in military operations carried out by the Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance forces, as ground and air bombardment focused on areas of northwestern Syria, including areas far from the contact lines, despite Idlib being subject to the Russian-Turkish ceasefire agreement since March 6, 2020.

These attacks included ones that did not distinguish between civilian and military targets, and monitoring showed direct targeting of vital civilian areas, resulting in:

- Casualties: Dozens of civilians, including women and children, were killed and injured.
- Material damage: Vital civilian facilities, including hospitals already suffering from shortages of staff and supplies, have been damaged, according to a statement issued on January 3, 2024, by Doctor Without Borders (MSF).

Use of internationally prohibited drones and weapons

Drones

From February to the end of 2024, Assad regime forces used explosive-laden (kamikaze) drones extensively. Many of the attacks were indiscriminate and targeted roads used by civilians, resulting in casualties.



Damage to a car following a drone attack by Assad regime forces on the vicinity of Qastoun village in Hama – February 22, 2024



Notable attacks

Northwest Syria

- **September 23 - Northern rural Idlib:**
 - Assad regime forces targeted Kafrayya town and its outskirts using shells and rockets that hit civilian homes, Martyrs' Park, and al-Hikma School.
 - **Outcome:** Five civilians killed (including two sisters, and an elderly woman), and 13 others (including six children and three women) were injured.

- **October 14-16 – Idlib, rural Latakia, and western Hama:**²
- Russian forces fixed-wing warplanes carried out daily intensive attacks with missiles, targeting civilian areas and IDPs camps.³
- In an October 23 [report](#) , SNHR documented the killing of 13 civilians (including 5 children) and the injury of 42 others.

Northeast Syria

- **August 9 – Eastern rural Deir Ez-Zour (al-Dahla and Jedid Bakkara):**

The Assad regime targeted civilian areas with artillery shells and launchers.

- **Outcome:**
 - **First wave:** Five civilians killed (including two children) and another civilian injured.
 - **Second wave:** Six civilians killed (including four children, one of them an infant) and injured four others.

- **August – al-Dahla abd Abu Hamam:**

Indiscriminate attacks with heavy fire on populated areas.

- **Outcome:** 11 civilians killed, including six children and four women.

Reciprocal shelling between the Assad regime and SDF

Reciprocal artillery shelling between Assad regime forces and Iranian militias on the one hand, and SDF on the other, escalated, especially in Deir Ez-Zour.

- **Outcome:** Civilian casualties and damage to residential buildings and public facilities.

Year-end attacks

At the end of November, Assad regime forces escalated their military attacks in northwestern Syria, resulting in civilian casualties and the destruction of vital facilities. Subsequently, it escalated further and included northern and central Syria starting Wednesday, November 27, when the Military Operations Command launched Operation Deter Aggression.

2. Areas in Idlib, as well as areas in northwestern rural Hama, western rural Aleppo, and rural Latakia. These areas were under the control of armed opposition factions and HTS at the time.

3. The bombardment focused on the western and northern outskirts of Idlib city, and later expanded to areas within eastern and northern rural Jisr al-Shoghour, in addition to al-Bara area and the outskirts of Joseph village in Jabal Al-Zawiya, in southern Idlib.

Notable attacks

- **30 November – Western outskirts of Aleppo:**

An air attack using a Sukhoi 24 aircraft [targeted Al-Basel Roundabout](#).

- **Outcome:** [62 civilians \(including eight children, six women, and two medical workers\) were killed and more](#) than 70 injured.

- **December 5-6, northern rural Homs:**

Artillery and missile forces targeted the cities and towns of Talbisa, al-Dara al-Kabira and Teir Ma'la.

- **Outcome:** [25 civilians killed](#) (including two children) and dozens injured.

Cluster munitions

On November 27, Assad regime forces resumed the use of internationally banned cluster munitions.

- In the popular market area of al-Atareb city in rural Aleppo, a cluster munition attack injured 11 civilians, including five children and two women.
- On this day, SNHR recorded two attacks in al-Atareb and Darat Ezza, which resulted in material damage and civilian casualties.

Incendiary munitions

Until the downfall of the Assad regime, we recorded several incendiary munition attacks targeting civilian areas and vital civilian facilities, killing one civilian and injuring others.

Barrel bombs

Since November 29, the Assad regime has reused barrel bombs which were dropped from helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.

General context

Despite the fall of Bashar Assad's regime in December 2024, the Assad regime's human suffering and grave crimes have continued over the 14 years since the outbreak of the popular uprising. Until the day of his fall, he continued to use unlawful weapons and carry out indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas, reflecting the gravity of the Syrian crisis, which remains one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

Indiscriminate attacks from outside Syrian territory

1. Attack on the Telita village, northwestern Idlib:

On January 15, long-range [rockets landed](#) on an empty building on the southern outskirts of Telita village in northwestern Idlib.

- **Source:** IRGC bases in the southern Iranian city of Khuzestan, [according to an IRGC officer](#).
- **Claim:** ISIS groups targeted in Idlib.
- **Results:**
 - **Casualties:** Two civilians who were near the site were injured.
 - **Material damage:** Significant destruction of the targeted building.
 - **Additional details:** SNHR's investigations showed that the targeted building was a former medical clinic, then turned into a military headquarters for HTS, before becoming a temporary shelter for displaced people, and later abandoned a year before the attack

2. Majdal Shams attack - occupied Syrian Golan

On July 27, a rocket attack hit the municipal stadium in the village of Majdal Shams in the occupied Syrian Golan.

- **Outcome:**
- **Human casualties:** 12 civilians killed, all children (four girls and eight boys).
- **Injuries:** 36 people injured, mostly children.
- **Damage:** Significant damage to the stadium and its surroundings.
- **Assessment:** SNHR issued a statement⁴ suspecting that Hezbollah was responsible for the attack.

3. Arman attack - southern Suwayda

On January 18, fixed-wing aircraft carried out an air attack on Arman town, southern Suwayda:

- **Possible source:** Aircraft coming from Jordanian territory, likely affiliated with the Jordanian army.
- **Pretext:** Combating the Captagon trade and drug traffickers.
- **Outcome:**
- **Casualties:** 10 civilians killed.

4. Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, July 29). Lebanese Group Hezbollah Evidently Responsible for the Killing of 12 Children in Majdal Shams Village. Accessed on March 15, 2025, via <https://snhr.org/blog/2024/07/29/lebanese-group-hezbollah-evidently-responsible-for-the-killing-of-12-children-in-majdal-shams-village/>

- **Assessment:** In its January 29 report, [SNHR confirmed](#) that Bashar Assad's regime bears direct responsibility for using civilian areas as cover for drug traffickers in coordination with Lebanese Hezbollah and Iranian militias.



↑ Destruction as a result of an attack by fixed-wing aircraft likely belonging to the Jordanian forces with rockets shelling a house in the center of Arman town/Suwayda, causing a massacre – January 18, 2024

4. Israeli attacks inside Syria

SNHR recorded attacks carried out by Israeli forces inside Syria, targeting military and civilian sites, killing a number of civilians, including women and children.

- Between January 1-December 8, 2024, we recorded the killing of 30 civilians, including 10 children and 10 women.
- Since December 8, we have recorded eight civilian deaths.

Russian forces

1. Sporadic attacks – February and March

- **Targeted areas:** Idlib and eastern rural Aleppo.
- **Results:**
 - Casualties: [Civilian deaths and injuries.](#)
 - Material damage: Civilian facilities were destroyed.
 - Nature: Russian air attacks were sudden and relatively far apart during this period.

2. Escalation in northwest Syria – October

- **Period:** Second half of October.

- **Attacks:**

Russian forces carried out several raids a day using fixed-wing aircraft and high-explosive missiles.

- **Targeted areas:** Idlib, northern rural Latakia, and western rural Hama.
- **Objectives:**
 - Urban areas
 - Camps for the displaced
 - Forest areas and contact lines.
- **Outcome:** A number of civilians were killed and injured, and vital facilities were destroyed.

3. Escalation after November 27 and until the downfall of the Assad regime:

- **Details:**

This period witnessed Russian air attacks that coincided with artillery and missile bombardment by regime forces.

- **Targeted areas:** Idlib, [Hama](#), Homs.
- **Objectives:** Populated areas and vital urban centers.
- **Outcome:**
 - [Civilians killed and injured.](#)
 - Destruction of civilian homes and structures.

4. Attack on northern rural Homs – December

- **Details:**

- **December 5-6:** Joint Russian and Syrian attacks targeting the cities and towns of Tablisa, al-Dar al-Kabira, and Teir M'ala.
- **Outcome:** [25 civilians killed, including two children, and dozens of civilians, including women and children, were injured.](#)

Use of unlawful weapons

- **Cluster munitions and incendiary weapons:**

SNHR monitored two attacks using cluster munitions and three attacks using incendiary weapons by Assad regime forces.

- **Outcome:** Civilians killed and injured, spreading panic among the population.
- **Details:** No military movements were recorded in the targeted areas during the incendiary weapons attacks.

- **Barrel bombs**

After a hiatus of about four and a half years, the Assad regime has reused barrel bombs which were dropped from helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft.

One notable incident: On December 5, 2024, helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the al-Arba'in neighborhood in northeastern Hama city, killing five civilians.

- **Chemical weapons:**

SNHR documented no chemical weapons attacks in 2024.

Conclusion

The year 2024 witnessed an intense escalation in military operations and indiscriminate attacks targeting civilians in Syria. These attacks included the use of internationally banned weapons and massacres that claimed innocent lives, reflecting the continuing grave violations of international humanitarian law.

Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

- **Escalation of shelling and attacks:**

SDF has intensified its military attacks, targeting areas in northern Syria under the control of armed opposition factions/(SNA), as well as areas where Assad regime forces and pro-Assad militias were stationed.

- **Outcome:**
- [Civilians killed and injured.](#)
- Significant damage to property and vital civilian centers.

- **Most prominent attacks:**

1. February 9 – Euphrates River Water Station, Eastern Jarablous

[SDF personnel targeted the station](#) using heavy machine guns, damaging the solar energy system that pumps drinking water to the city of Jarablus and its countryside.

February 28 – Popular market in al-Mayadeen, eastern Deir Ez-Zour

Artillery shelling killed an 18-year-old civilian and injured three others, in addition to minor damage to [market facilities](#).

August 9 – al-Boulayk village, Deir Ez-Zour:

SDF artillery fired shells at the village, killing a woman, identified as Feryal Fares Al-Ghadban, and a girl, identified as Razan Bassam Al-Okla, in addition to wounding seven civilians (including five children and a woman).

- **Sniper attacks**

In the wake of the launch of Operation Deter Aggression and Dawn of Freedom by the Military Operations Command and the SNA, the SDF deployed snipers in residential buildings in Aleppo city.

- **Sniping attacks:** We have been able to document the killing of 10 people, including two children, by SDF snipers since the beginning of the year.
- **After the launch of Operation Deter Aggression**
 - Twenty-seven civilians, including two IYD humanitarian workers, were killed by SDF personnel, either through sniper or ambushes by military groups.
 - Accident sites: The outskirts of the neighborhoods of al-Ashrafiya, al-Layramoun, and Bustan al-Qasr

For more details on these operations, see this [report](#) released by SNHR.

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)

January 1 - Nubbel and al-Zahra, western Aleppo:

[An HTS rocket launcher targeted](#) the towns of Nubbl and al-Zahra, which were under the control of Assad regime forces at the time.

- **Outcome:** Three civilians from the same family were killed, including a girl and her mother.

Armed Opposition Factions/Syrian National Army (SNA)

December 5 – rural Manbij, eastern Aleppo:

[Armed opposition/SNA factions fired artillery shells](#) at civilian areas, killing and wounding civilians.

- **Context:** The incident took place against the backdrop of military operations in northern Syria.

Lawlessness in most areas of Syria

Killings by unidentified parties

The year 2024 witnessed widespread lawlessness in most areas of Syria, where SNHR recorded [many killings](#) by unidentified parties. In addition, [killings](#) carried out by unidentified persons or entities have been repeated in various regions of Syria, reflecting the lack of security and the weak ability of the controlling forces to impose order and protect civilians.

Bombings

- **Remote and suicide/forced bombings**

Several remote bombing incidents were recorded in 2024. Such attack took place in [the governorates of Aleppo, Daraa, and Damascus](#), with varying forces controlling the targeted areas.

- **Outcome:**
 - Civilian deaths and injuries.
 - Damage to vital civilian facilities.
- **Responsibility:**

It is difficult to identify the perpetrators of such operations. However, the dominant powers have a responsibility to protect civilians, investigate incidents, and make their findings public.

Landmines and remnants of war

● Continued casualties:

Explosive remnants of shelling, unexploded ordnance and landmines killed dozens of civilians, including children and women.

● Most affected areas:

- The governorates of Deir Ez-Zour, Daraa, [Aleppo](#), [Homs](#), Idlib, [Hama and Raqqa](#).
- [A large number of](#) incidents took place in areas under the control of Bashar Assad's regime forces.

● Challenges:

- It is difficult to determine who is responsible for planting landmines, given the multiplicity of forces that have controlled these areas.
- The absence of clear efforts by the controlling forces to remove or uncover landmines, fence off dangerous areas and warn residents against them.

● Statistics:

SNHR documented dozens of mine-related incidents during the year.

Turkish air attacks on SDF areas

● Timeline

SNHR recorded Turkish air attacks on SDF-controlled areas in January, May, and December of 2024.

● Nature of attacks

- Most of them were carried out using remote drones.
- The attacks targeted civilian facilities, such as electrical and oil plants.

● Outcome

- Significant material damage to the targeted facilities.
- Civilian casualties in some incidents.

Findings

Security events in 2024 highlight the continued suffering of civilians in Syria from increased lawlessness, along with constant threats of landmines and remnants of war, indiscriminate bombings, and tit-for-tat airstrikes between warring parties. The responsibility to protect civilians and mitigate these abuses lies with the controlling forces, which lack real efforts to protect the population and secure the areas.

C. Israeli attacks and incursions into Syrian territory

1. Attacks before the fall of the Assad regime (until December 8, 2024)

• Escalation of Israeli airstrikes

In 2024, SNHR monitored a significant escalation in Israeli air attacks compared to 2023. These attacks targeted several Syrian governorates, including:

- [Aleppo](#), [Homs](#), [Damascus](#), [Deir Ez-Zour](#), [Hama](#), [Daraa](#), and [Rural Damascus](#).
- The attacks focused mainly on military targets belonging to Bashar Assad's regime forces and pro-Iranian militias, but also caused civilian deaths and injuries and the destruction of civilian property.

• Civilian neighborhoods targeted

SNHR recorded several incidents involving the targeting of residential buildings in populated areas. Among the most prominent of these incidents are:

• February 7 – al-Hamra neighborhood, Homs:

A fixed-wing aircraft, believed to be Israeli, targeted [a residential building](#).

Outcome: Six civilians were killed⁵, including a woman, in addition to military personnel (some of them Iranian).

Damage: Almost complete destruction of the building.

• October 8 – al-Mazza neighborhood, Damascus

Aircraft likely to be Israeli targeted the al-Sheikh Saad area al-Mazza neighborhood with missiles that hit a residential building in the “14 Buildings” area.

Outcome: [Eight civilians were killed, including four children \(three girls and one boy\)](#), with one of the female victims being a doctor. Eleven others were wounded.

Damage: Heavy destruction of the building and its surroundings.

Documentation: SNHR released a statement⁶ condemning the incident.

5. On February 22, 2024, Sudipto Mukerjee, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria ad interim, expressed in [a statement](#) his concern about missile attacks on a residential building in the Kafrsouse neighborhood of Damascus. [\(we observed an attack on a residential building in the Kafrsouse neighborhood of Damascus on February 21\)](#). The statement noted, ‘I am gravely concerned about yesterday’s missile attacks on a residential building in Kafrsouse neighborhood in Damascus, less than 250 meters from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) office. The attacks resulted in two deaths and one injury.’

6. Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, October 10). SNHR Condemns Israeli Airstrike on al-Mazza Neighborhood in Damascus City that Resulted in a Massacre Against Civilians. Accessed on March 28, 2025 via <https://bit.ly/4c8yyK9>

- **Incursion into the occupied Syrian Golan:**

On September 15, 2024, Israeli occupation forces, backed by tanks and bulldozers, advanced 200 meters deep into Syrian territory in western Jubata al-Khashab town in Quneitra governorate.

- **Most notable violations**

On October 11, Israeli occupation forces bulldozed agricultural land near the Konda town and began building what they called a 'security fence'.

- observation posts and the military road «Suva 53» east of the 1974 disengagement line were also established.

- **Assessment:**

SNHR released a report⁷ on October 15 condemning these actions, considering them a violation of international law prohibiting the annexation of territory by force.

- The failure of the Assad regime in protecting Syria's independence and unity has contributed to encouraging Israel to expand its occupation.

2. Attacks after the fall of the Assad regime of Bashar Assad (after December 8, 2024)

After the fall of the Assad regime, Israeli occupation forces launched one of the deadliest military operations in their history against Syria, which saw about **500 airstrikes** targeting more than 130 locations.

- **Targets:**

- Airports and military bases.
- Armories and air defense systems.
- Weapons production sites and military infrastructure.

- **Impact**

- About 85 percent of Syria's military capabilities, were destroyed, according to Israeli reports.
- The strikes covered almost all governorates, including Damascus, Daraa, Quneitra, Homs, Latakia, and Hasaka.

7. Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, October 15). SNHR Condemns Israeli Occupation of Syrian Lands in Quneitra in the Syrian Golan Since September 15, 2024. Accessed on March 28, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/4cjdGA4>

- **Land incursion**

Israeli occupation forces has taken full control of the buffer zone, including the summit of Mount Hermon and several towns and villages.

Civilian casualties

Despite Israel's claims of targeting military sites, SNHR recorded at least eight civilian deaths in these attacks.

3. The policy of imposing a fait accompli and Israeli violations

Justifications

Israel has long justified its attacks by confronting the Iranian threat. With the fall of the Assad regime, however, and the withdrawal of most Iranian militias, these justifications are no longer valid.

- **SNHR called on Israel to:**
 - Stop attacks immediately.
 - Fully withdraw from Syrian territory.
 - Compensate the Syrian state for losses.
 - Return the occupied Golan.

- **Violations of international law**

These attacks and incursions are a flagrant violation of international laws, including the 1974 disengagement agreements.

SNHR released a statement on December 14 entitled:⁸ 'SNHR Condemns Israel's Attacks and Occupation of Syrian Territory, and Calls on the Arab League and the International Community to Take Urgent Action'

8. Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, December 14). SNHR Condemns Israel's Attacks and Occupation of Syrian Territory, and Calls on the Arab League and the International Community to Take Urgent Action. Accessed on March 28, 2025, via <https://bit.ly/3EagNvk>

4. The impact of Israeli attacks on Syria's transition

• Weakening the Syrian army:

Israel's strategy has focused on destroying Syria's military infrastructure, weakening the new Syrian government's ability to rebuild its army and manage the transition.

• Complexity of the regional situation

These attacks further complicate the political and military situation in the region, while threatening international peace and security.

Conclusion:

Israeli attacks inside Syria, before and after the fall of the Assad regime, represent grave violations of international law and a challenge to Syria's sovereignty and unity. As SNHR remains committed to documenting these crimes, we call for urgent international action to put an end to these blatant violations and ensure respect for the rights of the Syrian people.

D. Laws and decrees that strengthened the grip of Bashar Assad's regime and restricted freedoms

1. Act No. 19 of 2024: Media Control

On April 23, 2024, the Assad regime [promulgated Act No. 19](#), which created the Ministry of Information to replace the ministry established by Legislative Decree No. 186 of 1961.

• Extended Powers

- Control all media sectors, including TV production, digital media, and social media.
- Censorship of the private press and imported publications.
- Cracking down on dramatic production.

- **Violations**

- The Act enshrines executive control over the media, undermining freedom of opinion and expression.
- It contradicts the 2012 Constitution, which establishes freedom of expression and independence of press in Articles 42 and 43.

Report by SNHR

SNHR released a report on June 13 entitled: [‘The Syrian Regime’s Law No. 19 of 2024 on Establishing a Media Ministry Blatantly Violates Freedom of Media, Opinion, and Expression’](#) that discusses the most prominent articles that contradict international human rights standards.

2. The 2024 People’s Assembly elections: a tool used by the Assad regime to consolidate control and repress the people

Despite the Assad regime’s grave violations, People’s Assembly elections were held on July 15, 2024.

- **Outcome**

The Baath Party-led National Unity List won 74 percent of the seats, reflecting the dominance of the Assad regime’s security apparatus security services.

- **Violations**

- The elections took place while the Assad regime had no control over 37 percent of Syria.
- More than half of the Syrian people are forcibly displaced.
- Figures involved in war crimes and corruption were elected to the People’s Assembly, including officers and militia leaders.

Report by SNHR

On July 24, SNHR released a report entitled: [‘The Syrian Regime’s 2024 Parliamentary Elections Are Illegitimate and Predetermined by the Assad regime’s Security Apparatus’](#)

- **Findings:** The elections violated UN Security Council Resolutions 2118 and 2254, which call for a comprehensive political solution that begins with a transitional government and the drafting of a new constitution.

3. The Baath Party and the control of unions: the expulsion of the head of the Agricultural Engineers Syndicate:

On July 17, 2024, the Central Command of the Baath Party issued Decision No. 37, which dismissed the head of the Agricultural Engineers Syndicate, Abdul Kafi al-Khalaf, and appointed Ali Saadat as a replacement.

- **Apparent reasons:** Restructuring of unions.
- **The real reasons:** Strengthening the Baath Party's control over professional unions.
- **Legal Analysis:**
 - The decision violates the freedom of trade union action guaranteed by the Syrian constitution and international law.
 - It also constitutes an infringement on the jurisdiction of the General Conference of the Agricultural Engineers Association.

Report by SNHR:

On August 8, a report was released by SNHR entitled: '[The Baath Party is the Syrian Regime's Instrument to Control Trade Unions in Syria](#)'

The report asserted that these interventions perpetuate individual rule and confiscate the independence of trade unions.

4. Appointing Persons Involved in War Crimes to Senior Positions

On September 23, 2024, Bashar Assad issued a decree forming a new government that included 28 ministers, including 15 people designated for international sanctions for their involvement in war crimes.

- **Notable names:**
 - Interior Minister Mohammed Khaled al-Rahmoun.
 - Defense Minister Ali Mahmoud Abbas.

- **Systematic Policy:**

Recycling figures implicated in abuses to enhance loyalty within security and military institutions.

5. Amnesty Decree No. 27 of 2024: Exclusion of Political Detainees

On September 22, 2024, the Assad regime promulgated [Amnesty Decree No. 27](#), which:

- Included minor crimes such as military desertion and misdemeanors.
- Excluded political detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, especially those detained on over expression of opinion and in connection to the conflict.

- **Results**

- No change in the Assad regime's policies has been introduced.

According to data from SNHR as of August 2024:

136,614 detainees and forcibly disappeared remain in Assad regime custody, including 3,698 children and 8,504 women.

After the fall of the Assad regime and the opening of prisons, the fate of **112,414** forcibly disappeared remains unknown.

Legal analysis of the decree

- The decree reflects a selective policy aimed solely at relieving pressure on the judicial system and prisons.
- The exclusion of serious crimes such as those named in the Counterterrorism Act and Counter-Cybercrime Act laws confirms the formal nature of the decree.

Reactions

On September 26, Human Rights Watch described the amnesty as a "[hollow](#)" step that does not provide a solution to the detainee crisis.

Conclusion

- The laws and decrees issued by the Assad regime in 2024 represent a continuation of repressive policies.
- These policies are aimed at consolidating autocracy, restricting freedoms, suppressing dissent, and controlling state institutions.
- SNHR asserts that these violations contradict the Syrian constitution, domestic laws, and international standards.

E. Violations against children and women in Syria

1. Violations against children

Escalating grave violations since 2011

Syrian children have been subjected to increasing violations since March 2011 by all parties to the conflict. These violations included:

- **Killing and injuries:** Military operations have killed thousands of children and maimed others with permanent injuries.
- **Arrest and enforced disappearance:**

As of the end of 2024, at least **3,925 children** remain in detention or under enforced disappearance. Nearly 59 percent of whom have been forcibly disappeared by Assad regime forces.

- **Torture and sexual violence:** The use of children as a means of repression, with horrific cases of torture and sexual violence documented.
- **Conscription**
 - Various parties, especially SDF, have recruited children through inducement or coercion.
 - SNHR documented the SDF's conscription of 83 children in 2024 alone, 79 of whom are still under recruitment.

- Additional details
 - SDF established training camps for children in remote areas, preventing children from communicating with their families.
 - Families reported being threatened to prevent them from filing complaints.

Landmines and remnants of war

- There have been a widespread proliferation of landmines and cluster munitions in conflict zones, [with children being the most vulnerable group to these lethal dangers](#).
- Landmines represent [a long-term threat](#), since they attract children with their bright colors.

Humanitarian conditions in the camps

Of all of Syria, the northwestern region remains the most crowded with IDPs camps. Children make up about 46 percent of camp population.

- Camp conditions
 - Lack of hygiene services and safe shelter.
 - Repeated incidents caused by heat waves and cold, leading to damage to tents and the death of some children.

In 2024, the number of children [in need of assistance](#) rose to **7.5 million**, with more than **650,000 children** under the age of five suffering from chronic malnutrition.

International and UN reports

- **Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI):**

[In a report released on March 19](#), the COI documented violations against children in SDF-controlled areas, including conscription.

- **Human Rights Watch (HRW)**

On October 2, the HRW confirmed the continued recruitment of children by the SDF-affiliated Revolutionary Youth Movement, calling it a “war crime.”

- **UN Annual Report (June 2024):**

1,574 grave violations against children in Syria were verified in 2023, affecting 1,549 children.⁹

Psychological and social effects

The ongoing violations have left children with deep psychological scars, depriving them of a safe environment or hope for a future that respects their rights.

2. Violations against women

Patterns of grave violations

Since 2011, Syrian women have faced unprecedented levels of violence and violations, including:

- **Extrajudicial killings.**
- **Arbitrary detention and torture.**
- **Enforced disappearance:** These practices are most seen by Assad regime forces and other parties, tearing thousands of families apart.
- **Sexual violence:** Sexual violence is systematically practiced as a means of terror and repression.
- **Conscription:** Especially in areas controlled by SDF.

The impact of violence on women

- **Families and Community**
 - The violence has torn families apart and left children uncared for, adding to the suffering of women as single breadwinners.
 - Widows and wives of forcibly disappeared persons face significant challenges to obtaining their housing and property rights.

9. UN (UN). (2023, June 5). Children and armed conflict. Accessed on March 28, 2025, via: <https://undocs.org/ar/A/77/895>

- **Additional challenges for women activists**

- Women activists face constant threats, from defamation to arbitrary detention.
- Their freedoms were severely restricted, hampering their role in providing assistance to society.

Report by SNHR

On March 8, SNHR released a report¹⁰ in observance of International Women's Day, in which it discussed the harsh conditions faced by Syrian women, with recommendations to support their rights.

Social and psychological impact:

Violence against women has devastating consequences at the societal level, where:

- It weakened social cohesion.
- It has had profound psychological and economic impact, while denying women employment opportunities and community involvement.
- The challenges have been exacerbated by lack of security, making access to protection and fundamental rights nearly impossible.

Ongoing challenges in 2024

- Continued violations against women by all parties to the conflict.
- Various violations were recorded including killing, torture, maiming, and conscription, further deepening their daily suffering.

Findings

- Children and women are the groups most affected by the Syrian conflict, having been subjected to grave violations by all sides.
- **Children:** Killed, injured, recruited, deprived of education and shelter, with landmines and remnants of war still threatened.
- **Women:** They face systematic violence with its physical, psychological, and social dimensions, which enhances their role as victims in an environment that lacks security and justice.

10. Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, March 8). On International Women's Day, Growing Protests and Worsening Access to Basic Rights for Women in Syria. Accessed on March 28, 2025, via <https://bit.ly/3FVNBdY>

F. Forced displacement in Syria: causes and repercussions

1. General context

Since the outbreak of the conflict in March 2011, the Syrian conflict has become the world's leading cause of forced displacement. As of the end of 2023:

- **7.2 million** IDPs inside Syria.
- **6.7 million** Syrian refugees outside the country, the largest refugee population worldwide.¹¹

In 2024, grave violations by all parties to the conflict continued, with escalating violence and military operations, leading to new waves of displacement.

2. Causes of forced displacement

Ongoing violence and indiscriminate shelling:

- Indiscriminate attacks, especially by Syrian-Russian alliance forces, have destroyed towns and villages, making life impossible.

Security prosecutions and arbitrary detention

- The Assad regime's security services continued to pursue and arbitrarily arrest dissidents, prompting many to flee their areas in search of safety.

Siege and forced displacement policies

- Prolonged sieges imposed by Assad regime forces on many areas, followed by the imposition of forced reconciliation agreements, led to the displacement of thousands of residents.
- The COI concluded that pro-Assad regime forces may have committed crimes against humanity through forced displacement.

11. UNHCR. Mid-2023 trends. <https://www.unhcr.org/mid-year-trends>

Among the most prominent causes of displacement movements that we monitored in 2024

Military escalation from various parties:

- At the beginning and middle of the year, the escalation of military attacks by the Syrian-Russian alliance forces, which targeted northwestern Syria, caused the displacement of hundreds of families.
- The escalation of military operations by Assad regime and Russian forces that started on October 14, 2024, in northwest Syria has displaced some 1,951 families.
- In May, al-Mayadeen city, which was under the control of the Assad regime, witnessed a movement of displacement towards the Deir Ez-Zour city, against the backdrop of the targeting of the city in ground attacks by SDF.
- The tit-for-tat attacks by Assad regime forces and SDF along the banks of the Euphrates River in Deir Ez-Zour caused the displacement of families from villages such as:
 - Theyban, al-Kishkiya, and Abu Hamam and others within SDF-controlled areas at the time.
 - Al-Boulayl, al-Tub, and Buqrus and others under the Assad regime's control at the time.
- After the Military Operations Command launched Operation Deter Aggression on November 27 and until the fall of the Assad regime, sporadic displacement movements, some temporary, were detected in several areas of northern and central Syria.
- On December 4, a military operation launched by the SDF to "Recapture the Seven Villages East of the Euphrates" led to the displacement of about 200 families from the villages of Jdeed Ekidat and al-Ji'a in western Deir Ez-Zour.

Targeting IDP camps

SNHR recorded [deliberate targeting of IDP camps](#), [both regular and irregular camps](#), [resulting](#) in additional waves of displacement.

• **The conflict in Lebanon and its impact on displacement**

By October 16, 2024, more than 4,000 people had fled the conflict in Lebanon to northwest Syria, 80 percent of them women and children.

- **Temporary return of some IDPs**

Despite the massive displacement, some 400,000 people had returned to their areas in Hama and Aleppo governorates by the end of November 2024, most of whom were not camp residents.

4- Displacement-related violations

Systematic bombardment

- **Targeting civilians during their displacement, as in:**

Al-Mayadeen, May 2024: Families displaced towards Deir Ez-Zour as a result of attacks by SDF.

Infighting

Clashes among opposition/SNA factions east of Aleppo have temporarily displaced families from areas close to clashes.

Multilateral violence

The displacement has been exacerbated by the conflict between SDF and Assad regime forces, backed by pro-Assad Iranian militias, displacing thousands on both sides of the Euphrates River.

5- Statistics according to the OCHA

- **Internal displacement**

- More than **730,000 people** have been displaced by military operations since November 27.
- **400,000 IDPs** return to their areas by the end of the year.

Asylum

Thousands of Syrians have fled to neighboring countries, mainly Lebanon and Türkiye.

Major areas of displacement

Northwest Syria and Deir Ez-Zour have been the hardest hit by displacement and clashes.

Findings

- Forced displacement in Syria is an ongoing humanitarian tragedy exacerbated in 2024 by escalating violence.
- Grave violations make the safe return impossible for millions of IDPs and refugees, threatening their basic rights and future.
- SNHR stresses the need for the international community to intervene to put an end to the violations, and to work on sustainable solutions that ensure the safe return of the displaced, while holding accountable those involved in the crimes of forced displacement.

Living and humanitarian conditions of IDPs

General humanitarian context: Worsening of the crisis

- At a UN Security Council session held on February 27, 2024, it was [noted](#) that 16.7 million people in Syria, nearly three-quarters of Syria's overall population, are in need of humanitarian assistance, the largest number since the beginning of the conflict.
- Humanitarian needs are increasing as a result of economic decline, as well as shrinking humanitarian support, leaving millions of Syrians facing catastrophic living conditions.

IDPs' suffering in northern and western Syria

Economic and social conditions

• Severe economic decline

- Lack of job opportunities and low purchasing power, especially for IDPs in camps.
- The lack of international funding has led to a reduction in much-needed relief aid.

• Northwestern Syria

- Northwestern Syria houses the largest proportion of camps countrywide.
- Children make up about 46 percent of the camp population. These children suffer in the absence of basic infrastructure, health and education services.
- IDPs suffer with extreme weather conditions (cold and heat waves), leading to the death of children and damage to camps in numerous incidents.

• Landmines and remnants of war

- All parties to the conflict, especially the Assad regime, have laid landmines over large areas, posing a constant danger to IDPs, especially children, because they are attracted by the bright colors of these munitions.
- Deteriorating living conditions:
 - Food insecurity and shelter persist in areas of displacement.
 - According to UN reports, **730,000 people** have been displaced since November 27, 2024, in light of military operations, straining the already-limited resources.

• Situation in the camps

- More than **1,500 camps** and shelters in northwest Syria lack the most basic necessities of life.
- 70 percent of IDPs live in dire conditions, with **800,000 people**, mostly women and children, living in dilapidated tents.¹²

Impact of weather conditions

• In winter

Rainstorms and snowstorms

The floods have washed away and flooded tents, further displacing thousands of families.¹³

Extreme cold:

Displaced people suffer from a lack of heating, leading to winter illnesses, especially among children and the elderly.

12. See: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2024, September 17). Northwest Syria: 2024 - 2025 Winterization Plan. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/northwest-syria-2024-2025-winterization-plan>

13. See for instance:

- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, February 20). Rainfall causes material damage in an irregular IDPs camp in N. Aleppo, February 19, 2024. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/41R2Opu>
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, February 17). Rainstorm hit NW. Syria, causes material damage to IDP camps, February 16, 2024. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/4j1PWIS>
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, February 20). Rainfall causes material damage to IDPs camps in N. Idlib, February 19, 2024. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/43rMzQT>
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, January 15). Heavy rains cause damage in al-Hawl Camp in E. Hasaka, January 13, 2024. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/42a3e98>

- **In summer**

High temperatures

High temperatures lead to the spread of diseases caused by heat and lack of potable water.

Camp fires

Due to reliance on refined fuels for heating, or the use of primitive means of cooking.



Water and mud pools formed between IDPs tents in al-Jabal Camp near Jarablos city in eastern Aleppo following heavy rainfall – February 14, 2024

Shrinking humanitarian aid

- **Lack of funding for water, sanitation and hygiene services (WASH)**

By July 2024, [200 camps](#) were at risk of losing these basic services.

- **Water cut off from Al-Shahba Camps**

Since February 2024, UNICEF has stopped providing safe drinking water to some [2,000 IDP](#) families, exacerbating the suffering of the population.

OCHA Winterization Plan for 2024-2025

An OCHA [report](#) released on September 17, 2024, noted that some 5 million people face another harsh winter, as floods and storms continue to affect displaced populations.

Conditions in Northeast Syria Camps

- **Al-Hawl Camp**

- The camp houses 60,000 people (at the time of this writing) mostly women and children.
- 93 percent of residents are women and children, suffering from:

- **Lack of health care and education:**

Children suffer from [psychiatric](#) disorders such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

- **Violence and insecurity**

SNHR has documented murders and violence targeting children.

Security Operations

- In January 2024, SDF launched a security campaign under the pretext of pursuing ISIS cells. US-led International Coalition forces were involved in the campaign.
- The suspension of humanitarian activities during the campaign has greatly affected the camp's residents, and the repercussions have continued even after the campaign ended in February 2024.

Human rights reports

- **Amnesty International**

In its April 17 [report](#), Amnesty International detention of **56,000 people**, including **30,000 children**, in al-Hawl camp and other centers as “the large-scale violation of the rights of more than 56,000 people in their custody.”

Conditions in al-Rukban camp

Located on the Syrian-Jordanian border, the camp was home to about **7,500 people** (as of before December 8) who lived under a tight siege imposed by the Assad regime and Iranian militias since April 2024.

- **Living conditions:**

- Flour shortage put only furnace in the camp out of commission.
- High fuel prices increased the suffering of the population in the winter.
- Lack of medical services

The camp's residents had to grapple with the absence of doctors. They had to depend on a medical center staffed by nurses who are not qualified to perform surgeries.

- **International appeals**

On September 23, Amnesty International [called on](#) the United States to provide urgent assistance to displaced people trapped in the camp.

- **Siege lifted and the camp was emptied after the fall of the Assad regime on December 8**

After the fall of Bashar Assad's regime on December 8, 2024, the vast majority of camp residents were able to leave the camp.

Repercussions of the lack of international funding

Since 2020, relief operations in Syria have gradually declined as a result of a lack of funding, affecting vital sectors

- **World Food Programme (WFP):** In December 2023, the WFP announced cuts in its assistance across Syria.
- **UNICEF** stopped subsidizing water supplies in several areas, adding to the suffering of displaced people.

Humanitarian suffering intensifies in Syria in 2024 amid dwindling resources

- **Deteriorating humanitarian conditions:** the figures that reflect the tragedy

According to a UN Security Council session held on February 27, 2024, 16.7 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance, the highest number since the beginning of the conflict, representing nearly three-quarters of Syria's overall population.

- The last quarter of the year saw an escalation in Syrian-Russian alliance attacks on northwest Syria, displacing thousands of families.
- By October 16, over 4,000 people had fled the conflict in Lebanon to northwest Syria, with more than 80 percent of the displaced being women and children.

- **The funding crisis and its devastating consequences**

- Severe funding shortfall in the Humanitarian Response Plan
- By November 2024, [less than a third](#) of the Humanitarian Response Plan had been funded.
- This deficit has led to:
 - Reducing health, education and food assistance services.
 - Disrupt the ability of humanitarian organizations to meet basic needs.

- **Shifting international political attention**

As global attention shifted towards new conflicts, hundreds of thousands of Syrians were in danger of being forgotten, adding to their suffering.

Conclusions

- The humanitarian situation in Syria in 2024 reached deteriorated to unprecedented levels, with IDPs' suffering exacerbated by escalating violence, declining international support, and severe weather conditions.
- The situation in Syria needs an urgent and coordinated humanitarian response to ensure that essential assistance is provided to millions of people in need, especially those displaced in camps living in catastrophic conditions.

Continuing waves of displacement and asylum

The main causes of refugee waves

- **Grave human rights violations continue**

Including killing, torture, enforced disappearances, and sexual violence, especially by the Assad regime and its allies.

- **Deteriorating economic and security conditions**

Fourteen years of conflict have left Syria in a catastrophic state, with residents suffering from a lack of basic services.

Risks on migration routes

Despite the restrictions refugees face, attempts at irregular migration have continued.

According to a report issued by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on March 26, 2024:¹⁴

- Between 2014 and 2023, 1,270 Syrian nationals died while attempting to migrate.
- Syrians rank fourth in the world in deaths on migration routes.

An April 2024 report by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)¹⁵ confirmed that Syria is unsafe for the return of refugees due to continued violence and violations.

UN reports and international statements

Situation of Syrian refugees

An OHCHR report issued on February 13, 2024,¹⁶ documented the grave violations suffered by refugees returning to Syria, most notably:

- Arbitrary detention, torture, and sexual violence.
- Enforced disappearance and abduction.

The report proved with a rigorous investigative methodology that Syria is unsafe for the return of refugees.

14. International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2024, March 26). A Decade of Documenting Migrant Deaths. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://mena.iom.int/news/one-three-migrant-deaths-occurs-en-route-while-fleeing-conflict-iom-report>

15. European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). (2024, April). Country Guidance: Syria. Accessed on March 29, 2025, via: <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/country-guidance-syria-april-2024>

16. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2024, February 13). The Dire Human Rights Situation Facing Syrian Returnees. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/syrian-returnees-subjected-gross-human-rights-violations-and-abuses-un>

Statements after the fall of the Assad regime

On December 10, 2024, in the wake of the fall of Bashar Assad's regime on December 8, 2024, UN special envoy to Syria, Geir Otto Pedersen, stated that Syria remains unsafe for the return of refugees.

Grave violations and challenges for returnees: Syrian refugees returning from Lebanon as an example

1. The deteriorating situation in Lebanon and its impact on Syrian refugees

From September 23, 2024, the security and humanitarian situation in Lebanon has escalated as a result of intensive Israeli airstrikes, which targeted several locations inside the country.

- These attacks killed hundreds of civilians, including 111 Syrian refugees. Of these 111 Syrian refugees, 39 were children and 20 were women, according to what SNHR has been able to document.
- This deteriorating situation has led to a severe humanitarian crisis, with Syrian refugees in Lebanon experiencing:
 - Food insecurity.
 - Lack of adequate housing.
 - Deterioration of health services.

2. Returning to Syria was still a risky option

In the absence of safe options in Lebanon, many Syrian refugees have been forced to return to Syria¹⁷ despite continued violations at home.

- From September to the end of October 2024, SNHR documented the arrest of 26 returnees, including a woman, by Assad regime forces. One of them died under torture in detention centers operated by the Assad regime.

17. On this issue, see statement by UN Special Envoy to Syria Geir Pedersen: Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria (OSES). (2024, October 7). Statement Attributable to the UN Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Ms. Najat Rochdi following the Humanitarian Task Force. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://specialevoyssyria.unmis-sions.org/statement-attributable-united-nations-deputy-special-envoy-syria-ms-najat-rochdi-following>

3. Patterns of violations faced by returnees

There were many violations against returning refugees, including:

- **Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance:** The Assad regime uses these tactics to intimidate returnees.
- **Torture and degrading treatment:** Deaths under torture were recorded in detention centers.
- **Conscription:** Returnees were forced to join the Assad regime's military forces.
- **Financial extortion:** Returnees were exploited to obtain funds in exchange for their release or allowing them to cross crossings.
- **Discrimination in humanitarian aid:** Aid is used as leverage to control returnees and bring them to their knees.

4. Report by SNHR: A Dreadful Homecoming

On October 29, 2024, SNHR issued a detailed report entitled, 'A Dreadful Homecoming: Widespread Human Rights Violations Against Syrian Refugees Returning from Lebanon'¹⁸. The report highlighted:

- Increased risk when crossing between different control zones.
- Unfair policies such as requiring a sponsor or conducting heightened security checks for returnees.
- Returnees face dire humanitarian conditions, including shortages of housing, food and health care.

5. International reports warn of consequences of refolement

In a report released on October 30, 2024, entitled 'Syrians Fleeing Lebanon Risk Repression Upon Return',¹⁹ HRW confirmed that:

- Returnees face great difficulties in knowing the fate of their detained loved ones.
- Syria remains unsafe for returnees and has called for permanent UN monitoring.

18. Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, October 29). A Dreadful Homecoming: Widespread Human Rights Violations Against Syrian Refugees Returning from Lebanon. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/446LnTd>

19. Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2024, October 30). Syrians Fleeing Lebanon Risk Repression Upon Return. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/10/30/syrians-fleeing-lebanon-risk-repression-upon-return>

Refugee deportations and refoulement practices of asylum seekers violate international law

1. Deportations and refoulements: a violation of international law

The practice of forcible deportation of Syrian refugees, as in Lebanon and Cyprus, constitutes a clear violation of international law, in particular:

- 1951 Refugee Convention.
- Inhuman treatment is prohibited in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights.

2. Practices of States Hosting Syrian Refugees

- **Cyprus and Lebanon as examples:**
- Cypriot and Lebanese authorities have worked together to forcibly return Syrian refugees to Syria, where they have faced arrest or extortion.
- On September 4, 2024, HRW²⁰ called on the European Union to review border control funding to ensure respect for human rights.
- The European Court of Human Rights ruled that the return of Syrian asylum seekers to Lebanon constituted a flagrant violation of the prohibition of inhuman treatment and collective expulsion.

3. Responsibility of Governments and Involved Parties

Governments carrying out refoulement bear legal responsibility for violations suffered by returnees, including:

- Torture, murder and enforced disappearance.
- Failure to respect customary international law prohibiting the refoulment of refugees to places where they may be at risk.

4. SNHR's demands

- Cease forcibly returning refugees to Syria, given the lack of safety and systematic continuation of violations.
- Obligate host countries to respect international laws and ensure that Syrian refugees are provided with protection and assistance.
- Impose UN monitoring on the situation of returnees and establish an international accountability mechanism.

20. Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2024. October 30). "I Can't Go Home, Stay Here, or Leave"

Pushbacks and Pullbacks of Syrian Refugees from Cyprus and Lebanon. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/09/04/i-cant-go-home-stay-here-or-leave/pushbacks-and-pullbacks-syrian-refugees-cyprus>

G. The Assad regime's exploitation of state documents as a tool of repression and war financing

1. Systematic control of the issuance of official documents

The Assad regime has used state documents,²¹ which are a basic right of citizens, as a means of imposing control and blackmailing the Syrian people, resulting in:

- **Tight security restrictions**

- The requirement to obtain 'security clearance' before obtaining many documents, such as ownership documents, death certificates, inheritance documents, and passport renewal.
- Linking the issuance of documents to political and security objectives, to target opponents or suspects.

- **Crackdown on vulnerable groups**

Survivors of arbitrary detention, families of forcibly disappeared persons, and those wanted for military service all faced additional hardship.

- **Systematic financial extortion**

Imposing exorbitant fees on citizens, beyond their financial means, to finance the Assad regime's security and military operations.

2. Systematic denial of fundamental rights

- **Death and inheritance documents**

The Assad regime aimed to conceal its crimes by refraining from granting death certificates for forcibly disappeared persons victims killed in extrajudicial killings.

- **Consequences of denial of documents**

- Obstruct Syrians' access to education, health care, and humanitarian aid.
- The appearance of unregistered children, who consequently were deprived their right to nationality.
- Loss of property rights and inability to move freely.

21. Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, October 17). About 16 Million Syrian Citizens are Suffering as a Result of the Syrian Regime's Control Over Official Documents. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/4jedhRJ>

3. Exploitation of passports:²² a tool to raise money and suppress dissent

- **High costs**

- The Syrian passport is one of the most expensive passports in the world, despite its poor ranking.
- The system charges passport fees in foreign currencies, making it an important source of hard currency.

- **Six types of violations:**

1. Enforce 'security clearance' requirements.
2. Transforming immigration offices into detention grounds for wanted persons.
3. Insults and poor treatment at immigrations branches and embassies.
4. Scams from brokers who charge extra fees.
5. Delaying the issuance of passports even in urgent cases, exposing Syrians abroad to the risk of losing residency.
6. Issuance of electronic passports that are not internationally recognized.

4. Employing financial revenues for the benefit of the Assad regime

- **Lack of transparency**

The Assad regime does not declare the revenues obtained from the issuance of documents, as they are used directly to finance its security and military services.

- **Violation of international laws**

Denying citizens access to affordable travel documents violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), both of which guarantee freedom of movement.

5. The impact of violations on Syrian society

- **Extended damage**

- Deepening the suffering of Syrians, especially women (especially the wives of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons).
- The emergence of legal and social obstacles, such as difficulty in establishing identity or obtaining civil rights.

22. Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, February 28). The Syrian Regime Perpetrates Multiple Types of Violations Against Citizens Obtaining Passports In and Outside Syria. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/4j4VLyZ>

6. Recommendations to protect the rights of Syrians

● Enact comprehensive reform

- Abolition of the 'security clearance' requirement.
- Providing documents at a nominal price that takes into account the economic conditions of citizens.

● International pressure

- Obligate the Assad regime to stop its discriminatory policies and the exploitation of state documents.
- Strengthen oversight of the Assad regime's practices with regard to the issuance of official documents.

H. One year since the ICJ's decision on the Assad regime: analysis of violations and the human rights situation

Decision summary and significance

On November 16, 2023, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) [issued a decision](#) following a joint case filed by the Netherlands and Canada, accusing Syria of committing serious violations of the UN Convention against Torture (2004).²³ The resolution focused on compelling the Assad regime to take concrete steps to stop torture and comply with human rights standards.

Documentation during the year following the decision²⁴

23. The ICJ's decision demanded that the Syrian Arab Republic:

- **First:** "Take all measures within its power to prevent acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and ensure that its officials, as well as any organizations or persons which may be subject to its control, direction or influence, do not commit any acts of torture or other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."
- **Second:** "Take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of any evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of the Convention against Torture, including medical and forensic reports or other records of injuries and deaths."
- Furthermore, the court requested that Syria submits a report to the court every six months after the date of the ICJ order's issuance, outlining the steps taken.

24. SNHR released periodic reports every three months (from the date of the issuance of the ICJ's order) monitoring the Assad regime's compliance with the ICJ's order. They were released respectively on February 22, 2024; May 23, 2024; August 15, 2024; and the most recent report was released on November 15, 2024. See:

- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, February 22). Three Months After the ICJ's Ruling, the Syrian Regime Has Blatantly Breached it, Killing More Syrian Citizens Under Torture. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/41Uzi2c>
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, May 23). Since the ICJ Order Was Issued Six Months Ago, the Syrian Regime Has Killed No Fewer than 29 Individuals Due to Torture, and Arrested At Least 534 Civilians, Including Eight Children and 21 Women. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/43ykXtk>
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, August 15). In the Nine Months Since the ICJ Issued its Order, the Syrian Regime Has Killed at least 43 Individuals due to Torture, and Arrested At least 756 Civilians, Including Nine Children and 24 Women. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/41P8Yq4>
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, November 15). In the One Year Since the ICJ Issued its Order, the Syrian Regime Has Killed at Least 84 Individuals through Torture, and Arrested At least 1,161 Civilians, Including 18 Children and 43 Women. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/4c8Xgdy>

1. Grave violations persist

● Arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances

SNHR documented **1,161 cases** of arbitrary arrest, including 18 children and 43 women.

Of these, only 138 were released, while 1,023 remained forcibly disappeared, accounting for 88 percent of the total.

● Torture and deaths

- A total of 84 people killed under torture in detention centers.
- Among the victims, 31 percent were children (26 children), reflecting systematic targeting.
- In 91.67 percent of cases of deaths due to torture, the dead bodies have not been returned to the families of the victims, perpetuating the enforced disappearance policy.
- Deaths due to torture included refugees who had returned or were forcibly returned, six of whom were killed due to torture or medical negligence.

2. Formal amnesty decrees

- The Assad regime issued two amnesty decrees (No. 36 of 2023 and 27 of 2024) but excluded political detainees and forcibly disappeared persons.
- These decrees did not affect the pace of arrests which continued to escalate.

3. Manipulation of death records

The Assad regime listed some forcibly disappeared persons in the civil registry as deceased, without specifying the causes of death, and without returning the bodies or informing their families.

4. Promotion of a policy of impunity

The Assad regime appointed security leaders implicated in war crimes and crimes against humanity to senior government positions.

The Assad regime continued to use torture as a strategic tool to terrorize civilians.

The impact of the resolution on the Syrian issue

- The resolution represented an opportunity to shed light on crimes against humanity in Syria, but revealed a failure to enforce the obligation.
- Despite the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, the violations documented during 2024 show the depth of the humanitarian crisis and its continuing repercussions.

Conclusion

One year passing since the ICJ's order serves as a test for the international community and its ability to enforce the law and hold perpetrators accountable. Broader international cooperation is needed to ensure justice for victims, including revealing the fate of forcibly disappeared persons, returning victims' bodies, and compensating their families.

I. The Assad regime exploits the precautionary seizure of funds as a tool of repression and financing

1. Provisional detention as a tool of collective punishment

The Assad regime adopted a policy of provisional seizure²⁵ of transferrable and non-transferable assets²⁶ against dissidents and their families, creating a form of collective punishment that violates basic legal standards.²⁷

25. Provisional seizure is defined as the process by which the debtor's funds are placed under the judiciary's authority, in order to prevent the debtor from engaging in any legal or material act that would put them (the debtor) and their assets beyond the reach of the pursuing creditor. Normally, provisional seizure is used as a precautionary measure to ensure the availability of funds that may be used to compensate any damage done by the acts of the accused should they be convicted. As such, the law usually restricts such measures through imposing a number of conditions that must be met before a provisional seizure can be ordered, such as certainty of need or the existence of evidence proving the necessity of a seizure. Furthermore, the order for a provisional seizure must be sufficiently clear and detailed so that all concerned parties can understand the scope of, and reasons for said order. There is also a criterion that the assets subject to a provisional seizure must be correctly quantified and computed, and another requirement that such expropriations must be documented adequately and clearly. In addition to needing to meet these criteria, provisional seizures also cannot or should not be carried out without a legitimate judicial ruling being issued by a competent court. The rights of the party affected, i.e., that party whose assets are subject to a provisional seizure, must be guaranteed fully and fairly throughout the judicial procedures. However, the data we have on the provisional seizure orders issued by the Syrian regime shows that they have not been carried out within any such acceptable legal framework. Rather, they were carried out based on secret decisions by security authorities that destroy any possibility of conducting any legitimate official and clear procedures.

26. Provisional seizures concern both financial/current assets, such as cash, bank accounts, investments, and shares, while non-financial assets refer to fixed assets, such as real estate, properties, and cars.

27. On July 16, 2024, SNHR released a report entitled, 'The Syrian Regime is Using Provisional Seizure of Assets as An Instrument of Collective Punishment' See:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, July 16). The Syrian Regime is Using Provisional Seizure of Assets as An Instrument of Collective Punishment. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via <https://bit.ly/3QVBHmY>

- **Targeting vulnerable groups and opposition**

- The detention decisions included broad categories of forcibly displaced persons, including both internally and refugees abroad.
- Detention lists included forcibly disappeared persons, political activists, women, and children.

- **Lack of official notification**

Those affected were not informed of the seizure decisions. Most of those affected discovered the matter by chance during official dealings or through the leak of documents.

- **Role of the security services**

The decisions were issued on the basis of security directives rather than independent courts, highlighting the infiltration of state institutions by the security services.

2. Exploitation of detention as an economic and political tool

- **War Financing**

- The confiscated resources were used to support military and security operations.
- An act promulgated in November 2023 on the management and investment of confiscated funds consolidated the Assad regime's ability to seize property permanently.²⁸

- **Targeting settlements**

Even those who made security settlements with the Assad regime after 2017 were detained, reflecting the Assad regime's lack of seriousness in respecting its obligations or local agreements.

3. Violations of local and international laws

- **Local Laws**

- Seizure decisions violate basic rules of Syria's constitution, including the right to property.
- The lack of judicial transparency makes the proceedings arbitrary and illegal.

28. We analyzed this Act in a detailed report released in December 2023. See: Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2023, December 8). The Syrian Regime is Using Provisional Seizure of Assets as An Instrument of Collective Punishment. Retrieved on March 29, 2025, via <https://bit.ly/3XCdbLo>

- **International Law**

- Pretrial detention without a fair trial violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 17), which protects private property.
- The decisions fall under the internationally banned policy of collective punishment, making them part of systematic violations amounting to crimes against humanity.

4. Notable examples of seizure decisions

- **Decisions in Damascus countryside**

- The Assad regime's Ministry of Finance issued 13 collective decisions involving more than 800 people in Zakya town alone between January and June 2024.
- The decisions mainly targeted
 - Refugees and IDPs.
 - Relatives of detainees or forcibly disappeared persons.
 - Those who agreed to security settlements with the Assad regime.

5. Effects of decisions on victims

- **Impoverishment and marginalization**

Dispossession of families pushed them further into poverty.

- **Deprivation of legal rights**

Victims have difficulty accessing justice or appealing decisions.

- **Social Impact**

Deepening the sense of injustice and exclusion among large segments of the Syrian people.

6. Recommendations to counter this policy

- **International Intervention**

Demand that the UN Security Council condemn arbitrary detention decisions and impose oversight on regime institutions.

- **Compensation and restitution of property**

Obligate the Assad regime to compensate victims and annul illegal decisions.

- **Transitional justice mechanisms**

Establish independent commissions of inquiry to ensure that those responsible for these violations are held accountable.

- **Victim Support**

Provide legal and material support to victims, especially women and children particularly affected by these decisions.

J. The fall of the Assad regime and its repercussions: analysis and recommendations

1. Military and political developments that led to the fall of the Assad regime

- **Operation Deter Aggression**

Launched on November 27, 2024, major cities were retaken from regime control:

- November 29: Aleppo city captured.
- December 5: Hama city captured.
- December 7: Homs city captured.
- December 8: Damascus captured and Bashar Assad flees to Russia.

2. The humanitarian catastrophe revealed by the transitional period

a. Detainees and forcibly disappeared persons

Opening prisons and security branches

SNHR estimated that 24,000 people were released from prisons and security branches in the cities of Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus.

- **Geographical distribution**
 - November 29, 2024: Detainees released in Aleppo city.
 - December 5, 2024: Detainees released in Hama city.
 - December 7, 2024: Detainees released in Homs city.
 - December 8, 2024: Thousands of detainees are released from security branches in Damascus city.

Still, the fate of **112,414** forcibly disappeared persons remain unknown.

- **Key evidence**
 - Registration of forcibly disappeared persons as deceased in civil registries since 2018.
 - Data on systematic mass executions.

b. Mass Graves

- **Discovery of mass graves:**
 - Contains the remains of victims killed under torture or field-executed.
 - This is considered compelling evidence of systematic crimes committed by the Assad regime.
 - These sites require sensitive processing in accordance with international standards to ensure justice.

3. Recommendations to ensure justice and dignity

a. Dealing with mass graves

1. Immediate actions

- Prevent tampering with mass graves.
- Educate local residents about the importance of preserving evidence.

2. International mechanisms

- Establish international and local investigative teams to document evidence.
- Ensure humane treatment of victims' remains.

3. Involving families

Transparently inform families about the fate of their loved ones.

b. The issue of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons

1. Disclosure of fate

- Issue official lists of the names of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons.
- Return dead bodies to their relatives.

2. Compensation for victims

- Provide material and moral compensation to the families of the victims.
- Provide psychological and social support for those released.

3. Accountability of officials

Launch transparent investigations and hold accountable those responsible for enforced disappearances and torture.

4. Challenges facing the new government

a. Management of liberated areas

- Provide basic services to ensure the stability of the population.
- Rehabilitate security and judicial institutions in accordance with transitional justice standards.

b. Ensure human rights

- Establish a legal framework that respects human rights and ensures justice and accountability.
- Cooperate with the international community for reconstruction.

5. Role of the international community

a. Technical and Financial Support

- Finance the exhumation and analysis of human remains.
- Support judicial institutions for investigation and accountability.

b. UN Supervision

- Ensure transparency in addressing humanitarian issues.
- Submit periodic reports on the progress of transitional justice in Syria.

Conclusion

The fall of the Assad regime represents a pivotal step toward ending the humanitarian catastrophe in Syria, but it also reveals the scale of the tragedy the Assad regime has left behind. Justice can only be achieved through a clear and inclusive transitional justice process that ensures respect for the rights of victims and their families and holds perpetrators accountable.

K. Challenges and humanitarian implications related to the security situation in Syria after the fall of the Assad regime

1. Degrading practices against suspects in custody and their impact on transitional justice

a. Details of the security campaign carried out at the end of December 2024²⁹

• Security Operations and Confrontations

- The campaign targeted areas such as South Latakia, Qedsayya, and al-Hama, where individuals suspected of involvement in serious violations were arrested.
- Armed clashes with former pro-Assad regime militias broke out, most notably in Tartus and Homs, which resulted in the death of 17 members of the security forces.

b. Violations in detention

Videos showed detainees being physically and psychologically degraded, which threatens the credibility of the new authorities.

c. Impact of Practices on Transitional Justice

1. Erosion of confidence in the new judicial system

Fueling feelings of revenge and sowing division in society.

2. Weakening extradition efforts

Reports of torture could prompt countries to refuse extradition.

d. Recommendations to avoid escalation

- Full compliance with the standards of international humanitarian law.
- Establish independent committees to monitor the treatment of detainees and ensure that they are not subjected to ill-treatment.
- Strengthen cooperation with international organizations to ensure accountability and transparency.

29. See for instance:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, December 30). Perpetrating Degrading Acts While Arresting Those Accused of Committing Violations During the Assad Regime's Rule Undermines the New Government's Credibility. Retrieved on March 30, 2025, via <https://bit.ly/4caDRst>

2. Proliferation of landmines and cluster munition remnants

a. Current Reality

- Landmines are scattered over large areas of Syria's governorate, including areas retaken by the new government.
- Parties responsible for planting landmines:
 - The Assad regime along the Syrian border and near military positions.
 - Other controlling forces without locating them or setting warnings.

b. Landmine Statistics in 2024

- **Deaths and injuries**

139 people were killed, including 32 children and 20 women. These divided into:
134 killed by landmine explosions and five by cluster munition remnants.

- **During Operation Deter Aggression**

45 civilians, including 6 children and 4 women, were killed by landmine explosions.

c. The impact of landmines on society

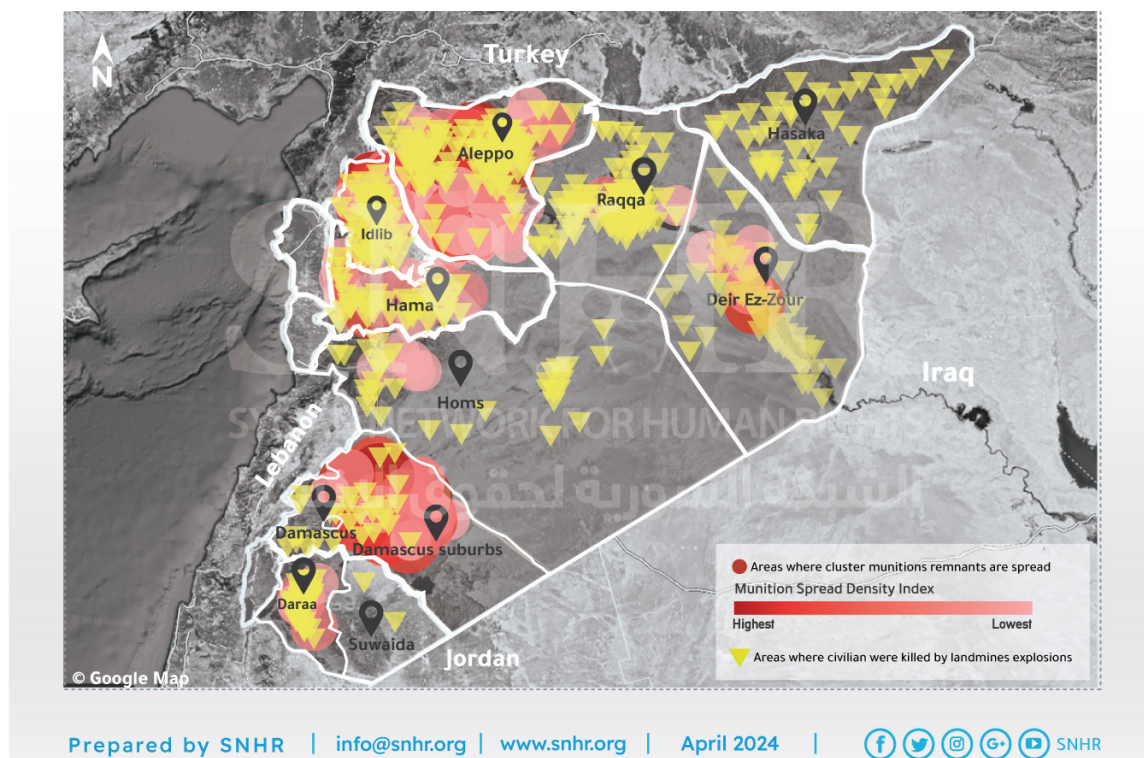
- **Obstacles for IDPs**

Landmines prevent the return of IDPs and impede reconstruction and development efforts.

- **Serious injuries**

- Amputations and physical deformities.
- Necessitates the need for rehabilitation programs and long-term psychological support.

The map below shows areas contaminated by anti-personnel landmines in Syria as a result of the military operations of the parties to the conflict from March 2011 to April 2024



3. Recommendations on landmines:³⁰

A. Dealing with contaminated areas

1. Establishment of specialized national and international teams

- Demining with the help of modern techniques.
- Develop accurate maps of contaminated areas and update them regularly.

2. Raising local awareness

- Educational campaigns on landmine risks and how to avoid them.
- Distribute awareness materials in schools and affected communities.

b. Support programs for victims

1. Medical Support

Provide prosthetics and establish rehabilitation centers.

30. On December 31, SNHR released a statement detailing a set of recommendations for the new authorities to address the issue of the proliferation of landmines across Syria. [See:](#)

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, December 31). Maps of the Most Prominent Areas Contaminated by Landmines in Syria, and Recommendations to Address This Issue. Retrieved on March 30, 2025, via <https://bit.ly/4caZ4SY>

2. Psychosocial support

Establish specialized centers to help survivors and their families.

c. International responsibility

- **Funding and technical support**

The international community must provide financial and technical support for landmine clearance.

- **Apply pressure on responsible parties**

States and organizations must hold those responsible for planting landmines accountable.

Conclusion

Degrading practices on the course of arrests/detention arrests and the widespread proliferation of landmines pose as major challenges for the new authorities in Syria. These issues require immediate and comprehensive treatment to maintain the credibility of the new government and achieve justice.

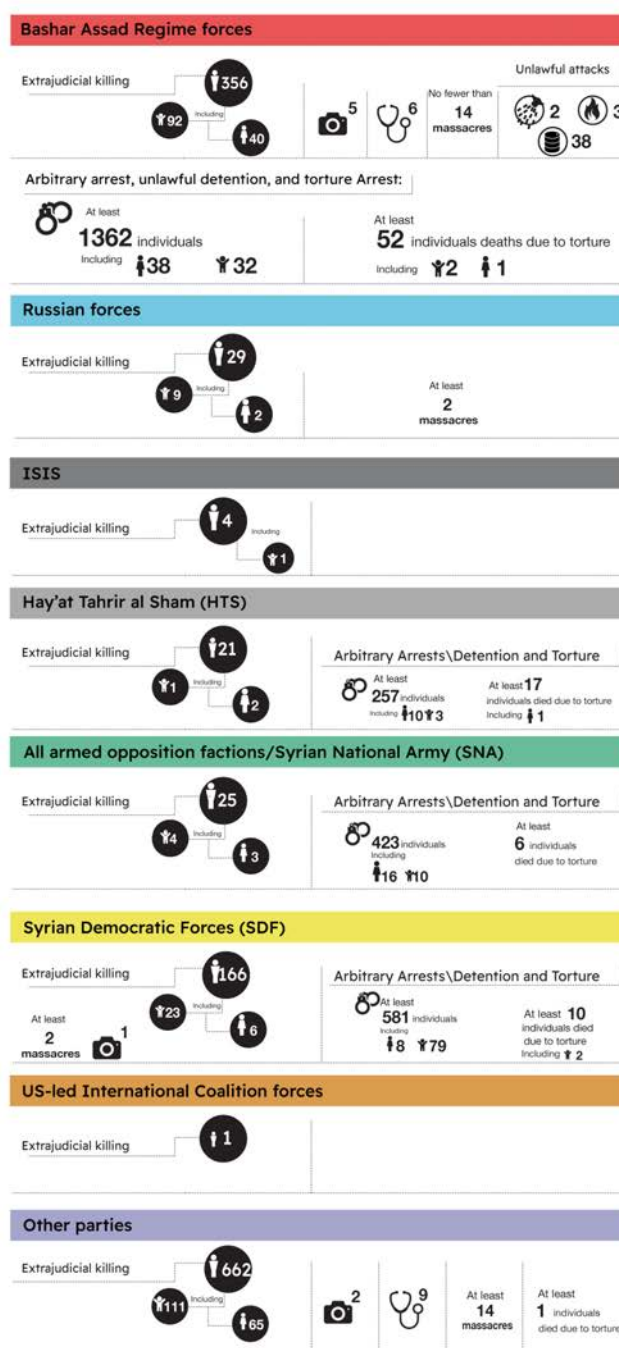
II. ACCOUNT OF THE MOST PROMINENT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SYRIA IN 2024 AS DOCUMENTED ON SNHR'S DATABASE



↑  One of the children injured in an aerial attack by Russian forces on a furniture workshop on the western outskirts of Idlib city, which inflicted a massacre - October 16, 2024

A. Most prominent human rights violations in Syria in 2024

This report covers the most prominent human rights violations committed by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria from January 1, 2024, until January 1, 2025, as outlined in the following infographic.³¹



Around **700 thousand** forcibly displaces individuals
due to military operations by the parties to the conflict in Syria

civilians women children Medical personnel Media Arrest Cluster Munitions Incendiary weapon attack(s) Barrel bomb

As documented by SNHR

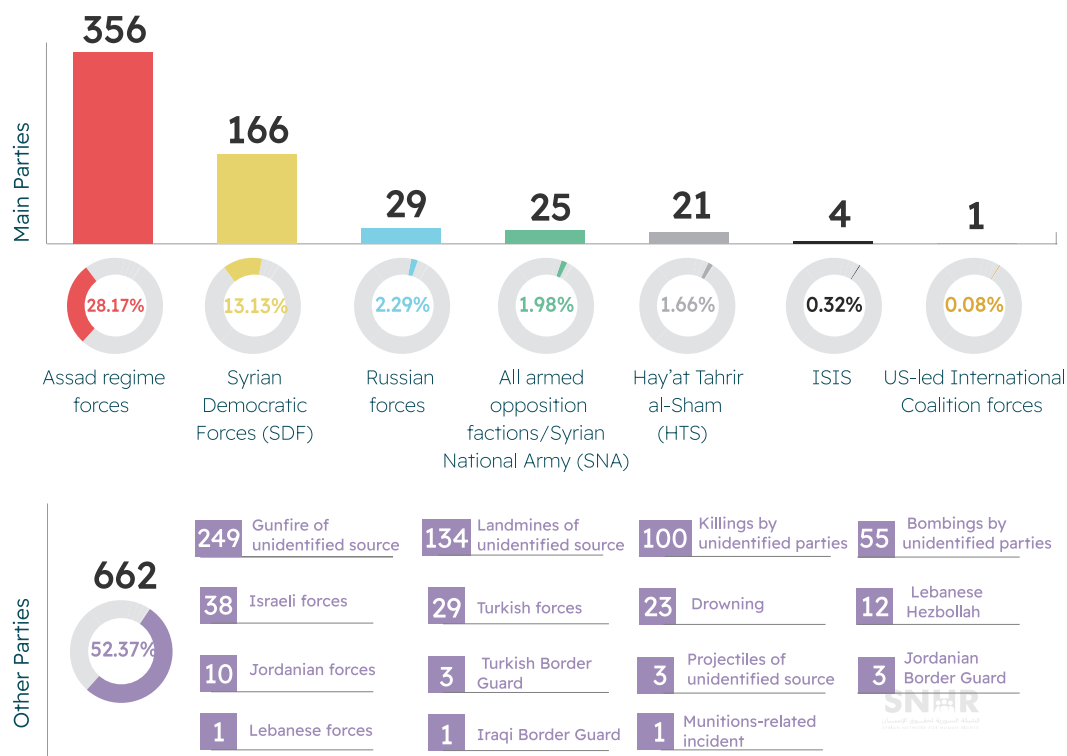
SNHR
Syrian Network for Human Rights

31. Infographic: Most prominent human rights violations by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria in 2024.

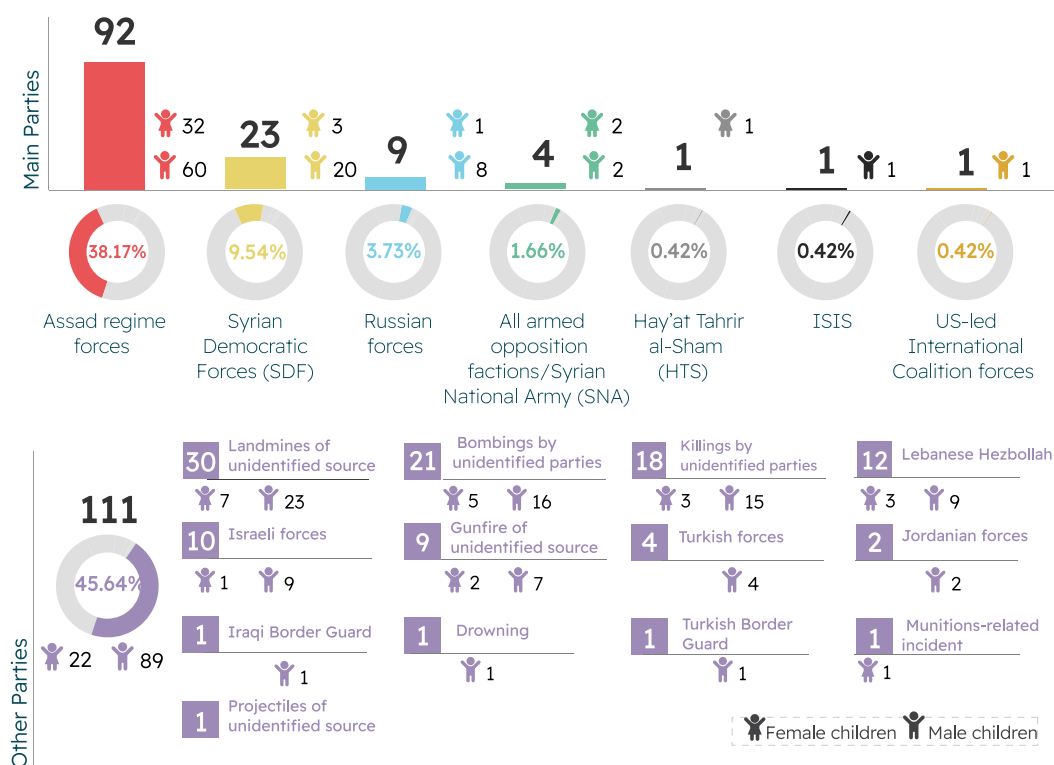
1. Extrajudicial killing

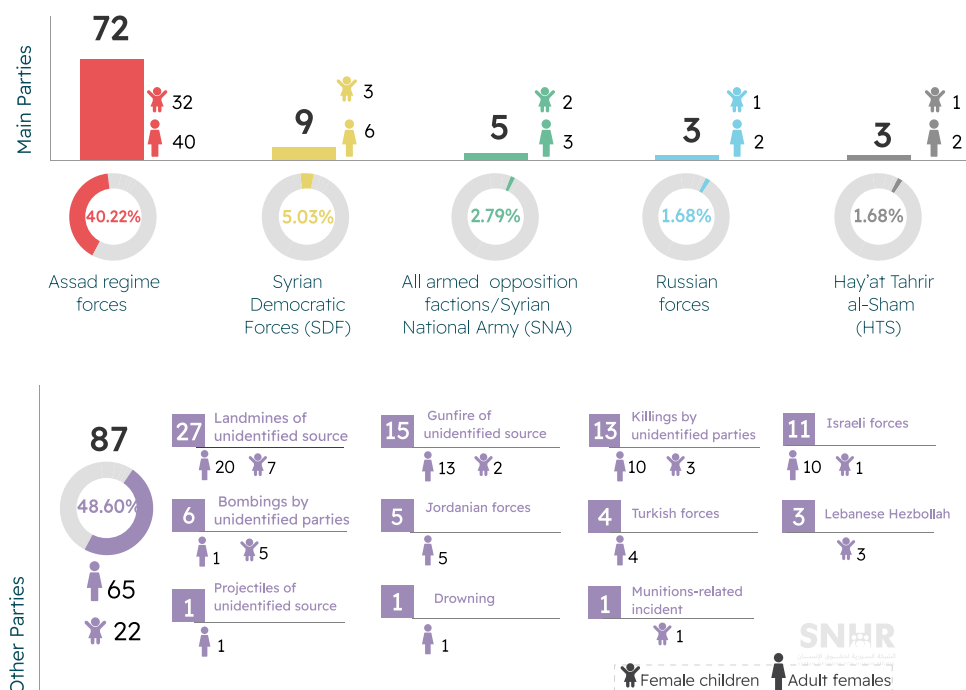
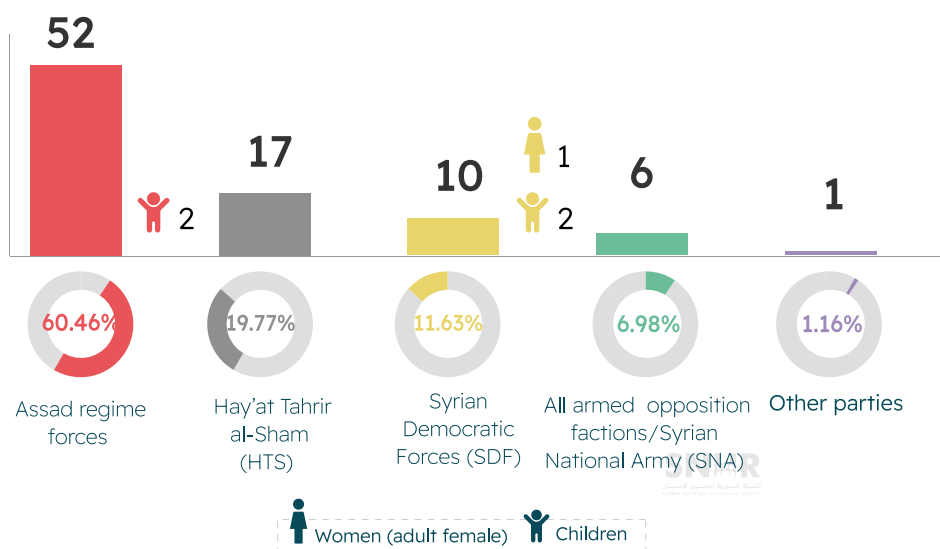
In 2024, SNHR documented the killing of **1,246** civilians, including 242 children and 118 women (adult female) at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria. These are distributed as follows:

1,246 civilians killed by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria



242 children killed by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria



179 females killed by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria**86 individuals** died due to torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria

A. Main parties

- Assad regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias):³² 356 civilians, including 92 children and 40 women (adult female).
- Russian forces: 29 civilians, including nine children and two women.
- ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State): Four civilians, including one child.
- Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS):³³ 21 civilians, including one child and two women.
- All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA):³⁴ 25 civilians, including four children and three women.
- Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF): 166 civilians, including 23 children and six women.
- US-led International Coalition forces: One child.

B. Other parties

In 2024, we documented the killing of **662 civilians**, including 111 children and 65 women, at the hands of other parties. Distributed as follows:

- Projectiles of unidentified source: 134 civilians, including 30 children and 20 women.
- Gunfire of unidentified source: 249 civilians, including nine children and 13 women.
- Killings by unidentified parties: 100 civilians, including 18 children and 10 women.
- Bombings by unidentified parties: 55 civilians, including 21 children and one woman.
- Drowning: 23 civilians, including one child and one woman.
- Munition-related incidents: One child.
- Jordanian forces: 10 civilians, including two children and five women.
- Lebanese forces: One civilian.
- Turkish forces: 29 civilians, including four children and four women.
- The Lebanese group Hezbollah: 12 children.
- Israeli forces: 38 civilians, including 10 children and 10 women.
- Turkish border guard: Three civilians, including one child.
- Iraqi border guard: One child.
- Jordanian border guard: Three civilians.

32. We have used the term 'the Assad regime' rather than 'the Syrian government', because the nature of the ruling power in Syria was that of a totalitarian dictatorship where power was concentrated in the hands of a small circle of individuals, namely the President of the Republic and the heads of the Assad regime's security apparatus. As a result, the ministers, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior, played a restricted, largely symbolic role, which was limited to implementing precisely what the ruling regime ordered, with no real decision-making power or active role of their own. Throughout the Assads' rule, Syria was under an autocratic, dynastic dictatorship, with no independent decision-making structure. Rather, the government was an empty façade that existed merely for show. The Minister of Interior received orders from the security branches over which he supposedly presided. The Minister of Justice could not even summon a low-ranking security officer, let alone a security branch head. Syria was ruled by the tyrannical president assisted by the heads of the security branches who he appointed.

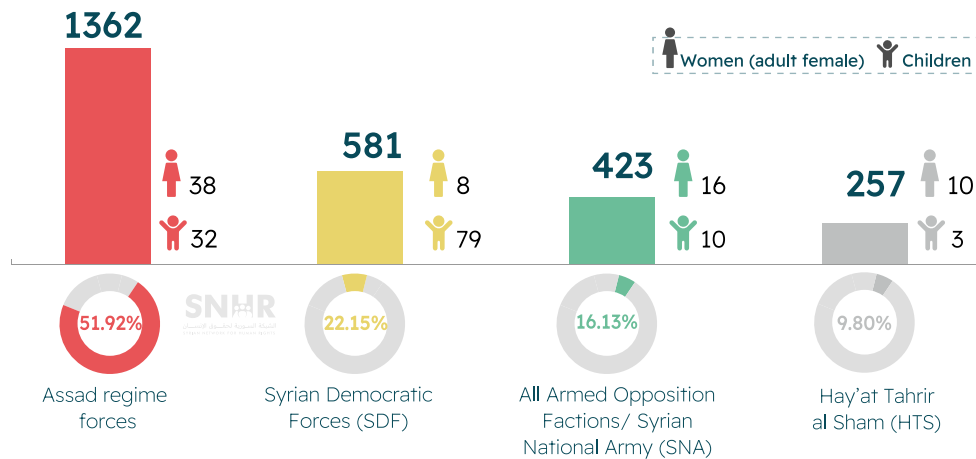
While we are aware that the UN and its agencies preferred to use the term 'the Syrian government', we believe that this was and remains a wholly inaccurate and misleading term in reference to the former Syrian regime.

33. Designated by the UN as a terror group.

34. All armed opposition factions founded since 2011 across Syria. Many of those formations are no longer active, and many were not structured around a central command. Towards the end of 2017, the Syrian National Army (SNA) was founded as an umbrella formation incorporating all active armed opposition factions to date.

2. Arbitrary arrests and unlawful detention

In 2024, SNHR documented at least **2,623 arbitrary arrests**, with those arrested including 124 children and 72 women (adult female), at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria. These are distributed as follows:



- Assad regime forces: 1,362 arbitrary arrests, including of 32 children and 38 women.
- Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS): 257 arbitrary arrests, including of three children and 10 women.
- All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA): 423 arbitrary arrests, including of 10 children and 16 women.
- Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF): 581 arbitrary arrests, including of 79 children and eight women.

3. Targeting medical workers

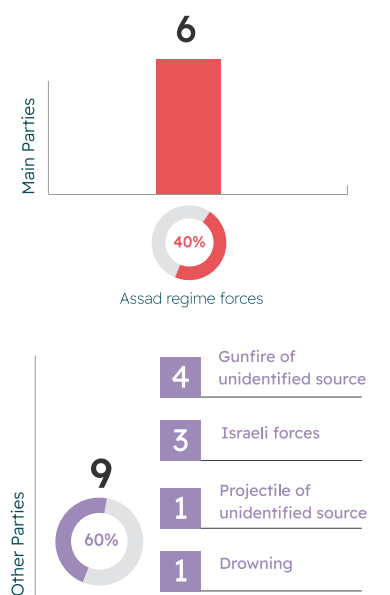
In 2024, SNHR documented the killing of **15 medical workers**, including one woman. These are distributed as follows:

A. Main parties

- Assad regime forces: Six medical workers.

B. Other parties, distributed as follows:

- Projectiles of unidentified source: One medical worker.
- Gunfire of unidentified source: Four medical workers
- Israeli forces: Three medical worker, including one woman.
- Drowning: One medical worker.

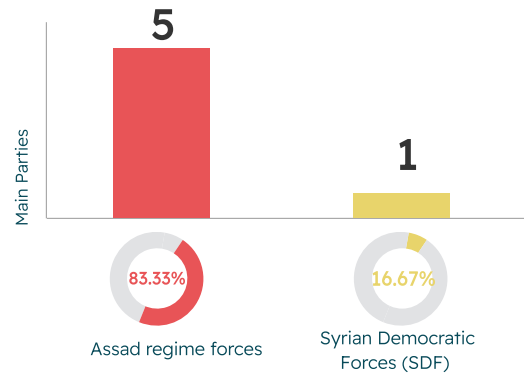


4. Targeting media workers

In 2024, SNHR documented the killing of **six media workers**. These are distributed as follows:

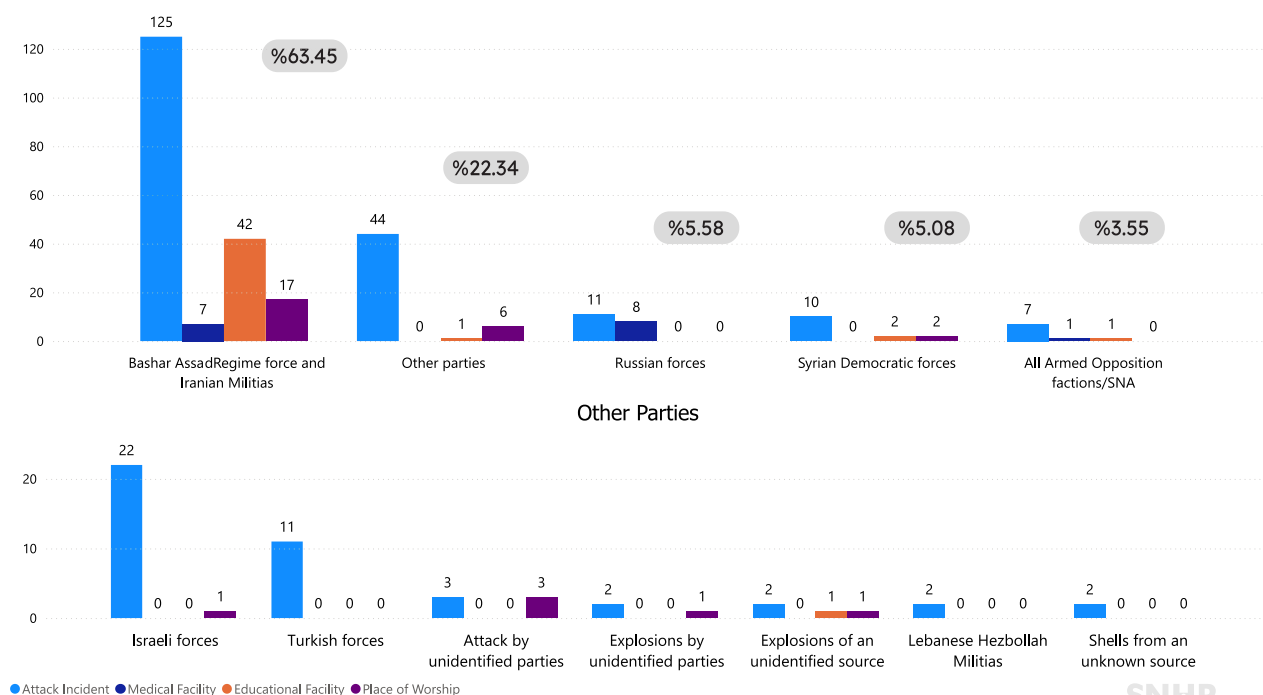
A. Main parties

- Assad regime forces: Five media workers.
- Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF): One media worker.



5. Attacks on vital civilian facilities

In 2024, SNHR documented at least **197 attacks** on vital civilian facilities. These attacks are distributed according to the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria as follows:



A. Main parties

- Assad regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 125 attacks.
- Russian forces: 11 attacks.
- All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA): Seven attacks.
- Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF): 10 attacks.

B. Other parties

Other parties were responsible for **44 attacks**, as follows:

- Explosions of unidentified source: Two attacks.
- Attacks by unidentified parties: Three attacks.
- Bombings by unidentified source: Two attacks.
- Projectiles of unidentified source: Two attacks.
- Turkish forces: 11 attacks.
- The Lebanese group Hezbollah: Two attacks.
- Israeli forces: 22 attacks.

6. Unlawful attacks

In 2024, SNHR documented **two attacks** involving the use of cluster munitions by Assad regime forces in Aleppo governorate. These attacks injured about **11 individuals**, including five children and two women.

We also documented **three attacks** that involved the use of incendiary ammunition by Assad regime forces. These attacks resulted in one civilian death and one civilian injury.

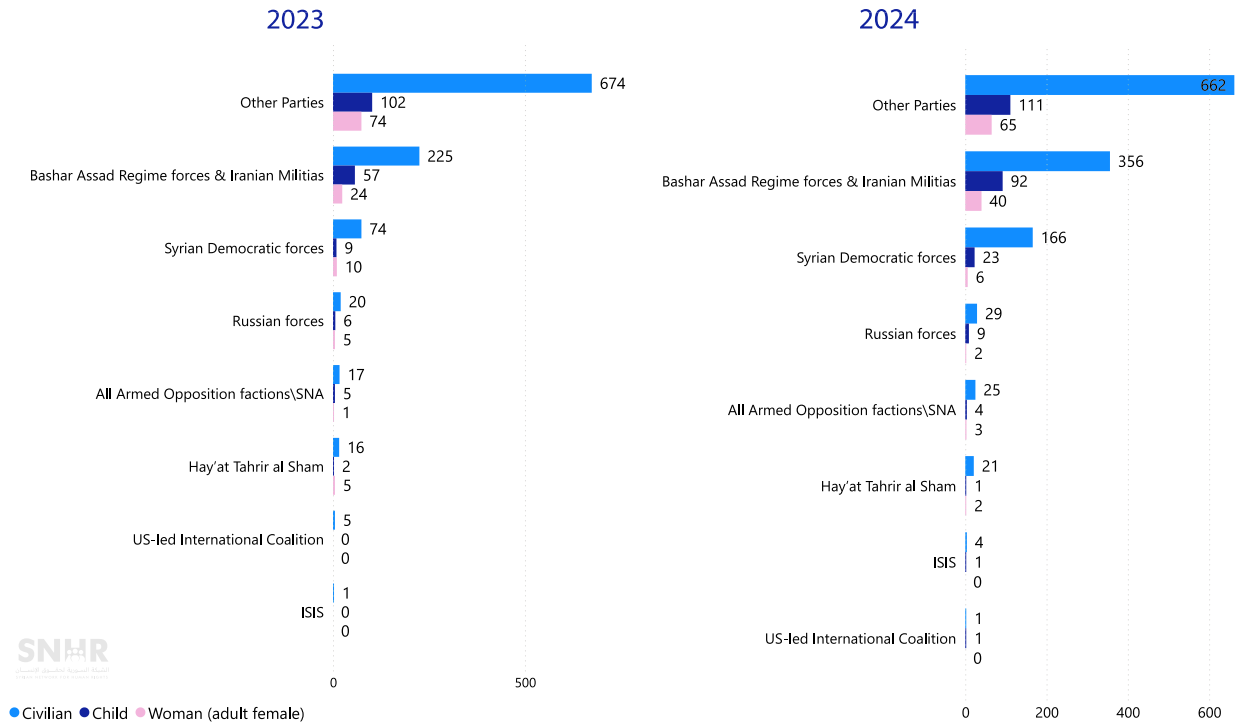
In addition, we documented that Assad regime military helicopters and fixed-wing warplanes dropped at least **38 barrel bombs** on the governorates of Idlib and Hama, killing five civilians, including three women (adult female).

7. Forced displacement

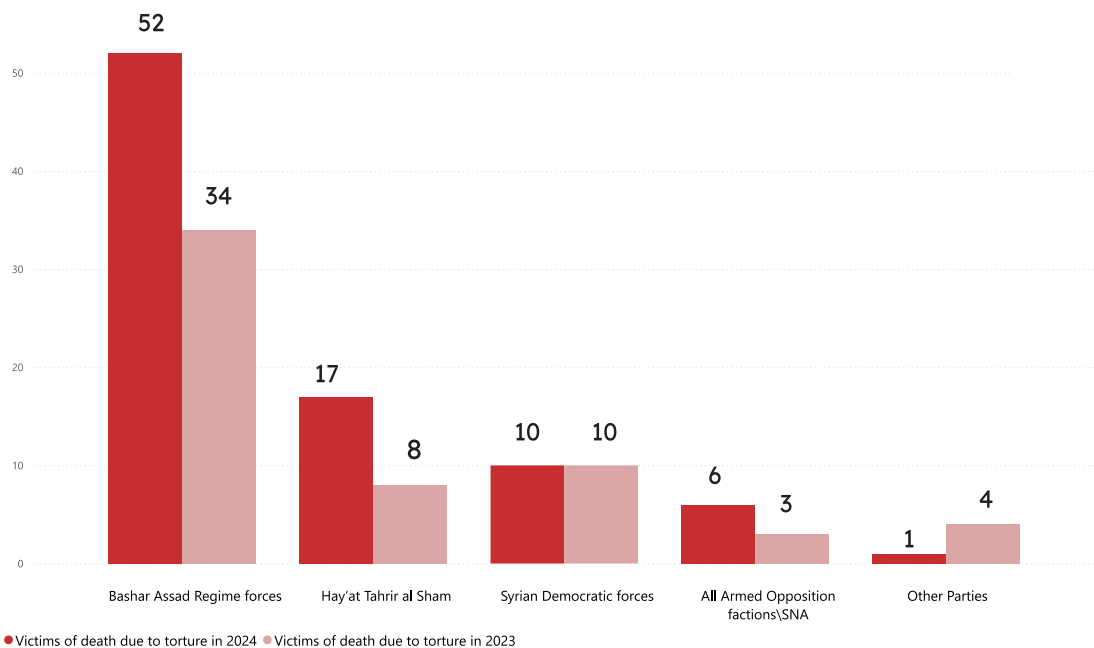
According to SNHR's documentation, military operations by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria led to the displacement of around **700,000 civilians** in 2024.

B. Comparison between the most prominent patterns of human rights violations in 2023 and 2024

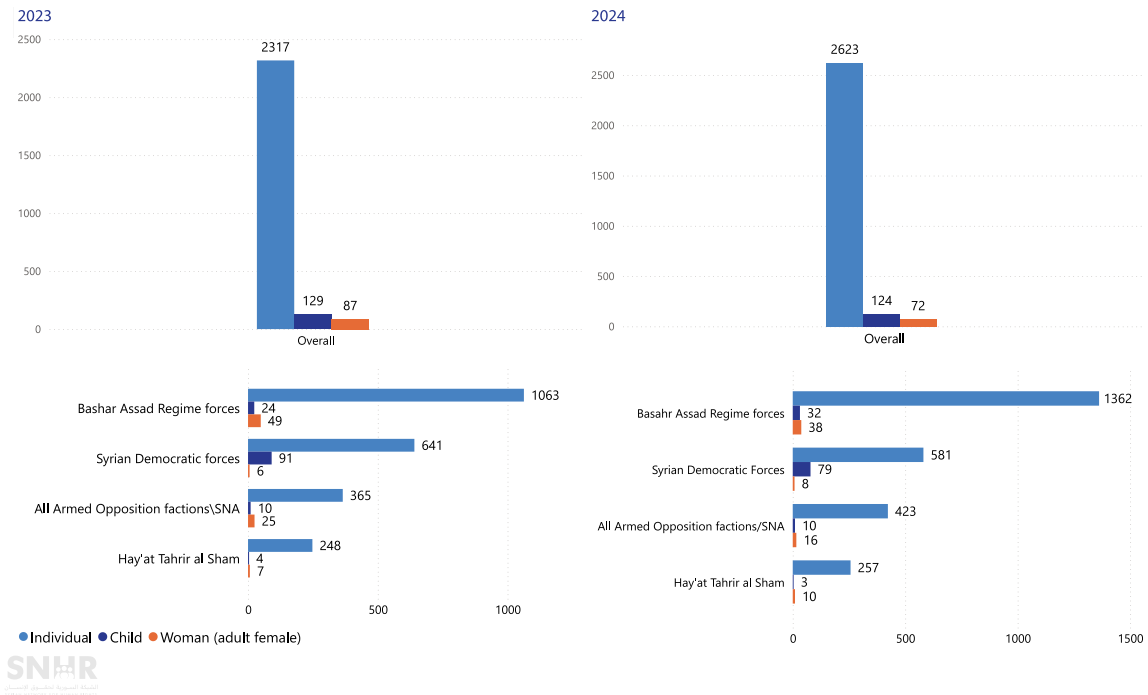
Comparison between civilian deaths at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria that were documented in 2023 and those documented in 2024



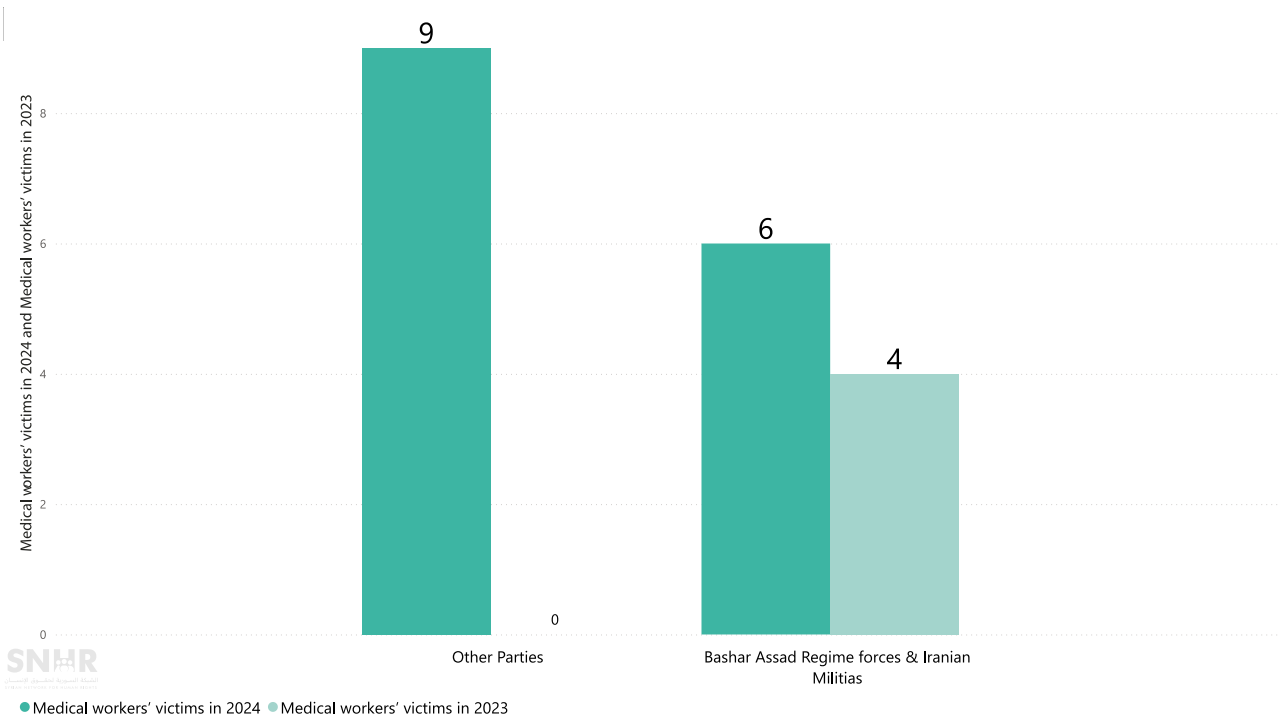
Comparison between deaths due to torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria that were documented in 2023 and those documented in 2024



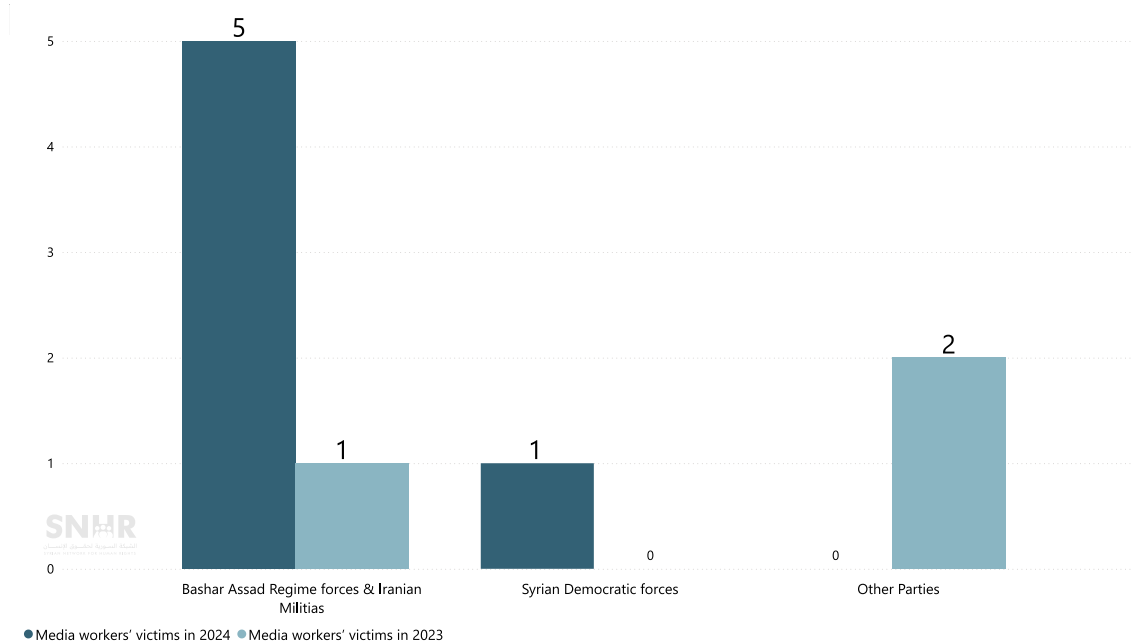
Comparison between arbitrary arrests at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria that were documented in 2023 and those documented in 2024



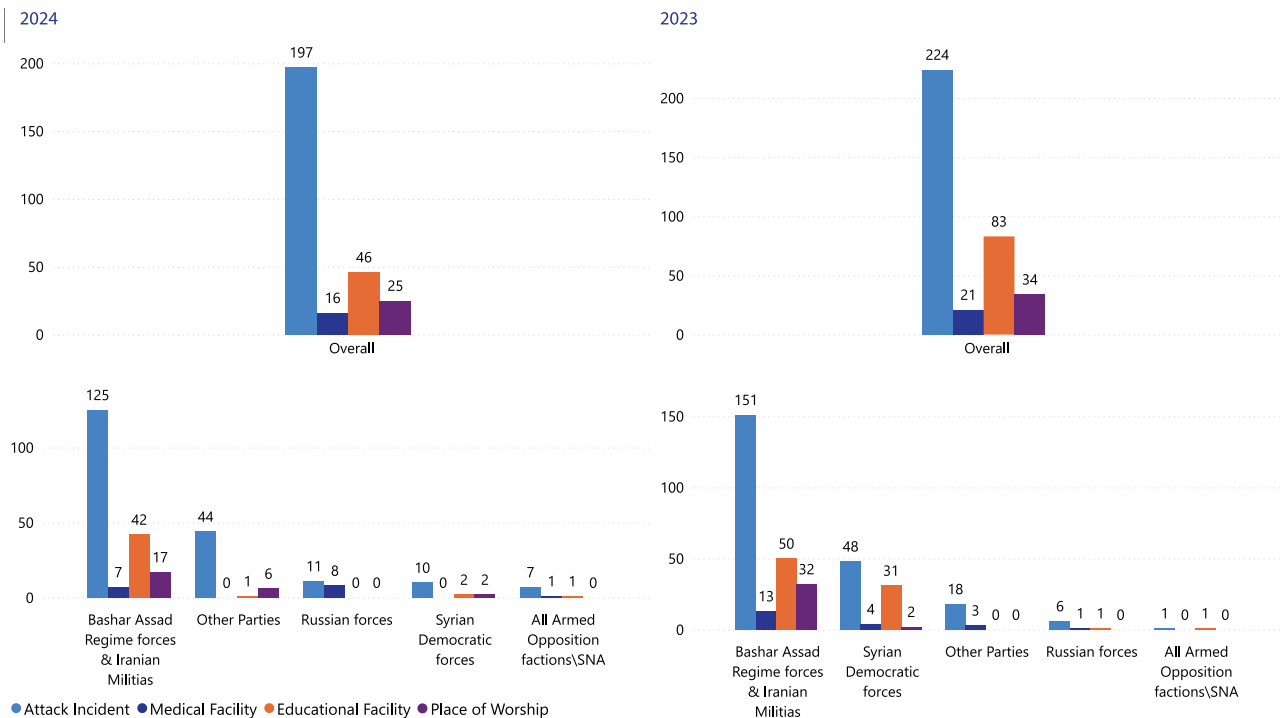
Comparison between deaths among medical workers at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria that were documented in 2023 and those documented in 2024



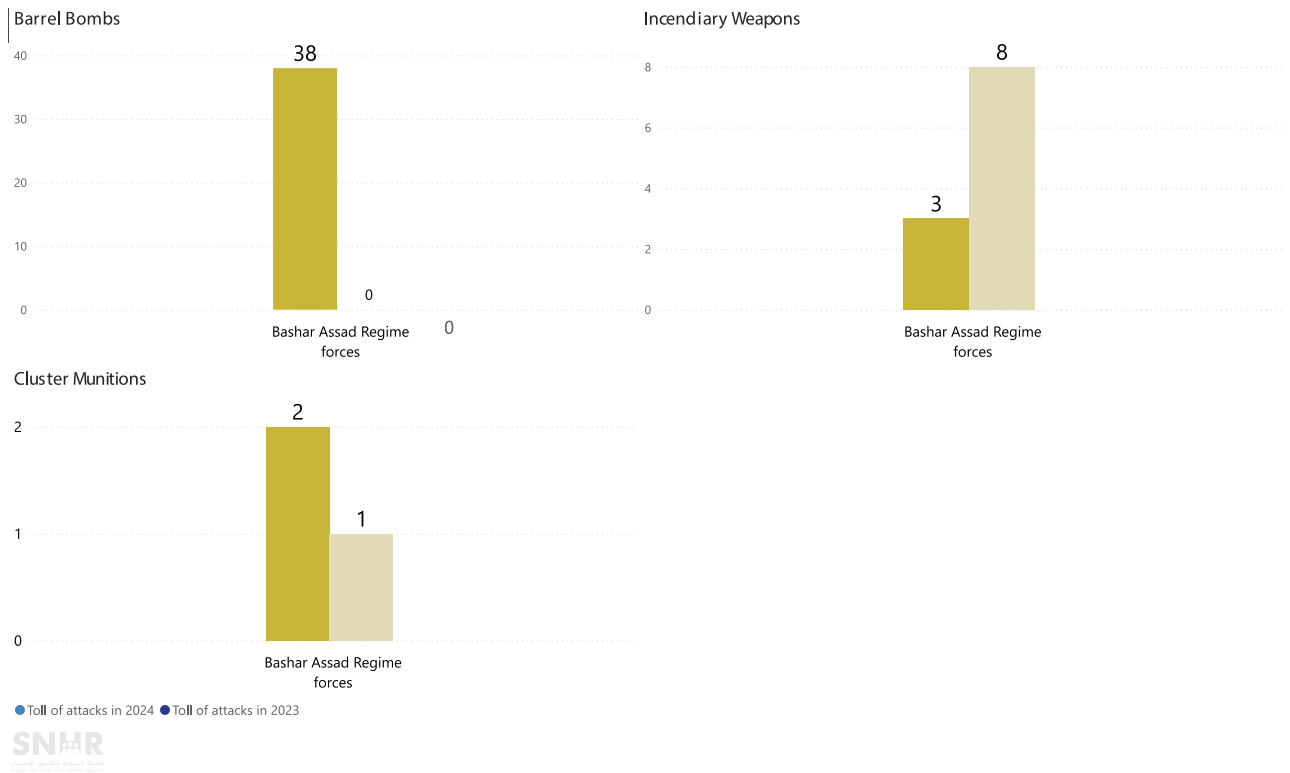
Comparison between deaths among media workers at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria that were documented in 2023 and those documented in 2024



Comparison between attacks on vital civilian facilities carried out by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria that were documented in 2023 and those documented in 2024



Comparison between unlawful attacks carried out by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria that were documented in 2023 and those documented in 2024



C. Outline of the most prominent human rights violations committed by Assad regime forces in 2024

1. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

a. Violations related to treatment of civilians and hors de combat fighters

i. Massacres and other acts of extrajudicial killing

During 2024, Assad regime forces continued to perpetrate serious human rights violations, particularly against civilians in areas outside their control. Chief among these violations were massacres and killings carried out by Assad regime through indiscriminate or retaliatory bombardment, armed clashes, and targeted violations against hors de combat fighters.

Indiscriminate bombardment and large-scale killings:

- **Continued indiscriminate bombardment:** Assad regime forces systematically targeted populated areas in northern Syria, particularly in the governorates of Idlib, Aleppo, and Hama, causing the deaths of dozens of civilians.
- **Key targeted areas:**
 - Kafrayya village and its outskirts in northern rural Idlib.
 - Al-Dahla village in eastern Deir Ez-Zour governorate.
- **Retaliatory military escalation**
 - In October 2024, northwestern Syria saw a military escalation by the Syrian-Russian alliance. The attacks targeted areas far from the frontlines, using heavy weaponry such as artillery shells.
 - Following the launch of 'Operation Deter Aggression' on November 27, 2024, the Assad regime intensified its retaliatory operations against areas that the opposition had regained control over.
 - Between November 27, 2024, and December 8, 2024, SNHR documented the killing of **223 civilians**, including 65 children and 28 women. These victims were killed as a result of air and artillery attacks. We also documented the use of cluster munitions, incendiary weapons, and barrel bombs.

Deaths resulting from previous injuries

Civilians, including children and women, succumbed to injuries sustained in previous indiscriminate bombardment. **Notable incidents include:**

- Several children died from injuries sustained in an artillery attack on a school in the Afis village in eastern rural Idlib at the end of 2023.
- Several women died from previous injuries in areas such as Idlib and Deir ez-Zour.
- **Shootings and internal clashes**
- **Victims of direct gunfire:** SNHR documented [several civilian deaths](#), including of [children](#), by Assad regime forces, including two killed by sniper fire.
- **Victims of internal clashes:** SNHR documented internal shootouts among pro-Assad groups, including clashes between groups affiliated with the Assad regime's Military Security Intelligence Directorate and the Assad regime's State Security Directorate in al-Sanamayn city in northern rural Daraa, which resulted in the deaths of civilians, including women.

2024 statistics

- **Total number of civilian victims killed by Assad regime forces:**
- **356 civilians** killed, including:
 - 92 children.
 - 40 women (adult females).
- **Among the victims**
- **Two civilians killed by sniper fire.**
- **Number of documented massacres: 14 massacres.**
- **Overall percentage of children and women among victims:**

This reached 37 percent, indicating the deliberate targeting of the most vulnerable groups in society.

Comparison with 2023

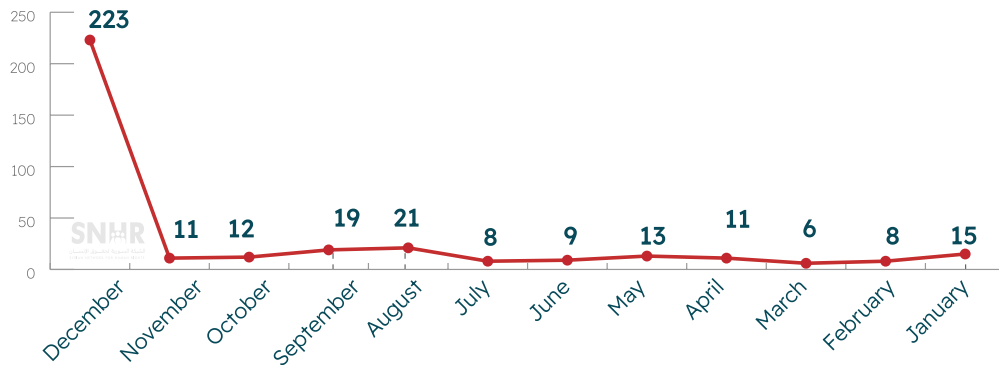
- **Total number of victims in 2023**
225 civilians killed, including:
 - 57 children.
 - 24 women (adult females).
- **Number of documented massacres in 2023:** Five massacres.

What do these figures suggest

- **Intense and ongoing escalation:** The significant increase in civilian casualties and massacres in 2024 compared to 2023 highlights a clear military escalation, particularly during the last month of Assad's rule.
- **Deliberate targeting of civilians:** The high proportion of children and women among the victims demonstrates the Assad regime's indiscriminate attacks on civilians, constituting a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.
- **Intensified use of prohibited weapons:** The growing use of cluster and incendiary munitions, despite international bans, reflects the Assad regime's complete disregard for international laws.

Analysis of civilian deaths killed by the Assad regime in 2024

Distribution of civilian deaths by month:



Data analysis

1. Major escalation in December

The data indicates a sharp rise in the number of victims in December (223 casualties), accounting for more than 62 percent of the year's total.

- Cause of escalation

- The final military escalation launched by Assad's forces and the Syrian-Russian alliance as a retaliatory response to Operation Deter Aggression, which was launched on November 27, 2024, and saw the Assad regime's control gradually weaken.
- The use of heavy weaponry such as artillery, rocket launchers, cluster and incendiary munitions, along with airstrikes and barrel bombs, significantly increased civilian deaths, particularly in northern and central Syria.

2. Lower number of casualties in previous months

- The months from February to November saw relatively lower casualty rates, ranging between six and 21 victims per month.
- This decline is attributed to the relative reduction in direct military operations by the Assad regime during most of the year before the final escalation.

3. Notable increase in August and September

- August saw a notable rise in the number of victims to 21, followed by 18 casualties in September.
- This increase is linked to intensified retaliatory attacks following limited opposition operations on the front lines, with the Assad regime responding by targeting civilian areas.

Additional violations: denial of death certificates

Failure to officially register victims

- From the start of the popular uprising in 2011, the Assad regime refused to register most extrajudicial killings in official civil registry records.
- Families were forced to live in a constant state of uncertainty about the fate of their loved ones, with no official acknowledgment of their deaths.

Reasons for families' refusal to request information or death certificates:

1. Fear of security repercussions:

Families of victims feared that any request for death certificates might see them linked with dissidents or labeled as 'terrorists' by the Assad regime, meaning they too might be arrested.

2. Fear of persecution

Registering a victim as a dissident, opponent of the Assad regime, or former detainee exposed families to security harassment.

3. Forced displacement

Most victims' families were internally displaced persons (IDPs) or had sought refuge outside Assad regime-controlled areas, preventing them from completing official procedures.

Consequences of not registering deaths

Depriving victim families of legal rights such as:

- Establishing guardianship.
- Claiming inheritance.
- Managing the deceased victim's property.
- Ongoing psychological trauma and social problems due to the uncertainty surrounding their loved ones' fate.

Arbitrary detention and unlawful imprisonment in Syria in 2024

Introduction

In 2024, Assad regime forces continued carrying out widespread arbitrary arrests in all areas under their control. These operations, conducted systematically, reflected the Assad regime's constant use of detention as a repressive tool to subjugate civilians and target specific groups based on political, security, and economic considerations. Various security agencies participated in these campaigns, most notably:

- Military Security Intelligence Directorate.
- State Security Directorate.
- Air Force Intelligence Directorate.
- Political Security Intelligence Directorate.

Additionally, military units such as the Fourth Division, local militias, and the Criminal Security Directorate carried out mass arrests with no legal justification.

Key backgrounds and patterns of arrests in 2024

1. Pressurizing relatives of wanted individuals

These operations targeted the relatives of wanted individuals to pressurize them into surrendering. These arrests included women and children, such as the arrest of two women and two children in the Kanaker town in Rural Damascus.

2. Evasion of military service

The Assad regime launched extensive campaigns targeting young men accused of evading mandatory and reserve military service. Most of these operations took place in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama, where hundreds of civilians were detained at checkpoints or during raids.

3. Expression of opinion and criticism of living conditions

SNHR documented the arrest of **34 people**, including three women, for criticizing living conditions or supporting the Suwayda protests, particularly on social media. They were charged under the Counter-Cybercrime Act.

4. Financial extortion

Arrests targeted civilians receiving money transfers from abroad on the pretext of 'dealing in foreign currency.' These arrests were concentrated in Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama, and the detainees were released after paying large sums of money.

5. Arrests related to illegal border crossings

The Assad regime targeted individuals attempting to cross into Lebanon illegally, particularly through Homs governorate and Rural Damascus.

6. Arrests of returnees

These arrests targeted displaced persons returning to their areas or refugees returning from Lebanon, especially those fleeing Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon from September 2024. SNHR documented the arrests of **236 returnees**, including, including eight children and 19 women, by regime forces.

7. Arrests for forced conscription

Forced conscription campaigns

Throughout the year, the Assad regime's security services and military forces used arrest as a means to forcibly conscript young men into the army. These campaigns mainly targeted:

- Civilians returning from abroad or from displacement areas.
- Young men attempting to escape mandatory service.
- Children in some rural areas.

Peak of conscription campaigns

These campaigns escalated in November 2024, coinciding with Operation Deter Aggression, reaching their peak in December. Assad regime security forces carried out mass arrests targeting hundreds of young men and children to send them to the frontlines in northern Syria. SNHR estimated that about **1,000 people** were arrested and transferred directly to combat zones without training.

8. Targeting civilians based on family ties or external connections

Civilians were arrested for being related to individuals involved in political opposition or for communicating with people in opposition-controlled areas. Others were detained while visiting immigration and passport offices in order to obtain travel documents.

Statistics and arrest figures in 2024

Total arrests in 2024³⁵

The Assad regime arrested 1,362 people, including:

- 32 children.
- 38 women.

A total of **1,239 people** were released, while 123 remain in detention or forcibly disappeared.

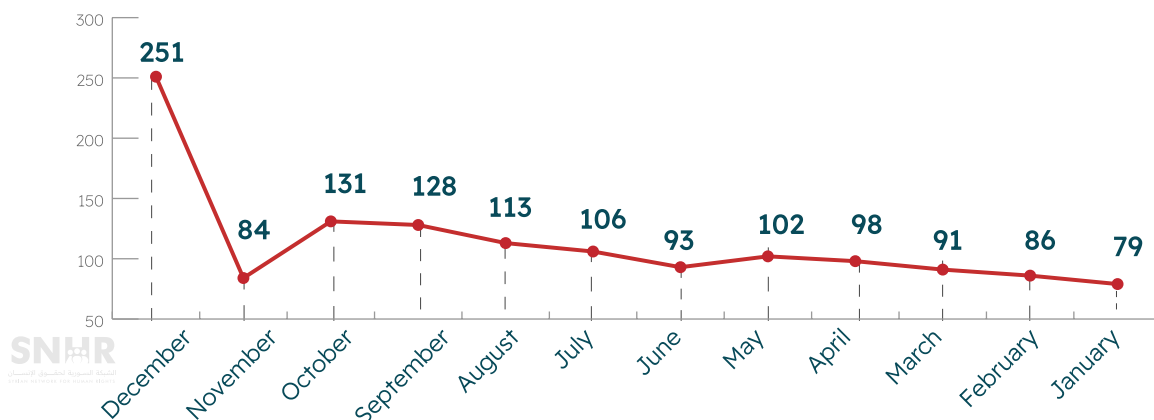
Comparison with 2023

In 2023, the Assad regime arrested **1,063 people**, including:

- 24 children.
- 49 women.

Analysis of arbitrary detentions by the Assad regime in 2024

1. Distribution of arbitrary arrests by month



35. It should be noted that any discrepancy between the data released by SNHR in its regular monthly reports and those released in its annual report is the result of SNHR's team recording new cases or verifying older ones that took place in 2024, which are then added to the month when they took place.

2. Analysis

- **Gradual increase:** There was a steady rise in arrests by regime forces from January to October, with an average of **105 detentions** per month.
- **Peak arrests:** December documented the highest number of arrests, with **251** in total, accounting for 18.4 percent of the yearly total.

Main reason: Intensive forced conscription campaigns targeting young men and children, along with retaliatory arrests of returnees from Lebanon.

- **Arrests in November and December:** This period saw a sharp escalation due to opposition forces' launch of Operation Deter Aggression, during which Assad regime forces used arrests as a tool for retaliation and for military conscription for frontline reinforcement.

Releases in 2024

• Releases before the fall of the Assad regime

Before the launch of Operation Deter Aggression, SNHR documented the Assad regime's release of at least **194 detainees**, including 15 children and 21 women. The releases were as follows:

- 13 individuals were released under Amnesty Decree No. 7 of 2022. Up till the Assad regime's downfall, the application of Amnesty Decree No. 7 of 2022 remained conditional upon the end of the sentences of those detainees partially included in the decree.
- 36 were released after serving their arbitrary sentences, unrelated to amnesty decrees.
- 145 people, including 15 children and 21 women, were released from Assad regime security branches without trial.

• Releases after Operation Deter Aggression and the fall of the Assad regime

On November 27, 2024, the Military Operations Command launched Operation Deter Aggression, regaining control of cities previously held by the Assad regime.

- As cities were recaptured, the Assad regime's prisons and security branches were immediately opened, leading to the release of all detainees.
- SNHR estimated that around **24,000 people** were released from all prisons and detention centers.

Violations related to those who were not released

- Failure to return victims' bodies: Until its final days, the Assad regime continued the practice of enforced disappearance. The bodies of the majority of victims killed under torture or executed were not returned to their families.
- Falsification of civil registry records: The Assad regime documented forcibly disappeared individuals as deceased in civil registry records without specifying the causes of death or returning the victims' bodies.

Social and humanitarian impacts of arrests in 2024

1. Consequences for families

- Financial extortion: Families desperate to secure the release of detained relatives were subjected to extortion by regime personnel, forcing many to sell property or go into debt.
- Fear and intimidation: Arrests were used as a tool to terrorize civilians and reinforce the Assad regime's control.

2. Impact on returnees and refugees

- Returning refugees: Widespread arrests were documented among refugees either forcibly returned from Lebanon or fleeing Israeli airstrikes on the country. Many were detained immediately upon entering Syria.
- Returnees to their original areas: Civilians returning to Assad regime-controlled areas faced arrest and prosecution, especially in the governorates of Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo.

Comprehensive analysis of arrest campaigns and releases:

1. Assad regime's policies before its fall

- The Assad regime relied on arrests as a primary tool of repression, targeting a broad range of civilians under various pretexts, including military service evasion, contacts with opposition bodies, or attempts to flee the country.
- Arrests were also used by regime personnel for financial gain, with families being extorted for the release of detainees.

2. After the fall of the Assad regime

- The opening of prisons and security branches revealed the extent of the humanitarian catastrophe linked to enforced disappearances. Large numbers of victims had been executed or tortured to death and buried in mass graves.
- The **24,000 detainees** released with the opening of the Assad regime's prisons represent only a small fraction of the total number of documented detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, highlighting the urgent need for achieving justice and revealing the fate of the tens of thousands still missing.

3. The need for accountability and justice

These events underscore the necessity of holding those responsible for violations accountable. Support must also be provided to released detainees and their families, including psychological and financial compensation, and for efforts to uncover the fate of the forcibly disappeared.

iii. Torture in detention centers in 2024

Torture as an instrument of repression

The practice of arbitrary arrest in Syria throughout the Assad regime's rule was closer to abduction than to any standard arrest procedure, beginning with the victim being detained under unlawful circumstances then subjected to an endless cycle of systematic torture inside detention centers. In 2024, torture practices continued in detention centers operated by Assad regime forces and regime-affiliated military hospitals. These practices, which constituted some of the most heinous crimes against humanity, included:

- **Physical torture:** Violent methods that caused permanent injuries and, in some cases, led to loss of life.
- **Psychological torture:** Deprivation of sleep, constant threats, and degrading humiliation.
- **Sexual violence:** Used as a tool of repression, affecting children, women, and even men.
- **Medical negligence:** Detainees were left to suffer from illnesses and injuries without any treatment, a prolonged form of torture that often resulted in death.

Tragic conditions inside detention centers

- **Lack of medical care:** Many detainees suffered from physical injuries and psychological traumas without receiving any treatment, constituting a form of chronic torture.
- **Indiscriminate violations:** Violations were carried out against all detainees, regardless of age or health condition, including children, women, the elderly, and invalids.
- **Constant systematic practice of torture from 2011 onwards:** Reports indicate that the Assad regime never changed its brutal methods and continued to use torture routinely and systematically at the same rate throughout the years of conflict.

Documentation in 2024

SNHR documented **52 deaths** due to torture in Assad regime detention centers, including of two children, compared to 34 people in 2023, including a child and one woman.

- Among those who died as a result of torture, six were refugees who had returned or been forcibly returned to areas under Assad regime control. The bodies of five of these victims were returned to their families.

Registering forcibly disappeared persons as deceased

Up until its downfall, the Assad regime continued registering forcibly disappeared persons as deceased in civil registry offices³⁶ without providing any details of the causes of death or returning the victims' bodies, reinforcing suspicions that they died as a result of torture.

At least **17 individuals**, including two children, were documented as deceased, including:

- political activists.
- university students.
- individuals with family ties to dissidents.

The families of the victims confirmed that their relatives were in good health at the time of their arrest, indicating a strong probability that they were tortured to death or deliberately denied medical care.

36. One of these victims was Islamic thinker Abdul Akram al-Saqqa. See:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, August 22). SNHR Condemns the Syrian Regime's Detention and Enforced Disappearance of Islamic Thinker Abdul Akram al-Saqqa for Nearly 13 Years, then Registering Him as Dead in Civil Registry Records. Accessed on February 25, 2025, via: <https://snhr.org/?p=71833>

Nature of the crimes

Reports indicate that torture in the Assad regime's detention centers was:

- Widespread and systematic: Carried out as a central policy, not as isolated individual acts.
- A crime against humanity: credible evidence shows that the crimes committed, including systematic torture, extrajudicial executions, and enforced disappearances, fall within the framework of crimes against humanity.

Analysis of information and findings

Key observations in 2024

1. **Returning refugees targeted:** Torture continued against refugees who were forcibly returned to Syria,³⁷ indicating the enduring absence of any safety guarantees for returnees throughout the Assad regime's rule.
2. **Increase in deaths inside regime detention centers:** More deaths due to torture or medical negligence were documented, with many deaths being registered in civil registry records as mere numbers without any details being provided.
3. **Lack of accountability:** The Assad regime failed to conduct any serious investigations or held perpetrators accountable, despite UN resolutions and human rights reports.

Consequences

Loss of trust in legal institutions: The Assad regime's failure to adhere to international and domestic laws are further evidence that it used state institutions solely to serve its own repressive policies.

Growing need for international justice: The systemic and large-scale nature of the former regime's torture and violations underline the continuing need for international support in holding the perpetrators accountable

Challenges to refugee returns: These realities confirm that Syria remained unsafe, with the former regime obstructing any efforts to repatriate refugees or IDPs up until its downfall.

37. See:

- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, July 9). SNHR Condemns Syrian Regime Forces for Detention, Fatal Torture of A Refugee Forcibly Deported from Lebanon Who Died in a Damascus Hospital. Accessed on February 25, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/4gVLJiu>
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, August 9). SNHR Condemns Syrian Regime Forces' Detention, Fatal Torture of A Refugee Forcibly Deported from Türkiye. Accessed on February 25, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/3XcFn7m>
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, May 21). SNHR Condemns Syrian Regime for Killing Doctor Majd Kamalmaz Under Torture After Eight Years of Enforced Disappearance. Accessed on February 25, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/4bhDOe2>
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, February 10). SNHR Condemns Syrian Regime Forces Detaining and Forcibly Disappearing Syrian Poet Nasser Bunduq for 10 Years, then Registering Him as Dead in the Civil Registry Records. Accessed on February 25, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/4bj9b8c>
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, June 28). SNHR Condemns Syrian Regime Forces for Detention, Fatal Torture of A Refugee Forcibly Deported from Lebanon. Accessed on February 25, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/3Qw75rZ>

b. Violations related to the conduct of hostilities

i. Unlawful military operations attacks

1. Artillery and aerial bombardment

In 2024, Assad regime forces continued conducting artillery and aerial attacks on populated areas across Syria. These attacks were marked by indiscriminate targeting and a failure to comply with the principles of distinction³⁸ and proportionality³⁹ under international humanitarian law. As a result, hundreds of civilians were killed or injured, and civilian infrastructure was subjected to widespread destruction.

Attack patterns

- **Indiscriminate and devastating escalation**

- Attacks were carried out using artillery, rocket launchers, and warplanes in areas far from the military frontlines. SNHR observed coordination between aerial and artillery attacks, indicating collaboration between Assad regime forces and their Russian allies.
- After November 27, 2024, the Assad regime resumed the use of barrel bombs, which had not been deployed for four years, targeting residential areas and worsening civilian suffering.

- **Intensified bombardment following the launch of Operation Deter Aggression**

- The pace of bombardment increased significantly after the Military Operations Command launched Operation Deter Aggression. Retaliatory attacks targeted areas that had previously slipped from Assad regime control, leading to a high number of civilian casualties and the destruction of vital infrastructure.

38. "The parties to the conflict must at all times distinguish between civilians and combatants. Attacks may only be directed against combatants. Attacks must not be directed against civilians." International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)'s IHL Databases - Rule 1. The Principle of Distinction between Civilians and Combatants. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule1>

"The parties to the conflict must at all times distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives. Attacks may only be directed against military objectives. Attacks must not be directed against civilian objects." International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)'s IHL Databases - Rule 7. The Principle of Distinction between Civilian Objects and Military Objectives. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule7>

39. "Launching an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated, is prohibited." International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)'s IHL Databases - Rule 14. Proportionality in Attack. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule7>

Notable documented attacks

• Northern rural Homs (December 5)

25 civilians, including two children, were killed, and dozens of others were injured in an attack on residential areas.

Event link: [Source](#)

• Northern rural Homs (December 7)

Eight civilians were killed, including three children and three women, in a ground attack by regime forces using artillery and rocket launchers, backed by airstrikes from Assad regime and Russian warplanes.

Event link: [Source](#)

2. Siege and military threats

Siege continued to be used as a weapon by Assad regime forces against civilians up till the downfall of the Assad regime, causing immense suffering. The Assad regime imposed severe restrictions on several towns and districts, often threatening military incursions.

Notable siege incidents

• Siege of Zakya town (Rural Damascus)

September 8, 2024

- Assad regime forces, including the Fourth and Second Divisions, imposed a siege on Zakya town in western Rural Damascus, setting up strict checkpoints at its entrances.
- The Assad regime claimed the siege was justified by the presence of armed groups and weapons inside the town, although residents denied these allegations.
- Although partial movement of residents and goods was allowed, Assad regime forces demanded bribes from those passing through their checkpoints.

October 20, 2024

- Assad regime forces intensified the siege, completely sealing off the town after clashes erupted between locals and regime forces following the arrest of two residents.
- The full closure lasted several days before being eased, although restrictions and extortion continued until the fall of the Assad regime.
- On December 7, the town was bombarded by regime military units stationed nearby, targeting civilian homes.

Analysis of the phenomenon

- The use of siege and military threats reflected the Assad regime's systemic policy of collective punishment against civilians in areas it deemed rebellious or disloyal.
- Siege operations constitute a blatant violation of international humanitarian law, as they deprive civilians of essential needs such as food and medicine.

ii. Protected individuals and objects

1. Medical sector

In 2024, the Assad regime continued targeting medical workers and facilities, in blatant violation of international humanitarian law, under which the medical sector is protected from attacks during armed conflicts. Below are the most significant documented regime violations against the medical sector:

Extrajudicial killings

Six medical workers were documented as having been killed by Assad regime forces in 2024, compared to four in 2023.

Arbitrary arrest and detention

Assad regime forces arrested **eight medical workers** in 2024, compared to six in 2023.

Attacks on medical facilities

SNHR documented **seven attacks on medical facilities** by Assad regime forces in 2024, compared to 13 in 2023.

Escalation at the end of the year

Following the launch of Operation Deter Aggression on November 27, Assad regime forces once again escalated their targeting of medical facilities.

In the course of this operation, three additional attacks on medical facilities have been documented.

Repercussions

- **Medical workers fleeing Syria**

The targeting of medical facilities and personnel drove hundreds of medical workers to leave the country, resulting in a severe shortage of healthcare workers. This shortage will have catastrophic consequences for public health in Syria for decades.

- **Lack of rehabilitation**

The Assad regime showed no interest in rehabilitating any of the medical facilities destroyed in areas it recaptured, further intensifying the healthcare crisis.

2. Education sector

The Assad regime's targeting of educational facilities caused severe damage to the education sector in Syria in 2024, directly affecting students and local communities.

- **Attacks on educational facilities**

SNHR documented **42 attacks** on educational facilities (mostly schools) by Assad regime forces in 2024, compared to 50 attacks documented in 2023.

- These attacks accounted for approximately 88 percent of all attacks on educational facilities in Syria in 2024.

- **Escalation at the end of the year**

Following the launch of Operation Deter Aggression on November 27, Assad regime forces escalated their targeting of educational facilities.

In the course of this operation, 16 additional attacks on educational facilities (all schools) have been documented.

Repercussions

- **Depriving students of education**

The Assad regime's deliberate targeting of schools led to the suspension of classes in several areas, further increasing school dropout rates among children, with the transitional government now working to remedy this and restore Syria's devastated education sector.

3. Places of worship

Assad regime forces continued to target places of worship, particularly mosques, as part of the Assad regime's policy to destroy infrastructure in areas beyond its control.

- **Attacks on places of worship**

SNHR documented **17 attacks** on places of worship (16 mosques and one church) in 2024 by Assad regime forces, compared to 32 attacks in 2023.

- **Escalation at the end of the year**

With the launch of Operation Deter Aggression, SNHR observed continued targeting of places of worship. SNHR documented three additional attacks (one mosque and two churches) after November 27.

- **Additional violations**

- From 2011 up until its downfall, the Assad regime exploited places of worship in areas under its control by
- Converting them into military headquarters.
- Using them as platforms to promote political propaganda.

4. Media workers

Media workers in Syria faced constant violations by the Assad regime throughout its rule, including killing, arrest, and arbitrary detention.

Extrajudicial killings

SNHR documented the killing of **five media workers** by Assad regime forces in 2024, compared to one media worker in 2023.

Arbitrary arrest and detention

Thirteen media workers were arrested in 2024 by Assad regime forces, compared to nine in 2023.

Repercussions

- **Silencing the media**

The Assad regime relentlessly targeted media workers with the objective of suppressing voices reporting the truth, and undermining independent coverage of its heinous crimes in Syria.

iii. Use of unlawful weapons

1. Cluster munitions

At least **two attacks** using cluster munitions by Assad regime forces were documented in 2024, both in Aleppo governorate. These attacks resulted in the injury of approximately 11 people, including five children and two women. At least one attack was documented in 2023.

2. Incendiary munitions:

In 2024, the Assad regime used incendiary weapons against areas far from the military frontlines, with no observed military activity at the targeted locations at the time of these attacks. SNHR documented at least **three attacks** using incendiary weapons in 2024, all of which targeted Idlib governorate, causing the death of one civilian and injuring another.

3. Barrel bombs:

As SNHR's database shows, Assad regime aircraft, both helicopters and fixed-wing warplanes, dropped at least **38 barrel bombs** on the governorates of Idlib and Hama in 2024. These attacks resulted in the deaths of five civilians, including three women.

2. Russian forces

a. Extrajudicial killing

Russia's air force continued to carry out airstrikes in 2024, targeting populated areas in northwestern Syria and other parts of the Syrian badiya or 'desert area' under joint control of opposition factions and HTS. These attacks caused civilian casualties and widespread destruction of infrastructure, with a notable escalation in the last quarter of the year.

• Attacks on civilians

Between October 14 and 16, 2024, northwestern Syria witnessed intense escalation by Russian forces. These forces carried out multiple daily airstrikes with fixed-wing aircraft, using high-explosive missiles, targeting civilian areas, including:⁴⁰

- Idlib governorate.
- Northern Rural Latakia.
- Western Rural Hama.

The attacks focused on:

- Residential neighborhoods.
- Forested areas.
- Displacement camps.

Nature of the targets

Investigations confirmed that the targeted areas were entirely civilian, with no signs of military targets. Despite their ability to distinguish between civilians and combatants, Russian forces failed to comply with the principles of international humanitarian law, including distinction, proportionality, and precaution.

Russian forces also failed to issue any prior warnings to civilians before carrying out attacks.

• Notable attack

On October 23, 2024, SNHR released an investigation into a Russian airstrike that resulted in a massacre,⁴¹ in which **11 civilians**, including four children, were killed.

• Casualties

In 2024, Russian forces killed at least 29 civilians, including:

- Nine children.
- Two women.

Russian forces committed two massacres during the year.

These figures are higher than those for 2023, in which Russian forces killed **20 civilians**, including:

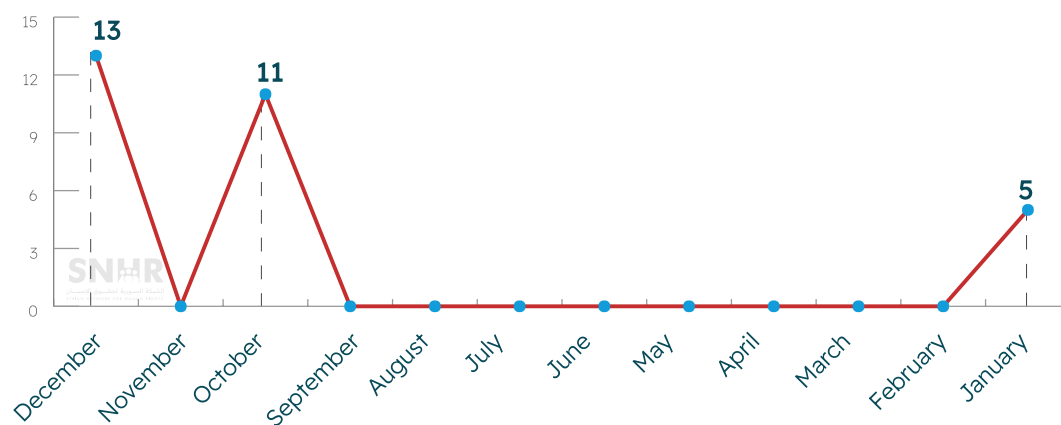
- Six children.
- Five women.

Russian forces also committed one massacre in 2023.

40. Areas in Idlib, as well as areas in northern rural Hama, western rural Aleppo, and rural Latakia. These areas were under the control of armed opposition factions and HTS at the time.

41. See:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, October 23). Investigation Proving Two Russian Forces' Attacks in Idlib – a Massacre in Which 11 Civilians Were Killed & the Destruction of a Power Station Depriving Thousands of Civilians of Water. Accessed on February 25, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/3XhD0A3>

Distribution of the 29 civilian victims killed by Russian forces by month in 2024:

↑ Rescuers retrieve a victim's body following a massacre caused by an aerial attack by Russian forces on a furniture workshop on the western outskirts of Idlib city – October 16, 2024

Targeting medical workers and facilities

• Victims among medical workers

SNHR did not document any incidents of killings targeting medical workers by Russian forces in 2024.

No such incidents were documented in 2023 either.

• Attacks on medical facilities

- In 2024, SNHR documented **eight attacks** on medical facilities believed to have been carried out by Russian forces. All attacks occurred after November 27.
- In 2023, only **one Russian attack** on a medical facility was documented.

c. Targeting educational facilities

SNHR did not document any attacks on educational facilities by Russian forces in 2024.

In 2023, **one Russian attack** on educational facilities was documented.

Conclusion: Russian crimes in Syria

From the launch of Russia's military intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015, up until the Assad regime's downfall, Russian forces committed grave violations amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity.⁴² These violations included:

- Unlawful killings
- Forced displacement
- Targeting vital infrastructure, including medical and educational facilities.

These crimes were part of a broader strategy that supported the Assad regime in suppressing Syrian civilians and inflicted severe harm on both the country's population and infrastructure.

42. SNHR outlined samples of these violations in its ninth annual report on the most notable violations by Russian forces since the launch of its military intervention in Syria. See:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, September 30). SNHR's Ninth Annual Report on the Most Notable Violations by Russian Forces Since the Launch of Russia's Military Intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015. Accessed on February 25, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/3CWFsVQ>

3. ISIS (the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State')

a. Unlawful killings

Despite losing all its territorial control since the end of March 2019, ISIS sleeper cells continued to carry out limited-scale terrorist operations, including targeting and unlawfully killing civilians. In 2024, SNHR documented several attacks attributed to cells believed to be affiliated with ISIS.

- **Civilian death toll in 2024**

In 2024, SNHR documented the killing of four civilians by ISIS, including:

- One child.

Comparison with 2023

In 2023, ISIS cells killed only one civilian.

- **Patterns and significant decline**

The decline in documented attacks and casualties is due to ISIS losing control over areas where it previously exerted influence, as well as the dispersion of its cells following military operations by multiple local and international forces.

b. Issue of forcibly disappeared persons

The issue of the people forcibly disappeared by ISIS remains one of the most complex ongoing humanitarian crises. Nearly five years after its defeat and loss of territorial control, the fate of thousands of Syrians arrested by ISIS remains unknown.

- **Number of forcibly disappeared persons by ISIS**

SNHR has documented that the fate of at least **8,684 persons** forcibly disappeared arrested by ISIS remains unknown.

- Areas previously under ISIS control
- The violations committed by ISIS during its control of large parts of Syria resulted in significant social devastation.⁴³
- The group left a legacy of suffering and fragmentation in the communities that were subjected to its oppressive rule.

43. In early-2022, SNHR released an extensive report outlining the most notable violations documented as having been carried out by ISIS since its emergence in April 2013. See:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2022, February 10). The Most Notable ISIS Violations against Syrian Society and ISIS' Contribution to Distorting the Popular Uprising Calling for Freedom and Dignity. Accessed on February 25, 2025, via: <https://snhr.org/?p=57313>

• Detention centers

The Assad regime's regaining control over ISIS detention centers did not lead to revelations about the fate of the disappeared, indicating the group's deliberate attempt to erase evidence of its crimes.

4. Hay'at HTS (a coalition comprising Fateh al-Sham Front and a number of armed opposition factions).

a. Extrajudicial killing

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) continued to commit violations against civilians in areas under its control in 2024, including unlawful killings targeting civilians, including women and children.

• Civilian death toll in 2024

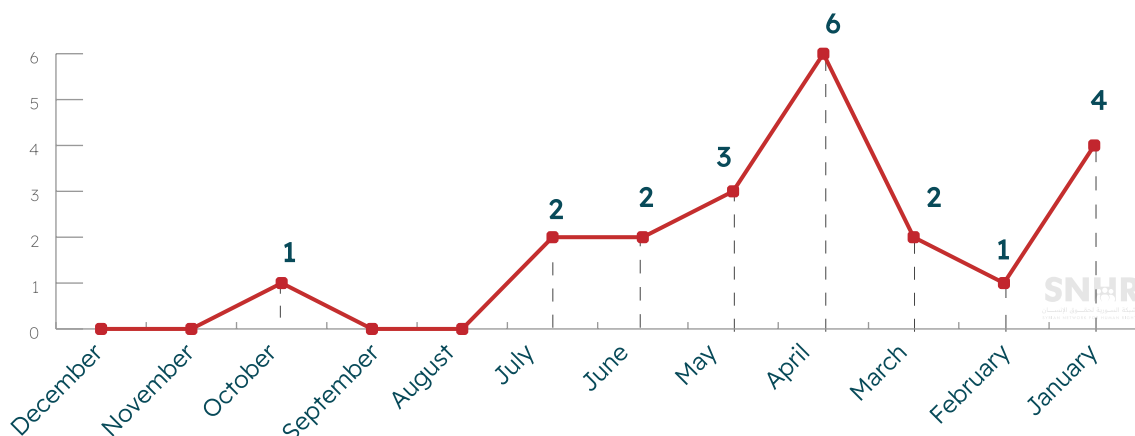
In 2024, SNHR documented the killing of 21 civilians by HTS, including:

- One child.
- Two women.

Comparison with 2023

At least **16** civilians were killed by HTS in 2023, including two children and five women.

Civilians killed by HTS in 2024 are distributed by month as follows:



b. Arbitrary arrest/enforced disappearance

HTS continued to carry out large-scale arbitrary detention campaigns in 2024, targeting media workers, humanitarian workers, local dignitaries, and even civilians who opposed or were unsupportive of the group's policies. These operations were often conducted arbitrarily, including home raids, abductions from the streets, or at checkpoints.

Key reasons for arrests and detentions in 2024

1. Opposition to the group's policies

- HTS targeted individuals who participated in peaceful demonstrations against it, especially in Idlib governorate.
- These arrests escalated throughout the year due to the expansion of the anti-HTS movement.

2. Associations with HTS rivals

- The group detained individuals accused of working for other factions and organizations, including opposition groups.
- Supporters of the Tahrir Party, particularly in Idlib governorate, were targeted.

3. IDPs

The targets of arrest campaigns included IDPs who refused to relocate to camps designated for them in rural Idlib.

4. Humanitarian workers and media activists

The HTS' Salvation Government, summoned media activists and humanitarian workers for questioning and issued warnings to them.

Arbitrary detention statistics in 2024

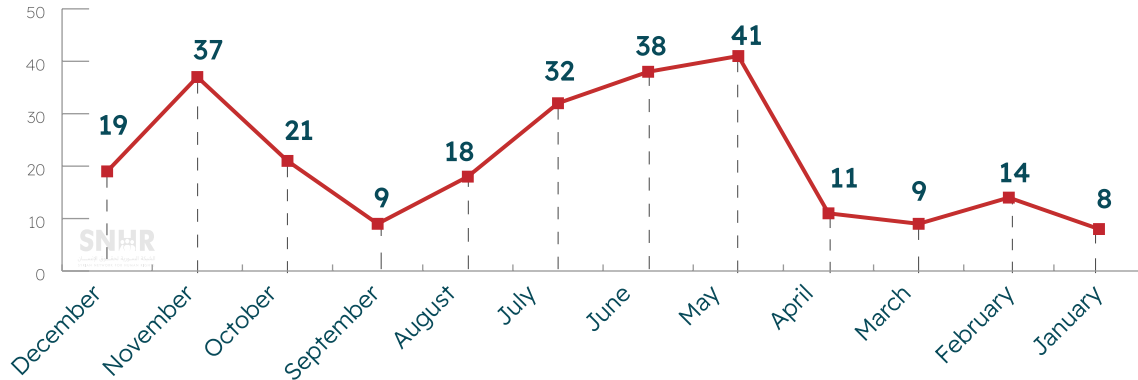
A total of **257 individuals** were arrested/detained by HTS in 2024, including:

- Three children
- 10 women
- A total of 65 individuals were released for various reasons, including paying money or through mediation by local figures.
- A total of 192 individuals are still detained or forcibly disappeared by HTS.

Comparison with 2023

The group detained at least **248 people**, including four children and seven women.

Arbitrary arrests carried out by HTS in 2024 are distributed by month as follows:



Data analysis

- A significant increase was documented in May and June, due to the group's targeting of Tahrir Party supporters.
- Another spike in arrests was observed in November, coinciding with an escalation in public protests against the group.
- In most cases, no clear charges were levied against the detainees.

Amnesty decree

On March 5, 2024, the HTS' Salvation Government issued a general amnesty decree for detainees held in its detention centers, covering those detained on criminal charges.

Some of the detainees released in accordance with the amnesty decree issued by the HTS' Salvation Government on March 5, 2024



Copy of the amnesty decree issued by the HTS' Salvation Government on March 5, 2024



c. Torture in detention centers

HTS continued to practice torture in its detention centers. Numerous accounts indicated that the group prevented detainees' families from obtaining information about their relatives' fate.

Deaths in HTS detention centers

In 2024, SNHR documented **17 deaths** in detention centers operated by HTS, due to:

- Torture
- Medical negligence

Comparison with 2023

SNHR documented eight deaths in HTS detention centers in 2023, including one woman.

Key practices

1. Execution of forcibly disappeared persons

- The group informed several families that their relatives had been executed, without providing evidence or clear charges against them.
- The timing of these notifications suggests an attempt to prevent public outrage from escalating.

2. Harsh detention conditions

- HTS' detention centers lack the most basic health and safety standards.
- Detainees are not allowed to contact their families or appoint lawyers.

3. Opening offices for missing persons inquiries

Under pressure from public protests, the group was forced to open offices to receive complaints from the families of forcibly disappeared persons.

5. All armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA)

a. Extrajudicial killing

In 2024, SNHR documented more incidents of extrajudicial killings by armed opposition and the Syrian National Army (SNA). Several practices led to civilian deaths, including:

1. Indiscriminate bombardment

Armed opposition factions and national army forces used unguided weapons, such as mortars and locally made projectiles, causing civilian deaths, including of women and children.

2. Infighting

Armed conflicts between factions in populated areas resulted in deaths and injuries among civilians who were not involved in the fighting.

3. Random gunfire

Opposition-controlled areas witnessed incidents of indiscriminate gunfire during disputes or celebrations, leading to civilian deaths and injuries.

Figures

• Casualties in 2024

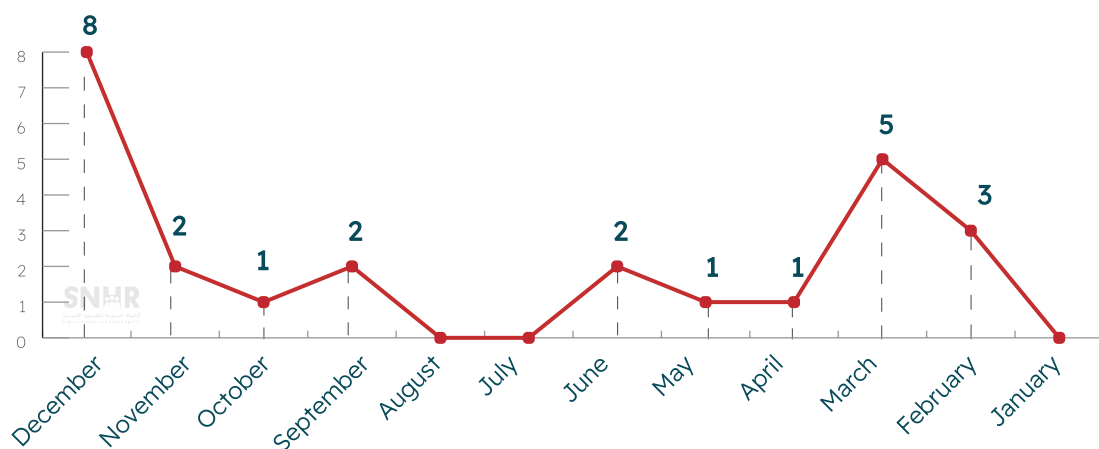
In 2024, SNHR documented the killing of **25 civilians** by armed opposition factions/SNA, including:

- Four children
- Three women

• Comparison with 2023

SNHR documented the killing of **17 civilians**, including five children and one woman, in 2023.

Civilian deaths by armed opposition factions/SNA in 2024 are distributed by month as follows:



b. Arbitrary detention/enforced disappearance

In 2024, armed opposition factions and the SNA continued to carry out widespread campaigns of arbitrary detention and abductions, targeting civilians, including women and children.

Patterns of detention in 2024

1. Individuals coming from areas under Assad regime control

Those arrested included civilians travelling from territories then controlled by the Assad regime to areas under the control of armed opposition factions, either to visit relatives or in an attempt to migrate to Türkiye. These individuals were detained without charges or trials.

2. Ethnic targeting

A number of Kurdish civilians were targeted for arrest on the basis of their ethnicity in areas such as Afrin. These detentions involved extortion and property seizures.

3. Accusations of affiliation with SDF

Civilians were detained on allegations of links to the SDF.

4. Pressure to seize homes

In villages in Afrin, SNA personnel detained civilians who demanded the return of their homes, which had been confiscated by factions such as the al-Sultan Murad faction.

5. Cultural and religious accusations

SNHR documented arrests targeting civilians in Afrin while they were organizing Nowruz celebrations.

Statistics

2024 figures

In 2024, SNHR documented at least **423 detentions** by armed opposition factions/SNA, including:

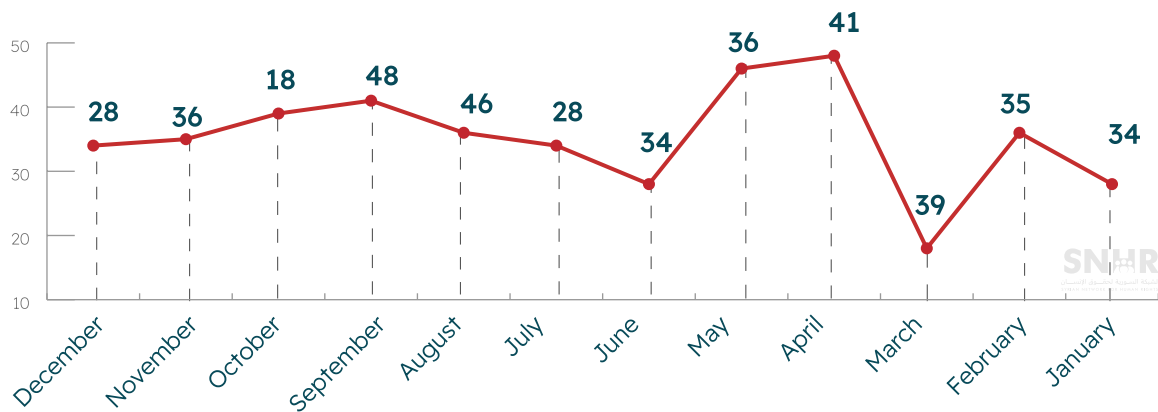
- 10 children.
- 16 women.

122 individuals were released, while 301 remain under arbitrary detention or enforced disappearance.

Comparison with 2023

In 2023, SNHR documented **365 detentions** by the armed opposition factions/SNA, including of 10 children and 25 women.

Detention carried out by armed opposition factions/SNA in 2024 are distributed by month as follows:



Data analysis

- Increases in detention cases were observed in March, April, August, and September.
- Detentions in these months were primarily linked to accusations of affiliation with the SDF or internal disputes.

c. Torture inside detention centers

In 2024, SNHR documented the continued use of torture by armed opposition factions and the SNA inside their detention centers. These practices included deliberate medical negligence and inhumane detention conditions.

Statistics

2024 figures

In 2024, SNHR documented **six deaths** due to torture or medical negligence inside detention centers operated by armed opposition factions/SNA.

Comparison with 2023

In 2023, SNHR documented **three deaths** due to torture inside detention centers operated by the SNA.

Notable torture practices

1. Execution under torture

Survivor accounts confirmed that detainees were subjected to severe beatings and psychological torture, leading to fatalities.

2. Deliberate medical negligence

Deaths increased due to the SNA's refusal to provide medical care to detainees suffering from chronic illnesses or severe injuries.

3. Harsh detention conditions

Torture methods in opposition detention centers included inhumane conditions such as severe overcrowding and a lack of food and clean water.

Conclusions

These practices reflect the absence of legal and humanitarian oversight in opposition detention centers, and confirm ongoing violations against civilians in areas under their control.

6. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

a. Extrajudicial killings

In 2024, the SDF continued committing serious human rights violations, most notably extrajudicial killings. Several primary types of these operations were documented, including:

1. Civilian deaths in indiscriminate bombardment

- SDF carried out bombardment targeting densely populated residential areas, particularly along the banks of the Euphrates River in Deir Ez-Zour governorate.
- Attacks also targeted displacement camps in areas controlled by the SNA, causing civilian casualties.

2. Targeting civilians with gunfire

Civilians, including [children](#), were shot dead by [SDF patrols](#) or while being pursued for arrest.

3. Clashes-related casualties

Civilians, including children, were killed in clashes between the SDF on one side, and Deir Ez-Zour military council, and tribal fighters on the other.

4. Sniper targeting

Deliberate sniper fire by SDF personnel resulted in the deaths of civilians, including children.

5. Victims of airborne raids

Joint airborne operations by SDF and the US-led International Coalition led to civilian deaths, including children, with homes being targeted on the pretext of alleged ISIS affiliation.

6. Deaths from previous injuries

Some victims died from wounds sustained in earlier SDF shootings or bombardment, particularly in areas controlled by Assad regime forces.

Statistics

2024 figures

166 civilians killed by the SDF in 2024, including:

- 23 children.
- six women.

Among the victims were:

- 10 civilians, including two children, who were killed by sniper fire.
- The SDF committed at least two massacres.

Comparison with 2023

SNHR documented **74 civilian** deaths by SDF in 2023, including:

- Nine children.
- 10 women.
- Among the victims were four civilians and one woman who were killed by sniper fire.

b. Arbitrary detention/enforced disappearance

The SDF continued to carry out arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance campaigns in 2024, characterized by mass detentions and accompanying physical and material violations.

Patterns of detention in 2024

1. Pretext of combating ISIS sleeper cells

- Raids and arrests targeted civilians and activists on the pretext of suspected ties to ISIS sleeper cells.
- Some operations involved the participation of international coalition forces.

2. Detention at checkpoints

- Civilians, including women and children, were detained at checkpoints.
- Cases of financial extortion against women at checkpoints were documented.

3. Accusations of affiliation with the SNA

Detentions involved severe beatings of civilians accused of communicating with the SNA.

4. Arrests for criticizing living conditions

- SDF personnel arrested civilians, including women, for criticizing living and service conditions in areas under the group's control, especially in the governorates of Deir Ez-Zour, Hasaka, and Raqqa.
- These arrest operations involved the confiscation of personal property such as money and phones.

5. Targeting anti-SDF protests

Detentions targeted civilians who participated in protests, such as those in Manbij against SDF-imposed curricula.

6. Pressuring wanted individuals to surrender

Detentions included arresting women and children as leverage against their wanted relatives.

7. Accusations of participating in battles

SDF personnel detained individuals accused of participating in clashes with tribal forces in Deir Ez-Zour.

8. Conscription

The SDF continued [detaining civilians](#), [including children](#), for forced conscription and prohibiting their families from contacting them or knowing their whereabouts.

General Amnesty Act No. 10 of 2024

On July 17, 2024, the SDF issued a [General Amnesty Act](#), leading to:

- The release of **279 individuals**, mostly from the governorates of Deir Ez-Zour, Hasaka, and Aleppo.
- The amnesty did not include women or children.

Statistics

2024 figures

A total of **581 individuals** were arrested by SDF in 2024, including:

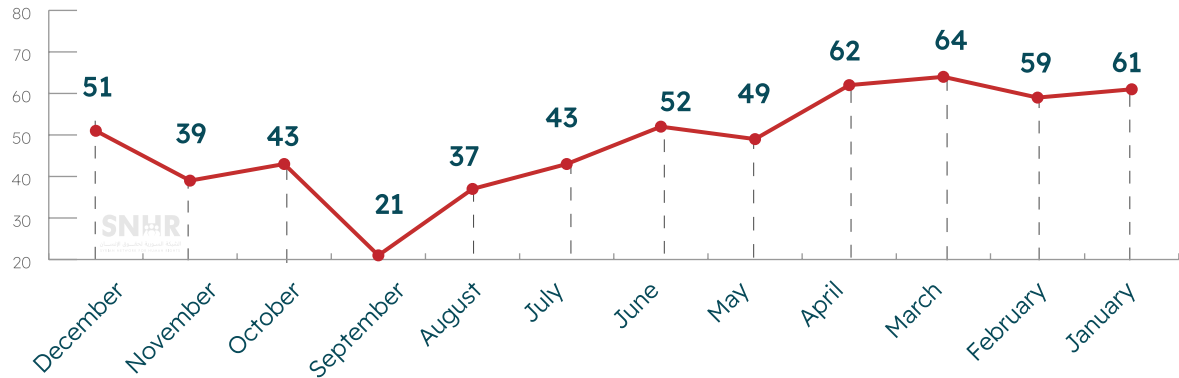
- 79 children
- Eight women.
- A total of **113 individuals** were released, while 468 individuals are still in detention or forcibly disappeared.

Comparison with 2023

In 2023, SDF arrested **641 individuals**, including:

- 91 children.
- Six women.

Arrests/detentions carried out by SDF in 2024 are distributed by month as follows:



Analysis of detention data in 2024

The increase in the number of arbitrary detentions by the SDF in January, February, March, and April can be attributed to:

- Widespread arrest campaigns under the pretext of participation in battles between the SDF and Arab tribal forces in Deir Ez-Zour governorate.
- Mass detentions targeting civilians, particularly for conscription or as punishment for participating in protests against the SDF.

iii. Torture inside detention centers

The SDF continued to use torture as a repressive tool against detainees in its detention centers in 2024, with SNHR documenting further systematic violations, including psychological and physical torture, as well as deliberate medical neglect.

Patterns of torture

1. Physical and retaliatory torture

- Practices included severe beating, burning, sleep deprivation, and forced standing for long hours, with these violations often perpetrated with retaliatory motives.
- Torture practices were characterized by an ethnic nature, particularly targeting Arab detainees in areas under SDF control.

2. Deliberate medical negligence

- Extreme overcrowding and harsh detention conditions led to the deterioration of detainees' health.
- [Two children](#) died due to lack of medical care in SDF detention centers.

3. Starvation and malnutrition

Detainees in SDF centers continued to suffer from severe food shortages, leading to signs of malnutrition among some survivors.

4. Deaths due to torture

- In 2024, SNHR documented **10 deaths** due to torture or medical negligence in SDF detention centers, including of two children.
- SDF returned some victims' bodies to their families but did not provide any explanations regarding the causes of death.

Comparison with 2023

In 2023, SNHR documented **10 deaths** due to torture or medical negligence in SDF detention centers, including of one child.

Detention conditions in al-Hawl desert camp

- SDF continues to detain tens of thousands of people in **al-Hawl camp**, including Syrian citizens and individuals of other nationalities, without judicial warrants or any clear legal grounds for their detention. The detainees in the camp continue to suffer from:
- **Lack of healthcare and food**
Shortages of food, water, and medical services have worsened the humanitarian situation, especially for children and women.

- **Prolonged detention without trials**

Some families have been detained for many years without any legal procedures to ensure their rights are upheld.

- **Psychological and physical torture**

Harsh conditions in the camp have involved multiple forms of psychological and physical torture.

Conclusions

- Al-Hawl camp remains one of the most prominent articles of evidence demonstrating the SDF's brutal and repressive policies in areas under its control.
- The conditions in the camp serve as a clear example of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

General conclusions on SDF violations (2024)

1. Increase in extrajudicial killings

- The number of civilian deaths at the hands of SDF in 2024 reached **166**, showing a significant increase compared to 2023.
- Attacks were particularly concentrated in residential areas in Deir Ez-Zour and areas near military frontlines.

2. Increase in arbitrary arrest campaigns

SNHR documented **581 arrests** by the SDF in 2024, mostly for conscription or silencing opposition voices.

3. Continuation of torture practices

The continued cases of death due to torture in SDF detention centers reflect the absence of any efforts by the group to improve detainee conditions or reduce the level of systematic violations.

4. Camp conditions

Detainees in al-Hawl camp continue to suffer from severe violations amid catastrophic living conditions.

7. US-led International Coalition forces

a. Extrajudicial killing

In 2024, the number of direct military operations by US-led International Coalition forces continued to decline compared to the early years of their military intervention in Syria. Since the declaration of the defeat of ISIS in al-Baghuz town in March 2019, airstrikes have significantly decreased, with operations now focusing on joint patrols with the SDF to target remaining ISIS cells.

Statistics

- In 2024, SNHR documented the killing of **one child** by US-led International Coalition forces.
- In 2023, SNHR documented the killing of **five civilians** in operations by the US-led International Coalition forces.

8. Other parties

a. Extrajudicial killings

This category includes violations that SNHR was unable to attribute to a specific party, including:

1. Victims of bombings

These include attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and car bombs in various areas of Syria.

2. Victims of unidentified gunfire

Cases of indiscriminate or deliberate shootings where the source/shooter could not be identified.

3. Victims of landmines and unidentified shells

Incidents of landmine explosions or falling shells in different areas, particularly in regions that were battlegrounds between conflicting parties.

4. Victim killed by border guards

Civilians killed by border guards of neighboring countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye).

5. Victims of other foreign forces

This includes attacks carried out by Turkish or Israeli forces or others.

Statistics

• In 2024

The number of civilians killed by unidentified or other parties reached **662 civilians**, including:

- 111 children.
- 65 women (adult females).

• Among the victims were:

- Nine medical workers.
- One who died due to torture.
- At least **14 massacres** by other parties were documented in 2024.

• In 2023

SNHR documented the killing of **674 civilians** by other parties, including:

- 102 children.
- 74 women (adult females).

• Among the victims were:

- Two medical workers
- Four who died due to torture
- **14 massacres** by other parties were documented in 2023.

b. Attacks on vital civilian facilities

These include attacks on medical, educational, and other infrastructure facilities.

• In 2024

- There were **44 attacks** on vital civilian facilities by other parties, including:
- Six attacks on places of worship.
- One attack on an educational facility.

• In 2023

SNHR documented **18 attacks** on vital civilian centers, including:

- Three attacks targeting medical facilities.

General conclusions

Other parties, including foreign forces and border guards, have continued to commit multiple violations ranging from extrajudicial killings to targeting civilian infrastructure, reflecting the ongoing humanitarian and security crisis in Syria.

Bombings and landmines remain a significant threat to civilians across Syria, necessitating greater international efforts to clear these areas and reduce civilian casualties.

III. KEY POLITICAL, MILITARY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS & INVESTIGATIONS RELATED TO SYRIA IN 2024



Columns of smoke rose in Aleppo as a result of airstrikes launched by the Assad regime on the city, after its forces were defeated by the rebels on Saturday, November 30, 2024 | Photo by: Rami Al-Sayed

A. Key political events in 2024

1. From the beginning of the year until the fall of the Assad regime on December 8, 2024

1. Twenty-First round of Astana talks (January 24–25)

In Kazakhstan's capital, the guarantors of the Astana agreement (Russia, Türkiye, Iran) met to discuss developments in the Syrian file.

2. OHCHR report (February 13)

[The OHCHR issued a comprehensive report](#) documenting the severe violations faced by Syrian refugees returning to Syria.

SNHR contributed to the report, which highlighted the increasing risks facing refugees in an unsafe return environment.

3. US Congress passes 'Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act of 2023' (February 14)

- [The Act](#) prohibits the normalization of relations with any government led by Bashar Assad.
- This Act also provided for an extension of the 'Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act.'

4. UN Security Council session on Syria (February 27)

[During his briefing](#), UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen [stressed](#) the lack of tangible progress on the issue of forcibly disappeared and arbitrarily detained individuals, considering it a major obstacle to implementing Resolution 2254.

5. European Parliament recommendations on Syria (February 28)

- [The recommendations](#) focused on supporting democracy, combating impunity, and ensuring continued humanitarian aid.
- They were approved by an overwhelming majority (428 voted in favor, 35 against).

6. UN Secretary-General statement (March 9)

On the 13th anniversary of the Syrian uprising, [António Guterres](#), UN Secretary-General, emphasized the continued grave violations in Syria, including arbitrary detention, torture, and sexual violence, considering them obstacles to achieving sustainable peace.

7. EU mission statement (March 13)

[The European Union](#) reaffirmed its support for a comprehensive political solution in Syria in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

8. Joint international statement (March 15)

- [Issued](#) by the UK, France, Germany, and the US, focusing on:
- The continued Captagon trade funding the Assad regime's repression of its people.
- Rejection of normalization or lifting of sanctions without genuine political progress.
- The necessity of ensuring the safe and voluntary return of refugees.

9. Geir Pedersen briefing on the 13th anniversary of the uprising (March 15)

- [He urged all parties](#) to immediately and unconditionally release arbitrarily detained individuals.
- He stressed the importance of addressing the issue of forcibly disappeared persons to establish credibility for any political process.

10. UN Security Council meeting (March 21)

- [The US and France reaffirmed](#) that sanctions would remain in place until significant political progress is achieved.
- The EU emphasized continued humanitarian support for the Syrian people without linking it to reconstruction.

11. Imposition of US visa restrictions on Assad regime officials (March 29)

- [The US State Department](#) announced visa restrictions on 10 officials in the Assad government, along with their family members, due to their involvement in the repression of civilians and human rights violations.
- This decision follows similar restrictions imposed in December 2023 on 11 other officials.

12. Eighth Brussels conference on supporting the future of Syria and the region (May 27)

- [Organized by the EU](#) with the participation of ministers and international figures, based on the outcome of the 'Day of Dialogue' held on April 30.
- More than **600 participants** attended, including representatives from Syrian civil society organizations (inside Syria and in diaspora), the UN, EU member states, and international partners.

Discussions focused on:

- The political process and UN Security Council Resolution 2254.
- Early recovery and resilience.
- Health and education issues.
- Livelihood opportunities.
- The issue of missing persons and accountability.

13. Extension of EU sanctions on the Assad regime (May 28)

[The EU Council announced](#) the extension of sanctions on the Assad regime until June 1, 2025, due to the "deteriorating situation in Syria."

Sanctions include:

- Asset freezes on **316 individuals** and 86 entities.
- Travel bans on designated individuals.

Humanitarian exemption

- The exemption was extended to facilitate humanitarian aid amid the ongoing crisis, particularly after the 2023 Earthquakes.
- The decision aligns with UN sanctions to ensure the continued delivery of essential aid.

14. Chemical weapons file: UN Security Council session (June 11)

Izumi Nakamitsu, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, [stated](#) that three outstanding issues related to the Assad regime's chemical weapons program had been resolved.

However, 26 issues remain unresolved, including:

- Undeclared research and production of prohibited chemical agents.
- Large quantities of precursor materials and chemical weapons whose fate remains unverified.
- The discovery of “unexpected” chemicals in samples collected between 2020 and 2023.
- She called for enhanced cooperation between the Assad regime and the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

15. Parliamentary elections in regime-held areas (July 15)

- The elections were held based on Decree No. 99 [issued](#) by Bashar Assad on May 11, 2024.
- The elections took place amid widespread public disinterest and a lack of international recognition of their legitimacy.

16. Additional US sanctions on regime officials (August 30)

The US State Department [announced](#) visa restrictions on 14 Assad regime officials due to their involvement in:

- Suppressing freedoms.
- Enforced disappearances.
- Gross human rights violations.

These sanctions coincide with the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and add to similar restrictions imposed in December 2023 and March 2024.

17. Swiss humanitarian exemption extension (September 4)

[The Swiss Federal Council announced](#) an indefinite extension of the humanitarian exemption from sanctions against the Assad regime.

- The decision aims to facilitate international humanitarian activities.
- This measure provides a “degree of predictability” for humanitarian actors.

18. Chemical weapons dossier revisited (September 5)

Adedeji Ebo, Deputy High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, [stated during a UN Security Council session](#):

- He revealed undisclosed activities related to chemical warfare materials.
- He noted that the Assad regime had provided additional information, but it was deemed “insufficient.”
- The number of outstanding issues has risen to 26, with only 7 resolved so far.

19. UN High Commissioner's visit to Damascus (October 8)

[Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#), met with Bashar Assad and officials from his government to urge them to ensure the safety of returning refugees who fled due to Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon.

SNHR's response

SNHR confirmed that the Assad regime has failed to fulfil its promises regarding returning refugees and has, in fact, arrested dozens of returnees following Israeli airstrikes.

20. Renewal of US national emergency on Syria (October 10)

[The White House announced](#) the extension of the national emergency concerning Syria, which allows:

- The freezing of assets belonging to individuals involved in destabilizing Syria.
- The imposition of financial and visa restrictions on those responsible.
- This move aligns with US policy to support the political process in Syria.

21. UN Human Rights Council resolution on Syrian violations (October 10)

[Draft resolution A/HRC/oV/L.II](#) condemned the widespread systematic violations committed by the Assad regime:

- The resolution was adopted with a majority of 26 countries.
- Four countries opposed it (China, Cuba, Eritrea, Brunei).
- Seventeen countries abstained.

The resolution emphasized

- The continuation of grave violations against children, with the number of detained children rising to 5,000.
- The absence of a safe environment for the return of refugees and displaced persons to Syria.

2. Post-Assad regime fall (December 8, 2024)

1. Bashar Assad escapes to Russia (December 8)

Early Sunday, December 8

- Russian media announced the arrival of Bashar Assad and his family in Moscow.
- The Kremlin granted Assad asylum «for humanitarian reasons,» a decision that sparked criticism from human rights groups.

SNHR's response

SNHR [Called](#) on Russia to extradite Bashar Assad for trial in Syria.

2. Un Security Council emergency session (December 9)

The emergency session was held to discuss developments in Syria, focusing on the transitional phase.

3. HTS' Salvation government meeting with former Assad regime ministers (December 10)

The Salvation Government, acting as a caretaker government, discussed with former Assad regime ministers mechanisms for:

- Taking over government institutions.
- Beginning the transfer of powers and overseeing daily operations.

4. US Secretary of State statement on Syria's future (December 10)

Antony Blinken stated:

- The Syrian people will decide the future of Syria.
- The United States affirmed its readiness to support a future government emerging from an inclusive and transparent process.

5. G7 statement on Syria (December 14)

The group's leaders issued a statement supporting Syria's transitional phase, emphasizing:

- The need to hold the Assad regime accountable.
- Support for the Syrian people in achieving democracy.

6. Joint statement on the sidelines of the Aqaba meeting (December 14)

Issued by:

- The US, the Arab Contact Group, the EU, and other countries.
- Emphasized support for the transitional process and coordinating international efforts to restore stability in Syria.

7. US delegation visit to Damascus (December 20)

Key participants

- Barbara Leaf (Assistant Secretary of State).
- Roger Carstens (Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs).
- Daniel Rubinstein (Retired Ambassador and a Syria Affairs Advisor).

Objectives of the visit

- Discussing Syria's future with Ahmad Al-Sharaa, head of Operation Military Command.
- The US Department of Defense announced an increase in American troops in Syria from 900 to 2,000 soldiers to reinforce stability.

Political developments analysis

Intersection of politics and international sanctions

Decisions from the US Congress, the EU, and the UN reflected the continued international isolation of the Assad regime, linking any improvement in relations to tangible progress in the political process.

The issue of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons

This issue was central to all international statements, highlighting its significance as a cornerstone for achieving peace.

Opposition to normalization

Despite some regional moves toward reestablishing ties with Damascus, the US 'anti-normalization' Act reaffirmed the Western stance against any normalization without genuine political reforms.

Tightening international sanctions

The extension of European and US sanctions underscored continued international pressure on the Assad regime, particularly regarding human rights violations, enforced disappearances, and the use of chemical weapons.

Escalation of the chemical weapons issue

Reports from the UN and the OPCW confirmed the Assad regime's ongoing concealment of prohibited chemical weapons programs, indicating a lack of political will to comply with international resolutions.

Humanitarian aid

The extension of humanitarian exemptions in sanctions (EU and Swiss sanctions in particular) came as a response to the worsening humanitarian crisis while ensuring essential aid for civilians amid the ongoing conflict.

Role of the international coalition and global conferences

The Brussels Conference demonstrated international consensus on the importance of humanitarian support for Syrians while emphasizing a political solution in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

Post-Assad regime collapse analysis

1. International support for the transitional government

Statements from the US Secretary of State and major countries confirmed a commitment to supporting a comprehensive and democratic transition.

2. Russia faces international pressure

Granting asylum to Bashar Assad places Russia under international scrutiny, with calls for his extradition growing.

3. Increased US military presence

The reinforcement of US troops reflects a commitment to securing Syria's stability and supporting allies on the ground.

B. Key military developments in 2024

General summary

During the first half of 2024, the Syrian conflict saw large-scale clashes involving various parties, including Assad regime forces, opposition factions, SDF, and foreign forces such as the Turkish military and the US-led International Coalition. While confrontations intensified along frontlines in different areas, they did not lead to significant territorial changes until late in the year.

1. Key clashes and attacks (January – February)

a. Frontlines in Idlib and northern rural Latakia

General situation

- Intense clashes continued between Assad regime forces, opposition factions, and HTS.
- The clashes resulted in casualties on both sides but no changes in territorial control were recorded.

b. Escalation in Deir Ez-Zour (January)

January 26: A clash between Assad regime forces and the SDF in western rural Deir Ez-Zour led to the death of a child.

c. Turkish escalation in northeastern Syria

Mid-January

- Turkish drones launched attacks targeting SDF military sites in
- Ein al-Arab (Kubani) in eastern Aleppo.
- Locations in Hasaka governorate.
- The attacks caused damage to civilian infrastructure, including power and oil stations.
- The UN expressed concern over civilian harm and damage to vital infrastructure.
- January 17: Germany's envoy to Syria acknowledged "Turkey's right to self-defense" but expressed concern over the damage inflicted on northeastern Syria's infrastructure.

d. Escalation between the Assad regime and the SDF (February)

Assad regime drones

- The Assad regime intensified the use of suicide drones to target opposition factions and HTS positions.
- Some attacks were indiscriminate, causing civilian casualties.

Mutual shelling in Deir Ez-Zour

Assad regime forces and pro-Assad Iranian militias, on one side, and the SDF, on the other side, carried out reciprocal attacks with various areas of Deir Ez-Zour governorate.

US strikes on Iranian militias (early February)

- US forces targeted Iranian militia sites in eastern Deir Ez-Zour (al-Boukamal and Al-Mayadeen).
- The attacks were described as retaliatory strikes in response to attacks on US personnel in the Middle East.

2. Military escalation in multiple regions (March – April)

a. Internal clashes in Daraa (April 7)

Clashes erupted between two Assad regime groups in al-Sanamayn in northern northern Daraa

Warring factions

- A group affiliated with the Assad regime's State Security Directorate led by Ahmed Jamal Al-Labad.
- A group affiliated with the Assad regime's Military Security Intelligence Directorate led by Mohsen Al-Haimid.

Outcome

Civilian deaths and multiple casualties on both sides.

b. Turkish escalation in Aleppo and clashes with the SDF

- The Turkish military and the SNA intensified ground attacks on SDF positions in Aleppo governorate.
- The attacks resulted in civilian casualties and damage to properties and civilian service centers.

c. Continued clashes in Deir Ez-Zour

- Clashes that began in August 2023 between Arab tribes and the SDF's Military Council escalated.
- The attacks caused civilian casualties and infrastructure damage, with intermittent fighting continuing.

3. Large-scale clashes in Deir Ez-Zour (early August)

a. Tribal attack on the SDF

Warring factions

- Tribal forces supported by Assad regime forces and pro-Assad Iranian militias.
- The SDF.

Events

- A large-scale attack targeted SDF military outposts along the Euphrates River.
- The attack was launched from Assad regime-controlled areas at the time.
- Heavy weaponry, including artillery and rocket launchers, was used.

Outcome

- Civilian casualties.
- Hundreds displaced and destruction of civilian infrastructure, including water pumping stations, which some parties turned into military bases.

b. Clashes in Nawa, Daraa governorate (mid-August)

- Armed clashes erupted between unidentified gunmen and Assad regime forces.
- The clashes resulted in civilian deaths.

4. Military escalation in different areas (mid-August – October)

a. Clashes in Nawa, Daraa governorate (mid-August)

Clashes occurred between unidentified gunmen and Assad regime forces.

Outcome

Civilian deaths and injuries.

b. Escalation in rural Aleppo (October 16)

Warring factions

Two factions affiliated with the SNA.

Location

Urm Camp in the rural areas of Izaz city.

Outcome

- A woman and a child killed, and 25 civilians injured.
- Large fires and significant damage in the camp, forcing hundreds of families to flee to farmlands.

5. Launch of major military operations (November – December)

a. Operation Deter Aggression (November 27)

Involved parties

Armed opposition factions in partnership with HTS.

Outcome

- Seizure of large areas previously under Assad regime control.
- A shift in battlefield dynamics.

b. Operation Dawn of Freedom (November 30)

Involved parties

The SNA.

Objectives

Capture eastern rural Aleppo from the SDF and Assad regime forces.

Operation fronts

Launched from Tal Rifaat towards Manbij.

Outcome

- **December 8:** Seizure of Manbij.
- SDF forces repositioned at Tishreen Dam east of Manbij.
- Clashes continued until the end of the year.

c. Battle 'the Return' (December 3)

Involved parties

The SDF's Deir Ez-Zour Military Council, supported by the US-led International Coalition.

Objectives

Recapture seven villages in Deir Ez-Zour governorate (al-Husainiya, al-Salhiya, Hatla, Mrat, Mathloun, Khsham, and al-Tabiya).

Outcome

Three civilians (including a woman) killed and many others displaced.

- **December 6:** The SDF withdrew from Deir Ez-Zour city after reaching an agreement with the Assad regime. Subsequently, an earthen bridge connecting the Euphrates' two banks was detonated.
- **December 10:** Operation Deter Aggression took control of Deir Ez-Zour after the SDF withdrawal.

d. Retaking Daraa and Suwayda (December 7)

Involved parties

- Southern Operations Room (a coalition of opposition factions in Daraa governorate).
- Armed factions and local groups in Suwayda.

Outcome

- Complete control over Daraa city and vast parts of its countryside.
- Seizure of large parts of Suwayda governorate.

e. Free Syria's Army advances (December 7)

Event

Free Syria's Army launched an offensive from the 55 km zone, breaking the years-long siege imposed on the area.

6. Scattered operations and drone attacks (December)

a. US Central Command airstrikes (December 8)

Dozens of precision airstrikes targeted ISIS camps and operatives in central Syria.

b. Turkish escalation in Manbij (December)

Events

Drone attacks coincided with clashes between the National Army and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Manbij city and its rural areas.

December 9: Three civilians killed in Haymar Jis village, south of Manbij, in drone attacks.

c. Tribal clashes east of Aleppo (December)

Events

Clashes erupted between tribal members and SDF fighters in Maskana town and its rural areas, east of Aleppo.

December 9: Five civilians killed and others injured.

Cause

SDF fighters assaulted civilian properties, prompting a response by tribal fighters.

7. Comprehensive shift in the military map (after the Assad regime's fall)

a. Damascus falls and Assad flees

December 8: The Syrian capital, Damascus, fell after Assad regime forces withdrew, and Bashar Assad fled to Russia.

b. Developments after the Assad regime's fall

Opposition expansion

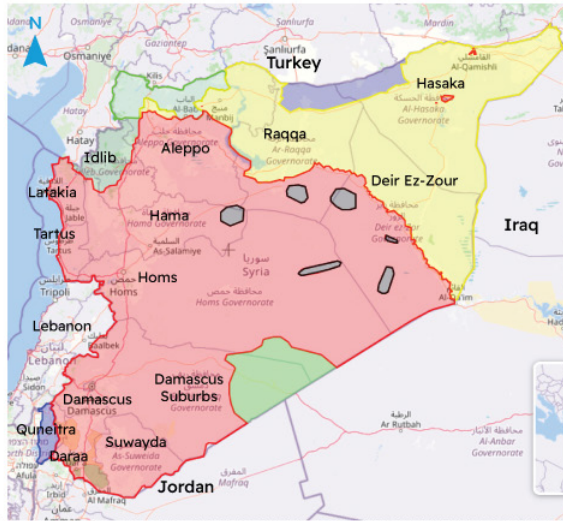
Armed opposition factions, HTS, and local forces took control of vast areas in central and southern Syria.

SDF withdrawal

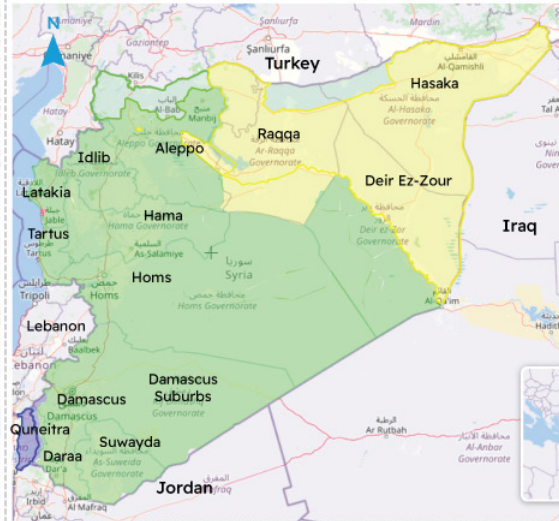
The SDF withdrew from some areas in Deir Ez-Zour and Manbij amid escalating confrontations with the SNA.

The following map illustrates the territorial control in Syria in 2024. SNHR's graphics design team created this map based on the maps found on the website [liveuamap](https://liveuamap.com)

From January to 29 November 2024



December 2024



Source map: syria.liveuamap.com

- Areas under the control of Bashar al-Assad's regime forces
- Areas under joint control between armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
- Areas under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces
- Areas under the control of ISIS
- Areas under the control of the Syrian National Army
- Areas under the control of the Armed Opposition factions
- Areas under the control of the new authorities in Syria

Prepared by: the Syrian Network for Human Rights

www.snhr.org

General conclusion

By the end of 2024, Syria saw unprecedented military shifts since the conflict began in 2011, including:

- The collapse of the Assad regime, leading to a major territorial shift in favor of armed opposition factions and HTS.
- Increased regional and international involvement, particularly through Turkish and US military operations.
- The resurgence of tribal clashes, reflecting ongoing internal conflicts despite changes in controlling forces.

C. key human rights developments

1. from the beginning of the year until the fall of the Assad regime on December 8, 2024

1. Reinforcing accountability efforts in Syria (January 12)

Event: [An op-ed by Brigitte Curmi](#), France's Special Envoy to Syria, titled 'Don't Let Syria Slip Off the Global Agenda.'

Key points

- Emphasizing France's long-term commitment to accountability.
- The vast gap between crimes committed in Syria and holding perpetrators accountable.

2. OHCHR report on Syrian refugees (February 13)

Report focus

- [Serious violations against returnees to Syria.](#)
- Forced displacement and deportation of Syrian refugees from certain countries.

Findings

Syria remains unsafe for dignified and sustainable refugee returns.

3. SNHR report on Syrian women's suffering (February 14)

An event marking the release of the report, '[Unshakable Voices: Syrian Women Who Overcame the Trauma of Detention and the Tribulations Following Their Release](#)' held in The Hague, Netherlands.

SNHR report

- [Documented challenges faced by Syrian women](#) during detention and post-release.
- Highlighted exceptional success stories despite hardships.

4. OPCW report on the Marea chemical attack (February 22)

Subject

Investigation into ISIS's mustard gas attack on Marea town (September 1, 2015).

Findings

- ISIS used sulfur mustard gas via loaded into 122mm artillery shells.
- Eleven people exhibited symptoms of chemical poisoning.

Reactions

Germany, France, and the UK condemned the attack and the use of chemical weapons by both ISIS and the Assad regime.

5. Refuting the Assad regime's claims on alleged chemical attacks (February 29)

OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) report

Denied Assad regime's claims regarding two alleged chemical attacks reported in Damascus (2017).

SNHR stance

Asserted that the Assad regime is attempting to mislead public opinion to distract from its repeated use of chemical weapons.

6. Violations in SNA-controlled areas (February 29)

HRW report

- Entitled, 'Everything is by the Power of the Weapon'
- Detailed widespread abuses in northern Syria, particularly in areas controlled by the National Army.

7. COI's report to the Human Rights Council (March 11)

Twenty-Ninth report

- [Covers](#) July 1 to December 31, 2023.
- Documents severe human rights and international humanitarian law violations in Syria.

Sources

Based on 528 direct interviews.

8. Thirteenth anniversary of the Syrian popular movement (March 15)

International event

Sponsored by the US, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and France, SNHR organized [an event titled](#) 'Thirteen Years of Death, Torture, and Disappearance: Examining Human Rights Abuses and Accountability Opportunities in Syria.'

Key points

- Continued sanctions and their non-lifting.
- Rejection of reconstruction and normalization with the Assad regime.

SNHR statement (March 18)

Highlighted major violations since 2011, [recommending](#) halting the forced return of refugees and pursuing political transition to ensure their safe and dignified return.

9. COI report on children in northeast Syria (March 19)

Topic

- [Documented widespread](#) violations against children in areas controlled by SDF.
- The report focused on detention camps holding children linked to ISIS.

10. Call for international prosecution of the Assad regime over chemical weapons (March 28)

SNHR statement

Called on states to refer the Assad regime to the ICJ for violating the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

International event

- Organized by the Arms Monitoring Association and the Chemical Weapons Convention Coalition, in collaboration with SNHR.
- The event emphasized the importance of international accountability and countering the Assad regime's disinformation.

11. HRW report on deported refugees to Tal Abyad (March 28)

The report

- Entitled, 'Syrians Face Dire Conditions in Turkish-Occupied 'Safe Zone'
- Documented the forced deportation of thousands of Syrians by Turkish authorities to areas controlled by armed opposition groups in Tal Abyad, where the humanitarian situation is dire.

12. COI's mandate extended (April 4)

- UN Human Rights Council Decision 55/22
- Renewed the mandate of the COI for an additional year.

13. Physicians for Human Rights report on Russia's attacks on the health sector (May 2)

The report

- Highlighted violations affecting health facilities since Russia's intervention in Syria (September 2015).
- Focused on the deterioration of healthcare due to Russian attacks on medical facilities.

14. Report on accountability and justice in Syria (May 15)

Joint report

Published by SNHR and the European Institute for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), entitled 'Patchwork for Justice in Syria?'⁴⁴

Purpose of the report

- To provide an analysis of accountability efforts since 2011.
- To evaluate gaps in the process and envision a future path for achieving justice.

15. SNHR's contribution to the global ` report (May 13)

The report

- SNHR participated in preparing an [assessment](#) of Syria for the annual CIVICUS State of Civil Alliance [report](#).
- Focused on the state of Syrian civil society and the violations it faces.

16. Denial of Assad regime's claims about chemical attacks (June 24)

The OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) report

- [Refuted the Assad regime's claims](#) of two alleged chemical attacks in Qleib al-Thour and al-Balil (2017).
- The report showed that the Assad regime exploits investigations to mislead public opinion.

SNHR statement

[Renewed](#) its demands to prevent the Assad regime from draining the resources of the OPCW with its claims.

17. Call to end torture in Syria (July 1)

Statement by Alice Jill Edwards

- [The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture called on the Assad regime](#) to implement interim measures ordered by the ICJ.
- Emphasized that torture is still widely practiced in Syria, despite international rulings.

44. European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR). (2024). Patchwork justice for Syria?. Retrieved on April 1, 2025, via <https://www.ecchr.eu/en/publication/patchwork-justice-for-syria/>

18. UN Human Rights Council discusses state of torture in Syria (July 3)

Statements by Paulo Pinheiro

COI Chair of highlighted:

- The collapse of the Syrian economy and catastrophic humanitarian situation.
- Increased reliance on drug trafficking.
- [Ongoing human rights violations](#), with the Assad regime's diminishing capacity to protect the Syrian people.

19. UN Human Rights Committee discusses report on Syria (July 31)

SNHR Report

SNHR submitted a report⁴⁵ to the UN committee [highlighting](#) the Assad regime's violations of the ICCPR, **including**:

- Torture.
- Arbitrary detention.
- Forced disappearance.

Key Points

During the 141st session of the Human Rights Committee, SNHR presented a visual statement outlining the recommendations and reforms required in Syria.

Committee Results (July 25)

- [Systematic violations](#) in areas controlled by the Assad regime, including torture, sexual violence, detention, and forced disappearance.
- A call for comprehensive and independent investigations into these violations and for perpetrators to face justice.

45. For more details, [see](#):

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, July 31). SNHR Submits A Report for the UN Human Rights Committee's 141st Session. Retrieved on April 1, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/4hXUmJN>

20. ESCWA report on sanctions and their impact on Syria (July 12)

ESCWA Report

- [The report claimed](#) that the economic sanctions imposed on the Assad regime have negatively impacted the lives of Syrian civilians and vital sectors such as healthcare and education.
- It focused on the negative consequences of the sanctions, calling for their easing to improve living conditions.

21. HRW Report on freezing civilian assets (July 18)

Statement

- [HRW condemned](#) the Assad regime's Ministry of Finance for [freezing the assets of 817 civilians](#) in the town of Zakya (Eastern rural Damascus).
- The actions were described as collective punishment and a clear violation of property rights.

22. Norwegian Refugee Council Study on Refugee Women's Rights (August 27)

Study

- [The study highlighted](#) the denial of Syrian refugee women's rights to housing, land, and property.
- It emphasized the importance of granting women fair rights to enhance their role in reconstruction and reconciliation.

23. COI's Report on violations in Syria (September 10)

Report

- [The report covered](#) violations committed between January and June 2024.
- It addressed crimes committed by all parties to the conflict, with a focus on the suffering of civilians.

24. Atlantic Council's call for referring the situation in Syria to the ICC (September 26)

Statement

- [The Atlantic Council confirmed](#) documented evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by officials of the Assad regime.
- It called for the referral of the Syrian case to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to bring perpetrators to justice.

25. EUAA Reports on Syria (October)

First Report (Security Situation)

[Documented](#) security violations in all areas of control in Syria between September 2023 and August 2024.

Second Report (Country of Origin Information)

- [Focused on](#) providing accurate information to assess international protection claims by Syrian refugees.
- SNHR was the primary source for both reports, with extensive references ([475 mentions in the first report](#) and [184 in the second](#)).

Analysis

- In the early months of 2024, international efforts to highlight grave violations in Syria were accentuated, through both UN reports and human rights organizations.
- There was a continued focus on linking the Assad regime and ISIS to major violations, including the use of chemical weapons.
- The emphasis on accountability for perpetrators remained strong, especially by France and the UK.
- International pressure to prevent normalization with the Assad regime persisted, while calls for highlighting the suffering of children in northeastern Syria grew.
- International and local organizations played a pivotal role in exposing violations by the Assad regime and its allies, offering recommendations for future accountability measures.
 - Ongoing international pressure against the Assad regime in human rights forums, such as the UN Human Rights Council and the ICJ.
 - International and regional reports highlighted the impact of sanctions, refugee rights, and the state of Syrian civil society, reflecting the ongoing importance of the Syrian issue.

2. Post-Assad regime fall developments (December 8, 2024)

December 10, 2024: Suspension of asylum applications and condemnation of anti-refugee policies

Suspension of asylum applications

Several European countries and the UK announced the suspension of asylum applications for Syrians.

Human rights reactions

- **Amnesty International**
 - [Warned against](#) anti-refugee policies in Europe.
 - Called for the safety and empowerment of asylum seekers to be at the core of policies, rather than sacrificing them for the sake of biased agendas.

December 11, 2024: Calling on Russia to extradite Bashar Assad

SNHR statement

- [SNHR called on Russia](#) to extradite Bashar Assad to face trial in Syria.
- Emphasized that Assad committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- Stressed the need to ensure a fair trial for him, free from torture and ill-treatment.

December 12, 2024: Dire conditions in northeastern Syria and opportunity for human rights change

HRW report

[Noted dire conditions](#) in northeastern Syria, including shortages of water, food, and healthcare.

Opportunity for human rights change

- [The group emphasized](#) that the new Syrian leadership has an unprecedented opportunity to adopt policies centered on protecting human rights.
- Called for the ratification of international human rights treaties that the Assad government had not ratified.

December 16, 2024: Lifting sanctions and mass grave in Tadamun

Call to lift economic sanctions

- [SNHR stressed](#) that sanctions imposed on the Assad regime had lost their justification after the Assad regime's fall.
- Called for their lifting to support Syria's economic recovery.

Discovery of mass grave in Tadamun

- [HRW issued a report](#) on the discovery of a mass grave south of Damascus.
- Called for securing the site and protecting evidence pointing to massacres committed in April 2013.

December 17, 2024: Destruction of chemical weapons stockpile

SNHR statement

- [Called on](#) the new Syrian government to disclose remaining chemical weapons sites and destroy them.
- Called for full cooperation with the OPCW to ensure the prevention of their future use.

December 18, 2024: Addressing mass graves

SNHR recommendations:

- The need to respect the dignity of victims.
- To achieve justice and hold perpetrators accountable.
- Engage the international community in protecting evidence and dealing with mass graves to ensure effective investigations.

December 20, 2024: COI's Visit to Syria

First visit since 2011

- The COI welcomed positive signals from the new authorities for cooperation in human rights matters.
- The visit focused on protecting mass graves and evidence related to crimes committed.

December 23, 2024: No alternative to accountability

SNHR statement

- Stressed⁴⁶ that holding war criminals and perpetrators of crimes against humanity accountable is non-negotiable.
- Called for the prosecution of all those complicit with the previous Assad regime, including artists and politicians.

December 26, 2024: Missing persons case as a top priority

- Call for cooperation with the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)
- SNHR called⁴⁷ on the new government to invite the ICMP to work in Syria.
- Stressed the importance of cooperation with human rights organizations and international bodies to address the issue of missing persons and mass graves.

December 31, 2024: Bashar Assad, Person of the Year in Corruption

Assad chosen as the most corrupt person globally:

- The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) named Bashar Assad as the Person of the Year in Organized Crime and Corruption.
- The selection was based on the immense damage caused by his regime through organized crime and corruption, leaving a catastrophic impact on Syria.

46. Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, December 23). Perpetrators of Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Must be Held Accountable. Retrieved on April 1, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/3Y8i5zO>

47. Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2024, December 26). SNHR Calls on the New Syrian Authority to Invite the ICMP to Operate in Syria. Retrieved on April 1, 2025, via: <https://bit.ly/4lbwN2N>

Phase Analysis

1. Opportunity for transformation

- After the fall of the Assad regime, international and local calls for legal reform and addressing the legacy of crimes have increased.
- Emphasis on the importance of accountability and evidence protection in building a new Syria.

2. Urgent challenges

- Continued difficult conditions in northern Syria, with weak infrastructure.
- The cases of the missing persons and mass graves require an urgent and effective response from the new government.

3. International position

Growing interest from international organizations and major countries, but it is conditioned on the new Syrian authorities' commitment to achieving justice and ensuring basic rights.

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY PATH



A detainee's father searches security branch records to find out the fate of his son Anas, who has been missing in Sednaya since 2013. | Photo by Ammar Al-Zeir

A. Slow progress on the accountability path

The year 2024 witnessed significant developments in the field of international accountability against perpetrators of crimes in Syria. The steps taken, however, were below the level to which the Syrian people aspire. International tribunals continue to focus on crimes committed since the start of the popular uprising in Syria in 2011, with most measures relying on universal jurisdiction and penal mechanisms. Below is an outline of key developments regarding accountability.

1. International trials against the Assad regime and pro-Assad loyalist militias

a. Trials in Sweden

January 10:

Stockholm Court: The [trial](#) of Mohammad Hamo, a former Syrian army officer based in Sweden, began on war crimes charges.

- **Charges:** Was involved in indiscriminate air and ground strikes between January and July 2012 in the cities of Hama and Homs.

b. Trials in the Netherlands

January 22:

Hague District Court [Sentenced](#) a fighter from the pro-regime Palestinian al-Quds Brigade to 12 years in prison.

- **Charges:** Was involved in the suppression of demonstrations, displacing and arresting civilians, and supporting systematic attacks amounting to crimes against humanity between 2011 and 2017.

c. Trials in Belgium

January 27

Belgian arrest warrant: Belgian authorities [have issued](#) an arrest warrant for H.A., leader of a pro-Assad militia that operated in al-Salamiya city in Hama.

- **Charges:** Murder and torture of civilians between 2011 and 2016.
- **Human rights role:** SNHR [provided](#) the court with detailed data on the defendant's violations.

2. International sanctions against Assad regime figures and entities

January 22

- **EU:**

The EU [announced](#) new sanctions against Assad regime-related figures and entities.

Targets:

- Economic adviser to Bashar Assad.
- Three prominent businessmen.
- Two people associated with the Assad family
- Five companies that support the Assad regime, some of which are engaged in the transfer of Syrian mercenaries , arms trade, drug smuggling, or money laundering.

March 26

- **US Department of the Treasury:**

[Sanctions have been imposed](#) on 11 entities and individuals working to support the Assad regime in the drug trade and remittances.

3. Cases before the ICJ

February 9

- **The ICJ** [has determined:](#)
- **February 3, 2025:** A deadline for submitting legal briefs from the Netherlands and Canada against the Assad regime.
- **February 3, 2026:** Deadline for submitting counter-memoranda from the Assad regime.

Case Background

- [The lawsuit](#) is based on the Assad regime's violations of the Convention against Torture.
- The ICJ [Demanded](#) ending torture as a provisional measure.

4. The trial of Rifaat Assad in Switzerland

March 11

[Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland \(OAG\)](#) referred Rifaat Assad to the Federal Criminal Court.

- **Charges:** War crimes and crimes against humanity during the 1982 Hama massacre.
- **Evidence**
 - Testimonies of survivors and eyewitnesses.
 - Data and reports [provided](#) by SNHR in cooperation with TRIAL International.
- The trial is in absentia due to the absence of the accused.

5. Arrests and trials in Germany

March 11

German authorities [arrested](#) Khalil A., and Fayez L. S., Syrian nationals residing in Germany.

- **Charges:**
 - Affiliation with ISIS.
 - Commanding an armed unit involved in arresting fighters from the Syrian Free Army and handing them over to Al-Hisba apparatus.

March 25

[The Koblenz Regional High Court](#) began trial of Syrian Mustafa M., accused of war crimes committed in 2015 as a member of ISIS.

- **Most prominent violations**
 - Carrying out field executions.
 - One of the captives was tied to a car that moved quickly until the captive died.

6. Judgments in absentia in Paris against Assad regime leaders

May 24

- **Criminal Court in Paris:**

Three senior Assad regime leaders convicted:

- Ali Mamlouk, Jamil Hassan, and Abdel Salam Mahmoud.

- **Charges**

- Involvement in war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- Torture, enforced disappearance, and killing under torture.

- **Ruling**

- Life imprisonment in absentia.

- **SNHR's role**

Data and reports were [provided by SNHR](#) on which the trial was based.

7. New arrests in Germany

July 3, 2024

Germany's the Office of the Federal Public Prosecutor General announced the arrest of four Palestinian-Syrian people and a former Syrian intelligence officer.

- **Defendants**

- (Jihad A., Mahmoud A., Samir S., Wael S. (Members of the 'Free Palestine Movement'.
- (Mazhar J (Former officer in Palestine Branch, one of the Assad regime's Military Security Intelligence Directorate's branches)

- **Charges**

- Involvement in the siege of Yarmouk Camp since 2013.
- Murder, attempted murder, torture, and deprivation of liberty.
- Violations are described as crimes against humanity and war crimes.

- **Details**

- The Free Palestine Movement cooperated with the Assad regime's Intelligence Branches 227 and 235.
- Torture, deprivation of food and medical water.

8. Syrian officer arrested in the US

July 9, 2024

US law enforcement authorities have arrested a former officer of Bashar Assad's regime, Samir Ousman al-Sheikh, in Los Angeles, California.

- **Charges**
 - Extrajudicial killing.
 - Torture and enforced disappearance.
 - Responsible for the deaths of about 4,000 people and the disappearance of 508 others.
- **SNHR's role**
 - Detailed information was provided about the defendant's record and violations.
 - SNHR [documented](#) that the officer was responsible for killing 93 people under torture.

9. European sanctions on the Assad regime extended

October 14, 2024

- **EU Council**

The EU [announced](#) the extension of the application of sanctions related to the proliferation of chemical weapons until October 16, 2025
- **Figures designated**

25 individuals and 3 entities, most of which are linked to the Assad regime.
- **Procedures**
 - Freezing of assets.
 - Ban on travel to EU countries.
- **Objectives**
 - Support the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
 - Countering the proliferation and use of chemical weapons.

10. US sanctions against a senior Assad regime official

November 15, 2024

The US State Department announced the designation of Brigadier General Abdul Salam Fajr Mahmoud, a senior officer of the Assad regime's Syrian Air Force, on the sanctions lists.

- **Charges**
- Committed serious human rights violations, including:
- Torture, cruel and inhuman punishment.
- **Details**
- The penalties included his wife and four children.
- The family was barred from entering the United States.

Conclusion

1. Ongoing momentum in pursuing those involved in the Assad regime's crimes
 - The arrests in Germany and the US reflect an international obligation to prosecute perpetrators.
2. The importance of international sanctions
 - The EU and the US continue to use sanctions against Syrian individuals and entities.
 - These sanctions are being employed to increase pressure on the remnants of the Assad regime.
3. **Challenges ahead**
 - Continued slow judicial proceedings.
 - The need to cooperate with the new Syrian authorities to address the legal legacy of violations.

B. SNHR's role in supporting the accountability process in 2024

1. SNHR joins in the World Alliance Against Genocide

SNHR has [joined](#) the Alliance Against Genocide.

2. Supporting international legal cases

January 30

- [SNHR contributed](#) to the investigation into the case of H.A. in Belgium, who was charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- SNHR has provided investigators with documented data and information on violations since 2020.

March 20

- SNHR provided testimonies and statements in cooperation with TRIAL International about the massacres in Hama in February 1982, [in which Rifaat Assad](#) was accused.
- [SNHR supported](#) the case by providing a list of witnesses and survivors.

3. SNHR shared data about forcibly disappeared persons

April 18

- [SNHR provided data](#) on thousands of missing and forcibly disappeared persons to the OHCHR.
- The process focused on examining data contexts through a geographic and temporal analysis of violations by parties to the conflict since 2011.

4. Conviction of Assad regime's senior security officers

May 24

[SNHR supported](#) the case that led to the Paris Criminal Court issuing life sentences in absentia against

- Ali Mamlouk.
- Jamil Hassan.
- Abdul Salam Mahmoud.
- They were convicted of complicity in torture, enforced disappearance, intentional harm to life, and other acts constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes.
- SNHR followed the trial sessions and provided statements and reports in support of the case.

5. Cooperation with the US Department of Justice

Since 2023, SNHR has contributed to [supporting](#) Samir Ousman al-Sheikh's case through coordination with the Syrian Emergency Task Force (SETF)

July 9

US law enforcement authorities have arrested Samir Ousamn al-Sheikh, who is accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity while working for the Assad regime's security services.

6. Supporting international human rights resolutions

October 10

- [SNHR supported](#) resolution A/HRC/57/L.11, which was adopted by the Human Rights Council. The resolution condemned the continued systematic and widespread violations of international law by the Assad regime.
- SNHR documented that 5,263 children are still detained and/or forcibly disappeared at the hands of the parties to the conflict, which further bolstered the resolution.

7. Support for sanctions on prominent Assad regime figures

November 15

- SNHR supported the designation of Brigadier General Abdel Salam Fajr Mahmoud on the US sanctions lists.
- [SNHR provided](#) documented information about his involvement in torture and serious violations, along with details of his use of his family as a front to avoid restrictions.

8. SNHR's data as an international reliable source

International reports relied on SNHR's data including:

- **Report of the EUAA**
- [“Country Guide: Syria” \(April 2024\).](#)
- [Report on the security situation in Syria \(October 2024\).](#)
- **Reports by foreign affairs ministry**
- [US Department of State's 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Syria](#)
- US Department of State Report on [Freedom of Religion in Syria for the year 2023.](#)
- The US Department of State highlighted the Iranian government's role in supporting Syrian authorities and recruiting sectarian fighters.

9. Cooperation with specialized UN bodies

SNHR briefed UN agencies on **34 cases of enforced disappearance** in 2024, including:

- UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.
- Special Rapporteur on torture.
- Special Rapporteur on the protection of human rights while countering terrorism.

10. Participation in international events in support of accountability and human rights

a. High-Level and Bilateral Meetings:

September 24-27

- SNHR Executive Director, Mr. Fadel Abdulghany, held a series of meetings with high-level officials in:
- The White House.
- US Department of State.
- The meetings focused on issues of human rights violations in Syria, while emphasizing the importance of accountability and transitional justice.
- On October 9, the US Department of State praised the efforts of Fadel Abdulghany and the role of SNHR in documenting human rights violations and supporting accountability.



b. Open events

February 14

SNHR held an event in The Hague entitled: 'Invitation: Unshakable Voices: Syrian Women's Struggle for Rights and Accountability.'

- **Included:**

- The launch of an extensive report entitled [‘Unshakable Voices: Syrian Women Who Overcame the Trauma of Detention and the Tribulations Following Their Release.’](#)
- Showcasing photos of missing women, to focus on the problem of enforced disappearance and its repercussions.

March 15

SNHR organized an event on 13th anniversary of the start of the popular uprising in Syria, entitled:

[‘Thirteen Years of Death, Torture, and Disappearance: Examining Human Rights Abuses and Accountability Opportunities in Syria.’](#)

March 26

SNHR participated in [two events](#):

1. An event organized by the Embassy of the United Kingdom in the Netherlands **entitled:** ‘Access to Truth and Justice for Victims’, attended by diplomatic representatives and legal advisers.
2. An event organized by the Chemical Weapons Convention Coalition and the Arms Control Association entitled:
[‘Addressing Current Chemical Weapons Convention Compliance Challenges’.](#)

April 29

In cooperation with Baytna, [SNHR organized](#) an event entitled

‘The Devastating Effects of Humanitarian Aid Cuts in Syria: Challenges and Strategies to Mitigate the Disaster, on the sidelines of the Eighth Brussels Conference.

May 16

SNHR and the ECCHR organized a virtual event entitled, ‘Accountability Efforts After 13 Years of Atrocities in Syria’

The event discussed the [joint report](#) entitled, ‘Patchwork for Justice in Syria?’

June 5

[SNHR participated](#) in a webinar organized by the OHCHR on, 'Housing, Land and Property Rights in Syria'.

July 30

[SNHR participated](#) in an event in London entitled, 'Achieving Justice in Syria: Challenges and Opportunities for the New British Government', organized by the Syrian British Consortium and Amnesty International.

September 19

[SNHR participated](#) in a webinar entitled, 'Double Burden: Exploring the Intersection between Displacement and Healthcare Crises in Syria'.

September 26

[SNHR organized](#) an event on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled:

'The Grim Reality in Syria: Systematic Torture and Opportunities for Justice and Accountability', sponsored by seven countries.

11. Training and capacity building

October

Mr. Fadel Abdulghany [gave](#) a training lecture to a number of Libyan human rights activists.

The workshop included topics such as:

- Mechanisms of remote work.
- Collection and analysis of information.
- Building databases and preparing human rights reports.

12. SNHR nominates children for the International Children's Peace Prize

SNHR nominated [two Syrian siblings](#)

- [Ahmed and Sena Abdul Karim Zeer](#), [for the 2024 International Children's Peace Prize](#).
- [They were announced](#) as [one of 118 international candidates](#), being the only children nominated from Syria. Along with a girl from Lebanon, they were also the only candidate for the Arab world.
- SNHR stressed that Ahmed and Sena's efforts highlight the suffering of Syrian children as a result of violations.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal conclusions

1. Bashar Assad's regime is responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes

- The Assad regime of Bashar Assad failed to fulfill its primary responsibility to protect the population from atrocious crimes, and was even implicated in their commission on a large scale, which required international intervention in accordance with the principle of the responsibility to protect (R2P).
- Documented crimes include: extrajudicial killings, systematic torture, forced displacement, indiscriminate shelling, and destruction of civilian buildings, which amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes.
- Despite UN Security Council resolutions (such as Resolutions 2139 and 2254) and other UN resolutions, the Assad regime has continued its violations with impunity, benefiting from Russian and Chinese political support and Western silence.

2. Torture, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance

- Torture in the Assad regime's detention centers is systematic and widespread, as we have proven that these practices are carried out under the direct direction of the Assad regime's leadership, with the knowledge of the President of the Republic, and in coordination with the Ministries of Defense and Interior, and the security services.
- Despite the ICJ's Order in November 2023, the Assad regime has taken no action to stop torture or improve detention conditions.
- Arbitrary arrests are carried out without a real legal basis, relying on confessions extracted under torture. Consequently, the Assad regime has been operating outside a proper framework of justice.
- The issue of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons has remained without tangible progress despite its inclusion in numerous international resolutions.

3. The issue of forcibly disappeared persons

- Most forcibly disappeared persons died under torture or as a result of inhumane conditions of detention, yet their bodies have not been returned or their fate revealed, keeping them in a state of enforced disappearance.
- Ending enforced disappearances requires full disclosure of the fate of victims, returning their remains to their families, and holding those responsible accountable.
- These issues require immediate and intensive action by the current authorities to ensure justice on this complex humanitarian issue.

4. IDPs suffering

- Northwestern Syria hosts the largest number of IDPs as a result of the Assad regime's violations, including systematic bombardment of their gathering areas.
- The Assad regime not only abdicated its responsibilities towards them, but also obstructed humanitarian access and looted a large part of it, exacerbating their suffering.

5. Legislative tampering and security control over state institutions

- The legislative authority of Syria (the People's Assembly) was lacking in independence, as the Assad regime fully controlled it and issued laws that served its interests at the expense of the people.
- Laws often violate constitutional rules, and legislation has been passed that serves the security services and legitimizes their violations.

6. Violations related to passports and identification papers

- The Assad regime imposed exorbitant and unjustified costs for obtaining and renewing passports, denying many their right to freedom of movement.
- Immigration and passport branches have been turned into tools of security repression, used as places to arrest or humiliate dissidents.
- The Assad regime exploited citizens' need for identification papers, which became a tool for the Assad regime to achieve huge political and economic gains, as it made millions of dollars by imposing unreasonable fees on granting these documents, and used them to finance its war.

7. Depriving millions of their basic rights

- The arbitrary control of identification papers has deprived millions of Syrians of their basic rights, such as
 - Legal recognition of their existence.
 - Access to education and healthcare.
 - Humanitarian aid.
 - Rights of ownership, movement and work legally.
- Women and children have been the most affected by these violations due to their vulnerability in the absence of legal frameworks that protect them.

8. Decisions of provisional seizure and violation of property rights

- The Assad regime's Ministry of Finance's pretrial detention decisions were based on security decisions that have no judicial criteria, highlighting the security services' encroachment on state institutions.
- These decisions constituted a policy of collective punishment that deepened poverty, stripped victims of their rights, and entrenched the lack of legal protection.

9. Legislative decrees and general amnesties

- The Assad regime has used legislative amnesty decrees as a tool to mislead public opinion and cover up the continued detention of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, with the exception of political opponents from these decrees.
- The persistence of these policies has fostered a culture of impunity and the protection of those involved in violations.

10. Bashar Assad's arbitrary control of identification papers

- The Assad regime has used its control over the issuance of documents to strengthen its political and economic influence, denying Syrians their basic rights in the process.
- The number of people affected by this arbitrary control practices is estimated at 16 million, with a greater impact on women and children due to their vulnerability.

11. State security agencies and judicial decisions govern

- Before the fall of the Assad regime, the security services in Syria controlled all aspects of state institutions, including the judiciary, which lost its complete independence.
- The Assad regime's Ministry of Finance's decisions on pretrial detention were not based on any fair judicial standards, but were the result of security decisions.
- The Act on the Management and Investment of Seized Funds allowed the Assad regime to strip citizens of property rights, in violation of domestic and international legislation, and enshrine a policy of collective punishment.

12. Violation of freedom of opinion, expression and information

- Act No. 19 of 2024 entrenched the Assad regime's control over the media, through which it practiced disinformation and distortion in favor of its repressive agendas. It must be cancelled immediately.
- This law constitutes a flagrant restriction on freedom of opinion and expression, in contravention of article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

13. Election fraud and exclusion of genuine popular participation

- Syria's elections, including the 2024 People's Assembly elections, were merely a façade to confer false legitimacy on the Assad regime, as the opposition was completely restricted and the security services controlled candidate lists.
- The elections were illegitimate and unfair, as a safe and neutral environment was absent, and more than half of the Syrian population remained displaced or refugees, not to mention the issue of the Assad regime having no control over large parts of the Syrian lands.
- These violations are contrary to Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 25 of the ICCPR.

14. Violations of property rights of IDPs

- The Assad regime violated Article 21 of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which prohibits arbitrary deprivation of property.
- The funds and property of IDPs were subject to looting, attack, and destruction, as collective punishment of Assad regime opponents and as a weapon to control displaced areas.

15. Targeting of civilians and civilian objects in armed conflict

- The targeting of civilians, including shelling of IDP camps constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and the Rome Statute.
- Indiscriminate shelling has spread panic and fear among civilians, and exacerbated the suffering of IDPs already living in catastrophic humanitarian conditions.
- Article 52 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions prohibits the targeting of civilian objects not taking part in military operations, which the Assad regime and its allies have clearly violated.

16. Russia's Role in supporting the Assad regime and committing violations

- Russia's military intervention has supported the Assad regime in committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- Russian forces have been implicated in direct abuses, including indiscriminate shelling and the use of prohibited weapons.
- Russia has vetoed the Security Council 16 times since its military intervention in Syria, granting the Assad regime immunity and obstructing justice.
- Russia has been involved with the Assad regime in obstructing the delivery of UN aid to the affected areas, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis of millions of internally displaced people.

17. Responsibility of the international community

At the 2005 summit, UN member states recognized their duty to protect civilians, yet the international community failed to intervene effectively in Syria.

18. Violations of international humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions

- The Assad regime and its Russian allies have violated UN Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2254, which mandated a halt to indiscriminate attacks. The Assad regime and its allies have committed murders, which are classified as war crimes under the Rome Statute.
- The use of prohibited weapons has further worsened the humanitarian situation, targeting critical infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and service facilities.

19. Systematic violations by third parties

- Armed opposition factions and the Syrian National Army (SNA) were implicated in torture, enforced disappearances, looting, ethnic discrimination, and violations of international humanitarian law.
- Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) Practiced forced displacement, forced conscription, and looting of regional resources, while lacking transparency in managing economic revenues.
- Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) committed numerous violations, including arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearance, indiscriminate shelling, and harassment of women.

20. Landmines and associated violations

- Landmines have killed a large number of civilians, especially children. Meanwhile, the parties to the conflict have failed to provide maps outlining areas where landmines were planted.
- This shows a blatant disregard for civilian lives and a violation of international humanitarian laws.

21. Repercussions of violations and political and social collapse in Syria

The massive accumulation of catastrophic violations committed by the Assad regime over 14 years contributed to the collapse of the Syrian state. The Assad regime was like a cancerous body that permeated all state institutions, making it impossible to achieve reforms without a radical political transition.

22. UN Security Council's failure to protect Syrian civilians

The UN Security Council bears the greatest responsibility for the continued suffering of Syrian civilians for its failure to implement effective measures to protect them from war crimes and crimes against humanity.

23. Responsibility of military and civilian commanders for war crimes

- Military and civilian officials of the Assad regime and its allies bear full responsibility for crimes committed by their subordinates, whether by direct orders or as a result of their failure to prevent crimes or hold perpetrators accountable.
- This includes violations by Assad regime forces, Russian forces, and other factions involved in the conflict, such as HTS, armed opposition factions, and SDF.

24. Inability of the US-led International Coalition forces to achieve political stability

- Despite the elimination of the terrorist group ISIS in Syria, US-led International Coalition forces have failed to achieve long-term political stability in northeast Syria.
- The absence of democratic local elections and the non-handover of power to governments representing all ethnic and religious components have perpetuated social and political tensions.

25. Continued use of prohibited weapons and targeting of civilians

- The Assad regime continued to use internationally prohibited weapons, such as barrel bombs and cluster munitions, exacerbating the humanitarian catastrophe and destroying essential infrastructure.
- These violations are a direct breach of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions and customary laws of international humanitarian law.

26. The landmine crisis in Syria

- None of the forces involved in the conflict provided maps showing the location of the landmines planted, causing thousands of deaths and injuries to civilians.
- These practices show a severe disregard for civilian lives, imposing legal responsibility on the parties to the conflict to address this issue.

27. Use of remote explosions against civilians

The use of remote bombings to target densely populated residential areas reflects a premeditated intent to target civilians, a clear violation of international human rights law.

28. Obstruction of humanitarian access

- The Assad regime and its Russian allies have obstructed humanitarian access to IDPs, with the aim of controlling its distribution and exploiting it for political gain.
- Russia's involvement in blocking the entry of cross-border aid has further worsened the humanitarian conditions of millions of Syrians in need of humanitarian support.

29. Ongoing violations by all sides

- Serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law have been a general feature of all parties to the conflict, with varying scale and gravity of the violations
 - The Assad regime and its Russian and Iranian allies have been the party responsible the most for large-scale crimes.
 - HTS and SDF committed similar abuses of varying severity, including forced displacement and torture.
 - Armed opposition factions engaged in looting, torture, and ethnic discrimination.

30. The catastrophic effects of violations on the Syrian social fabric

- Systematic violations, such as torture, enforced disappearances, and displacement, have led to deep divisions within Syria's social fabric, exacerbating sectarian and ethnic conflicts.
- The continuation of these violations without accountability has caused victims to lose confidence in both national and international institutions.

Final recommendations

- The transitional authorities must immediately address the issues of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, including revealing their fate and returning their remains to their families.
- Transitional authorities also need to fully cooperate with international bodies and courts with universal jurisdiction to ensure that those involved in crimes are held accountable.
- Strengthen the role of Syrian civil society and human rights organizations in documenting violations and ensuring their independence.
- Develop comprehensive demining and residential security mechanisms, involving the community in these processes.
- Provide a secure and neutral environment for the formation of a governing council that represents the components of the Syrian people and restores confidence in national institutions. This governing council shall be the nucleus for the formation of a

transitional justice body.

Recommendations

To the UN Security Council and the UN

- **Apply pressure to resolve the issue of detainees**

Immediately begin to press all parties to the conflict to disclose detainees' records within a specified timetable, declaring their places of detention and allowing unhindered access to humanitarian organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

- **Support documentation of violations and accountability**

Support organizations that document cases of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, and torture, while strengthening international accountability mechanisms. Victim rehabilitation programmes and psychosocial support should also be supported.

- **Refer crimes to the ICC**

Ensure that Syria is referred to the ICC or establish a special tribunal to try those responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

- **Impose UN sanctions**

Impose economic and military sanctions on former Assad regime officials, as well as external actors, such as the Iranian regime and the Russian regime, involved in committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria.

- **Refugee protection**

Ensure the security and safety of millions of Syrian refugees, especially women and children, and prevent any country from forcibly returning refugees to Syria.

- **Strengthen humanitarian assistance**

Intensify efforts by UN agencies to provide food and medical assistance in IDP camps.

- **Demining**

Allocate funding from the UN Mine Action Fund to remove the landmines planted during conflict, focusing on the most affected areas, and ensure transparency in the

implementation of these tasks.

To the international community

- **Refer to the ICC**

- Support the referral of the Syrian dossier to the ICC.
- Apply pressure on international parties, including Russia, to which criminals from the Assad regime have fled, to hand over those responsible for the crimes, including Bashar Assad and his family, to international or national courts.

- **International cooperation in support of justice**

Support the efforts of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic (IIMP) and the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) by providing the necessary resources to identify the missing and training local cadres on the use of modern documentation technologies.

- **Support the transitional justice process**

- Provide support for the establishment of local national institutions in each governorate that address missing persons issues and hold accountable those responsible for crimes.
- Strengthen national reconciliation programs through psychosocial support for families of the missing and work to reduce societal divisions.

To the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic (IIMP) the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)

- **Strengthen technical and technological cooperation**

Provide technical and technological support to the future Syrian government to ensure the use of modern technologies in documenting cases of missing persons and identifying victims.

- **Local capacity development**

Organize training programs for local organizations to teach evidence collection techniques and document enforced disappearances in line with international standards.

- **Engaging civil society**

Strengthen cooperation with victims' families and civil society organizations in research

and documentation operations, while providing them with psychological and human rights support to deal with the tragic consequences.

- **Promote international advocacy**

Shed light on the issue of missing persons in Syria in coordination with international organizations and donor countries, and support transitional justice and national reconciliation efforts.

- **Benefit from human rights expertise**

Build partnerships with human rights organizations that have huge databases and documented expertise on violations and cases of arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared persons.

To the new Syrian government

1. Cooperation with international mechanisms

Facilitate the entry of independent UN and international mechanisms, including:

- International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria (IIIM).
- Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI)
- International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP).
- International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC).
- Give these bodies unhindered access to detention centers and crime scenes.

2. Protect evidence and crime scenes

- Take urgent action to protect evidence, including documenting mass grave sites and prisons.
- Clearly mark important sites to ensure that they are used as legal evidence in the future.

3. Address the issue of the forcibly disappeared

- **Disclosure of information and the right of families to know the fate of their loved ones**
 - Conduct independent and thorough investigations into all cases of enforced disappearances.
 - Require former Assad regime officials to disclose mass burial sites or any relevant

records.

- Provide psychosocial support to the families of victims.
- **Document the details of the death of the forcibly disappeared**
 - Clarify the circumstances and causes of death.
 - Provide official documents related to the death of victims to their families, while ensuring the accuracy of the information.
 - Return the bodies in a manner that demonstrates respect for human dignity.

4. Work to protect mass graves

- Use sophisticated techniques (such as satellites and DNA analysis) to locate and document mass graves.
- Protect sites to ensure evidence is not tampered with.

5. Investigations and accountability

Cooperate with the ICC to issue international arrest warrants and prosecute those involved in violations.

6. Ensure non-recurrence of crimes

- Reform the security and judicial apparatuses.
- Issue strict laws to prevent enforced disappearances and serious violations.
- Launch awareness and capacity-building programs to promote a culture of human rights.

To supporting countries and the European Union

- **Support the documentation of violations**
 - Provide financial and technical support to organizations working to document violations and crimes committed in Syria.
 - Expose the continuity of the former Assad regime's practices and violations of international law.
- **Rehabilitation of victims**
 - Support civil society organizations concerned with the rehabilitation of victims and their integration into society.
 - Allocate additional resources to assist survivors in displacement and asylum areas.

- **Raise the level of humanitarian assistance**
- Make clear commitments to meet the financial contributions that have been made, with a focus on supporting education and health in neighboring countries.
- Ensure that forcibly displaced women are adequately protected and their specific needs are taken into account.

To the Israeli government

1. Withdrawal from the occupied territories

- Fully commit to complete withdrawal from Syrian territory, including the Golan Heights, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, foremost of which is resolution 497 (1981).
- End all military incursions and shelling within Syria's borders.

2. Compensation for damage

- Provide comprehensive compensation to the Syrian state for damage to infrastructure and property as a result of Israeli military operations.
- Establish transparent mechanisms to compensate individual civilians affected by airstrikes and attacks.

3. Cooperation with the international community

- Allow international monitoring of border areas to ensure compliance with ceasefire lines.
- Implement all Security Council resolutions related to the Israeli-Syrian conflict.

To humanitarian organizations

1. Immediate Relief

- Develop urgent plans to provide dignified shelters for IDPs, with priority given to widows and orphans.
- Intensify efforts to clear landmines in the affected areas in conjunction with relief operations.

2. Enhance vital facilities

- Provide the necessary support to medical facilities and schools, and provide them with ambulances equipped with clear signs that can be identified to avoid being targeted.

3. Documentation and awareness

Strengthen efforts to document human rights violations and work on raising international awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Syria.

4. Support for survivors and victims' families

Provide psychosocial support programs to survivors of violations and families of victims, to help them recover and reintegrate into society.

To the media

1. Counter disinformation

- Launch media campaigns to counter misleading campaigns that attempt to justify or deny violations.
- Shed light on the grave crimes and violations committed by the Assad regime and the rest of the parties to the conflict.
- Abstain from hosting Assad regime apologists.

To the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI)

1. Launch thorough investigations

Investigate the violations described in this and previous reports, focusing on enforced disappearances and violations related to those who disappeared after the fall of the Assad regime.

2. Accountability for those responsible

- Identify those directly or indirectly responsible for crimes and publish their names to expose them internationally.
- Cooperate with countries and human rights organizations to prevent dealing with them politically or economically.

3. Submit updated reports

Issue periodic reports on the humanitarian and human rights situation in Syria, and submit them to the Human Rights Council and the UN to support international accountability efforts.

To the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

1. Evidence collection

Continue to collect evidence related to the crimes documented in this report, including testimonies, documents, and criminal data that support accountability.

2. Coordination with the transitional authorities

Cooperate with transitional actors in Syria to ensure the protection of forensic evidence associated with mass graves and detention centers.

To the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

1. Improve the situation of refugees

- Create a stable and safe environment for Syrian children refugees, while enhancing their education opportunities and providing long-term psychological support.
- Work to support programs that help reintegrate Syrian refugees into host communities.

2. Promote investment in health and education

Intensify investments in education and health infrastructure to support refugees and host communities with a significant humanitarian and economic burden.

To the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and local and international humanitarian and relief organizations

1. Urgent Response

- Better coordinate humanitarian assistance in proportion to the most affected areas.
- Allocate additional resources for the rehabilitation of children and women survivors of sexual violence and grave violations.

2. Support survivors of abuse

- Establish long-term programs to provide psychosocial assistance to victims, especially survivors of torture and arbitrary detention.



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No justice without accountability

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