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Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in September 2022

Extensive, massive violations and the lack of any imminent political solution are major reasons for asylum waves on “death boats”

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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 analyzes in Syria.

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I. Introduction and methodology:

Syria has seen an unprecedented number of violations since the start of the popular uprising for democracy in March 2011. Extrajudicial killings, arrests, torture, and enforced disappearances are the violations most frequently perpetrated against Syrian citizens. While the Syrian regime and its affiliated militias were the sole perpetrators of these violations for the first seven months or so of the uprising, other parties subsequently joined in, also violating the rights of Syrian citizens. The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has continued to document every incident that its team members are able to verify, with these violations escalating very dramatically in 2012 and 2013, prompting us to expand our publication of periodic monthly reports recording and highlighting the continued suffering of the Syrian people, which subsequently grew to eight reports on different issues issued at the beginning of each month. In the course of our work, SNHR has compiled a massive database cataloguing hundreds of thousands of incidents, each of which involves a pattern of violations that we have been able to document.

By the end of 2018, with a reduction in the level of violence compared to previous years, we changed our previous strategy and now compile our reports into a single monthly report featuring the most prominent violations in Syria which we have been able to document in the preceding month.

This month's report focuses on the human rights situation in Syria, which SNHR documented in August 2022, and catalogues the death toll of civilian victims whom we documented killed by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria during this period, as well as the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearance. The report also highlights attacks on civilian objects, which SNHR's team was able to document during this period. To find out more about our working [methodology](#) in documenting and archiving data, please visit the following link that explains this in detail.

This report only represents the bare minimum of the actual severity and magnitude of the violations that occurred. Also, it doesn't include any analysis of the profound social, economic, and psychological ramifications.

II. A summary of the most prominent incidents in September:

In terms of shelling and military operations:

Artillery shelling by the Syrian regime forces on the Idlib area in north-western Syria continued in September. This bombardment focused on the villages and towns of Jabal al-Zawiyah in the southern countryside of Idlib, the western countryside of Aleppo and the Al-Ghab plain in the western countryside of Hama, which is close to the line of contact with factions of the armed opposition. The towns and villages of the western countryside of Aleppo and the southern countryside of Idlib, which are far from the lines of contact, were subjected to ground attacks by the Syrian regime forces. On September 6, one of these attacks left one woman injured, in addition to causing material damage to several houses in the village of Shannan in Jabal al-Zawiyah, south of Idlib, and caused moderate material damage to a mosque in the village. Another attack, on September 22, killed one civilian and injured another in the village of Kafr Ameh west of Aleppo.



Damage to a house following shelling by Syrian regime forces in the southern outskirts of
Shannan village, west of Idlib, on 6 September 2022

Since the first quarter of September, Russian forces have escalated their air strikes on the northwestern region of Syria, where we documented dozens of air strikes that affected civilian and military areas, concentrated on the area of Sheikh Yusuf, Hafsarja and the Sahl al Rouj west of Idlib, where airstrikes on September 8 on the village of Hafsarja west of Idlib resulted in the death of at least six civilians, including two children, and injured about 11 others. The same forces carried out further air strikes on the same area on September 17, which resulted in the injury of one civilian, in addition to inflicting significant material damage in the targeted locations. On September 27, another aerial attack, this one on the headquarters of one of the armed opposition factions located in the middle of several IDP camps north of Idlib injured four civilians near the targeted site, in addition to causing a state of fear and panic among the IDPs in the camps.

On September 8, we also recorded [an attack](#) by Russian ground forces using a medium-range rocket which hit agricultural land in Tal Sahan area in Sahl al Rouj west of Idlib. This attack was carried out at the same time as air strikes, also by Russian forces, on a hilly area near the village of Al-Ghafar near Tal Sahan. Investigations by the Syrian Network for Human Rights are still continuing to ascertain if the rocket was loaded with cluster munitions.



In September, the Syrian Democratic Forces continued their ground attacks on the northwestern and eastern countryside of Aleppo. The same area was also subjected to ground attacks originating from areas under the joint control of Syrian regime forces and Kurdish self-administration forces north of Aleppo, where the [village of Ulashli](#), which is adjacent to the city of Al-Bab, east of Aleppo, on 15 September, was subjected to heavy machine-gun fire. We were unable to identify the perpetrators. We believe that responsibility for the attacks can be attributed to either Syrian regime forces or Syrian Democratic Forces, as the shelling originated from an area controlled jointly both. The shelling resulted in moderate material damage to the structure a mosque in the village.

In terms of explosions, in September, we documented explosions caused by explosive devices in the governorates of Daraa, Aleppo and Hasakah. A motorcycle explosion - believed to be caused by an explosive device placed on the motorcycle - killed [two civilians, one of them a child](#), who were riding it on the Be'er Kusa road south of the city of Jarablus, located to the east of Aleppo, on 9 September.

[Civilian casualties caused by mines and munitions remnants](#) continued in September in various governorates and areas in Syria, with most of these concentrated in the governorates of Idlib, Dar 'a and Homs, and most [of the victims being children](#). A landmine explosion caused an explosion in an uninhabited residential building in the center of the city of Binnish in the north-eastern countryside of Idlib, on 5 September, killing four sibling children. In September, there were 11 civilian casualties, including nine children. The total documented civilian death toll to date since the beginning of 2022 from explosions caused by landmines and munitions remnants now stands at 112 in all, including 59 children and nine women.

[Assassinations of civilians](#) by so-far unidentified armed parties also continued in September, with most of this month's killings taking place in Daraa governorate. We also documented the killing of a [refugee](#) from Iraq during this period.

On September 6, the Syrian regime's [SANA News Agency](#) reported that the Israeli Air Force had targeted Aleppo International Airport with missiles, putting it out of service. On September 17, [the same source reported](#) that five Syrian regime soldiers were killed as a result of the rockets fired by Israeli forces at Damascus International Airport and some locations south of Damascus City. The Israeli bombing also caused material damage. Commenting on the attacks, the Iran International Channel website published a report in which it stated that "Israel carried out air strikes on Damascus International Airport and other sites south of Damascus, on September 16 and 17, targeting the so-called 2250 Unit, a private Iranian logistics organization run by [the Iranian Revolutionary Guards](#)." The Iran International report added that the targeted unit is responsible for receiving equipment, weapons and personnel from Iran, as well as supporting the Lebanese militias sponsored by Iran in Syria.

Regarding arrests and enforced disappearances:

In September, Syrian regime forces continued to pursue and arrest people who had settled their security status in areas that had previously signed settlement agreements with the Syrian regime. These arrests were concentrated in the governorates of Rif Dimashq and Daraa, with most of them taking place during campaigns of mass raids and arrests, and at checkpoints. We also documented arrests targeting returning refugees and displaced persons while they were trying to return to their homes in areas which are now under the control of Syrian regime forces. These arrests were concentrated near the Kassab border crossing in the northern countryside of Latakia Governorate. We have also recorded sporadic arrests by the Syrian regime forces carried out through the regime's Criminal Security Branch targeting a number of civilians, including women, on the grounds that they had received remittances in foreign currency (dollars). These arrests took place in several Syrian governorates, most notably Damascus and Aleppo. Many of these detainees' families told us that the arrests were aimed at extortion and obtaining money in exchange for their release.

As for the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), in September, we documented that they continued their policy of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, with the month seeing an increase in the number of SDF detentions and enforced disappearances carried out through raid campaigns and mass detentions targeting civilians under the pretext of fighting ISIS cells. Some of these campaigns were carried out with the support of international coalition forces' helicopters. We also documented detentions targeting a number of civilians in mass raid campaigns and arrests at checkpoints with the aim of forcible conscription, with these prisoners being transferred to SDF military training camps. These arrests were concentrated in the governorates of Deir ez-Zor and Raqqqa. We also documented detentions targeting a number of civilians and teachers on the basis of their participation in protests, criticizing the educational curriculum imposed by SDF in areas under the group's control and preventing them from teaching the educational curriculum of the Syrian regime's Ministry of Education. We have issued [a statement](#) on this subject.

We also recorded the continued abduction of children by the Syrian Democratic Forces with the aim of taking them to their training and recruitment camps and forcibly conscripting them, preventing their families from communicating with them, and failing to reveal their fate.

September also witnessed detentions carried out by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) against civilians, concentrated in Idlib governorate and including media and political activists, most of which were connected to the detainees' expressing views critical of the HTS administration's policies in areas under the group's control. The detentions were carried out in an arbitrary manner in the form of raids, break-ins, and kidnappings while traveling or at temporary checkpoints. We also recorded the detention of a number of displaced civilians who were living in one of the abandoned schools in the countryside of Idlib governorate, over their refusal to leave that school and move to camps for the displaced. In another incident, we documented the arrest of children on charges of possession of suspicious materials obtained through their work in collecting scrap.

Meanwhile, in September, all armed opposition factions/the National Army also continued carrying out arbitrary detentions and kidnappings, most of which were of a collective nature, targeting people from Syrian regime-controlled areas. We also recorded detentions carried out on the basis of detainees' ethnicity, which were concentrated in areas under the opposition factions/ Syrian National Army's control in Aleppo governorate, with most of these taking place without the presence of any judicial authorization or any clear charges being brought, and without the participation of the police, which is the administrative body authorized by the judiciary to arrest and detain individuals. We also recorded raids and detentions carried out by elements of the National Army targeting civilians, including women, on charges of dealing with the Syrian Democratic Forces, and in connection with their criticism of living conditions and corruption in areas under the Syrian National Army's control; these were concentrated in the city of Afrin and some villages adjacent to the city of Afrin in rural Aleppo governorate.

With regard to the living situation:

In September, the economic, living and service conditions continued to deteriorate in all regions of Syria, as the areas under Syrian regime control continue to suffer from a steady rise in the prices of living materials, which further worsened the situation. The Syrian regime government's Central Bank officially increased the exchange rate of the dollar against the Syrian pound, with the pro-regime [Al-Watan newspaper](#) reporting on September 20 that this increase was taking place at a rate of about 7%, so that the exchange rate of one dollar became 3,015 Syrian pounds, a significant increase on the previous 2,814 Syrian pounds.

On the subject of services, specifically the electricity crisis, the Syrian regime's government continued to implement a policy of rationing electricity in most areas under its control in September, with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Syria warning in a [tweet](#) posted on its official Twitter account on September 29 that this shortage "affects the ability to restore key services such as water systems, markets, bakeries, and others."

Meanwhile, most areas under the control of the Syrian regime continue to experience severe fuel shortages, increasing the burden on citizens in light of the high prices on the black market, where the price of one liter of gasoline in some areas has reached 8,000 Syrian pounds while diesel prices have risen to 7,000 Syrian pounds per liter, according to the pro-regime [newspaper Al-Watan](#), which noted in an article published on September 26 that the prices of [diesel](#) and unsupported [gasoline](#) specified by the Syrian regime government last May had been set at 3,500 pounds per liter for Octane 90 gasoline, and 4,000 pounds for Octane 95 gasoline, while the price of industrial and commercial diesel is 2,500 pounds per liter.

In northwestern Syria, the intense suffering of civilians continued in light of the constantly deteriorating economic and living situation at all levels, in conjunction with the high prices of all food, supplies and fuel. The region has witnessed an increase in electricity prices in rural Idlib and the city of Afrin in the countryside of Aleppo. The impact of the continuous decline in the value of the Turkish lira - used in trading in the region - against the US dollar continues to affect the prices of food and supplies, in light of a significant decrease in purchasing power due to widespread unemployment and high poverty levels, especially in the areas that include the refugee camps for the internally displaced, in addition to low labor wages. The service and health sectors in the region are also suffering from a severe funding crisis in light of a sharp increase in humanitarian needs.

HTS continued to harass the people of the region, especially media professionals. The most prominent of these incidents was the harassment of a number of media activists, including Hadi al-Abdullah, Muhammad al-Dahir, Abdulaziz Qaitaz, Muhammad al-Faisal, Ali al-Issa, Aladdin al-Yusuf, Jamil al-Hassan, and Ahmad Falaha, on September 12, who were subjected to harassment by HTS security personnel in an effort to prevent them from providing media coverage of a crowd of hundreds of young men who gathered in Bab al-Hawa Square near the Syrian-Turkish border crossing in northern rural Idlib in order to enter Turkish territory to participate in what was called the “peace caravan”, with the participants beaten by the same security personnel with sticks and intimidated with threats of arrest.

In northeastern Syria, the living situation in the region also continued to deteriorate in light of the continuous rise in the prices of some foodstuffs and supplies (such as sugar, flour, grains and oils) and fuel, due to the high exchange rate of the dollar and the control of shop owners over the prices of their materials in the absence of ration control. Activists from the region confirmed the increase in the migration of young people outside the areas controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces towards Turkey and then European countries in search of work and safety due to the decrease in job opportunities and the spread of unemployment and general security harassment by the dominant forces in the region.

On the cholera epidemic:

On September 10, the Syrian regime announced for the first time, according to [SANA news agency](#), that 15 cases of cholera had been recorded in Aleppo governorate. Commenting on this, on 12 September, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, Imran Reza, issued a statement expressing serious concern about the cholera outbreak in Syria. The statement said that the [Ministry of Health of the Government of the Syrian regime had](#) announced an outbreak of cholera in Aleppo governorate after 15 laboratory confirmed cases, including one death. The statement added that between August 25 and September 10, surveillance data showed that a total of 936 cases of acute diarrhea had been reported in Syria, including at least eight deaths, with the source of infection believed to be related to the use of unsafe, untreated water from the Euphrates River as drinking water, as well as the use of contaminated water in the irrigation of crops, leading to food contamination. The statement indicated that the outbreak of the epidemic is also an indication of the severe water shortages throughout Syria. The statement added that the United Nations calls on donor countries to provide urgent additional funding to contain the outbreak and prevent its spread.

The latest statistics published by the Syrian regime regarding the total number of infections indicated that the total number of infections and deaths from cholera in Syria to date stood at 338, with 29 deaths. SANA indicated that the infections were distributed as follows: “Aleppo Governorate 230 infections, Deir ez-Zor 55, Al-Hasakeh 25, Lattakia 19, Homs 5, and Damascus 4 infections.” The deaths were “in Aleppo 25, Deir ez-Zor, Fitan, Al-Hasakeh and Fitan,” according to a [Sana News Agency](#) report published on September 25.

In northwestern Syria, on September 19, the [Interim Government's Ministry of Health](#) announced the emergence of the first laboratory-proven cholera case in the region, specifically in the city of Jarablus, east of Aleppo. On September 26, the [EWARN program](#) announced on its Telegram account that the first two confirmed cases of cholera had been recorded in the camps area in Idlib governorate.

On September 10, the [French Press Agency](#) cited a report from the Self-Administration of Northeastern Syria stating that three people had died of cholera. The agency added that most of the cases had been spreading in the province of Raqqa and the western countryside of Deir ez-Zor.

On September 21, Joan Mustafa, the joint head of the Health Authority of the Syrian Democratic Forces Autonomous Administration, announced at [a press conference held](#) in the city of Qamishli that the analysis conducted on the waters of the Euphrates River confirmed the presence of the *Vibrio-cholerae*, the bacteria responsible for cholera. She confirmed that the number of suspected cases of cholera in the eastern region had reached 2,867, with 78 cases being confirmed. As for the 16 deaths, the disease is widespread in the western countryside of Deir ez-Zor, where the first cases were recorded last month, as well as Raqqa, Tabqa, and Hasakah.

On September 16, CARE¹ International issued [a press release](#) warning that the cholera outbreak in Syria poses an additional threat to the displaced population. The statement added that "Four people have died in northeastern Syria alone and more than 700 others have been infected since the beginning of the outbreak earlier this month." The statement noted that about 70% of the population in northeastern Syria rely on unsafe water sources, warning that the risk of rapid, large-scale transmission of the disease is very high.

CARE further reported [on September 22](#) that since late August, cases of acute watery diarrhea had been increasingly reported throughout Syria, with these reports particularly concentrated in areas beside the Euphrates River in the north and east of Syria. The organization pointed out that these cases are caused by people's reliance on unsafe drinking water sources as a result of the water crisis in all regions in Syria, with this crisis not only reducing access to water, but also leading to increased reliance on unsafe water sources, especially those that are delivered by trucks from private vendors.

On September 20, Save the Children warned in [a statement that](#) thousands of children in eastern and northern Syria are at risk due to the rapid spread of the cholera epidemic. The statement added that "the outbreak coincides with the return of children to school at the beginning of the school year in Syria this month, which puts the health of children at risk and threatens the continuation of their educational process." The statement noted that the outbreak underlines the need to shift the focus towards early recovery and the restoration of basic services, including water and sanitation.

¹ A major international humanitarian agency providing emergency relief and long-term international development projects, founded in 1945

With regard to forced displacement:

In September, the suffering of the displaced in northwestern Syria continued in terms of living conditions and humanitarian needs, especially in light of the deterioration of the economic conditions and the increase in the volume of needs, which has reached record levels and is exacerbated by the steep decline in the levels of essential support provided by relief organizations to cover those needs, the almost complete lack of job opportunities, and the significant decrease in purchasing power, especially among the displaced people living in IDP camps. In September, we also documented the continuation of fires in IDP camps in Idlib areas, with [a fire](#) on September 3, caused by the misuse of cooking facilities in one of the IDP tents in a camp in the village of Aqrabat, north of Idlib, completely destroying two tents and significantly damaging three others.

In northeastern Syria, the suffering of the displaced in the region has been further exacerbated, especially by the spread of cholera in light of the severe shortage of potable water, and by the low effectiveness of the work by relief organizations that provide support to the displaced and contribute to improving the food security of needy families, in addition to the decrease in the quantities of relief items distributed by the United Nations and the increase in the time between the distribution of food baskets, which may reach four months.

With regard to the operations by governments around the world to bring their citizens home from camps in the north-eastern region of Syria, [Anatolia News Agency](#) reported on September 9 that 161 Iraqi citizens had left Syrian territory through Turkey to return to their country. The agency added that "these people entered Syria in 2014 to escape the clashes in their areas in Iraq, and their departure came after diplomatic efforts made by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Iraqi Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Displacement, and the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Authority İHH."

Regarding Al-Hawl Camp, on September 9, the US Forces Central Command issued [a statement](#) following a visit by General Michael Eric Corella to the camp in northeastern Syria. The statement said that about 56,000 people, more than 90% of whom are women and children, are currently living in tents in the camp under difficult climatic conditions. The statement added that nearly 70% of the camp population are children under the age of 12, which makes them vulnerable to radicalization due to the poor living conditions they suffer. The statement indicated that there is no military solution to the threat posed by Al-Hawl Camp, adding that most suitable permanent solution is for countries that have nationals in the camp to bring their citizens home and rehabilitate and reintegrate them into their communities.

On September 17, the Syrian Democratic Forces' internal security forces issued [a statement announcing](#) the end of a security campaign in Al-Hawl camp in the eastern Al-Hasakah countryside in search of ISIS cells, which began on August 25, 2022, and resulted in the arrest of 226 civilians, including 36 women, suspected of dealing with ISIS cells.

In terms of asylum, [Reuters](#) reported on 12 September that the bodies of six Syrians, including three children, had been found on a boat for asylum-seekers that had arrived at the port of Potsalo on the island of Sicily. The agency quoted Chiara Cardolletti, the representative of UNHCR in Italy, as saying that the victims had "died of thirst, hunger and severe burns." The agency added that the victims were among a group of 26 people who had been on the boat at sea for several days.

In Lebanon, the Lebanese authorities have continued their efforts to promote their plan to start returning Syrian refugees. In September, there were several developments in this context. On September 8, the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Najib Mikati, [addressed a letter](#) to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, in which he said that Lebanon "calls without delay for the implementation of the international mechanisms contained in the texts adopted by the High Commissioner for Refugees and its Executive Council on the return of refugees".

On September 20, in a report on the Lebanese authorities' plan to repatriate Syrian refugees, the [Al-Hurra](#) news website reported that the Lebanese Public Security Directorate had opened "17 offices in Lebanon to register names of those wishing to return voluntarily". The article also reported that the list of names of "those wishing to return" had been sent to the Ministry of Local Administration in the Syrian regime's government. This list included 460 families currently living in the Lebanese town of Aarsal. The first convoy is expected to start within two weeks.

In September, SNHR also documented a tragedy in which a boat carrying refugees and 'illegal emigrants', mostly Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinians, capsized off the Syrian coast after setting out from northern Lebanon on September 21 in a bid to reach Europe. The bodies of most of the victims appeared on the shores of Tartous province in Syria. On September 23, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) [issued a press release](#) saying that the boat had set off from Minya port, near the Lebanese city of Tripoli, with between 120 and 170 migrants and refugees on board, mostly Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinians. On the same day, Stefan Dugarik, the official spokesman of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, said during the daily [press conference](#) from permanent headquarters in New York, that what is worse is that "we know that such incidents can be prevented if states manage the flow of people, migrants and refugees in a coordinated manner [and] if people are not left in the hands of criminal gangs and smugglers."

On September 23, UNICEF issued [a statement](#) revealing that ten children had died in the mass-drowning according to preliminary reports, stating that “every death of a child at sea emphasizes the need to protect and support children wherever they are and expand the options available to children and families to move safely without having to risk their lives.”

On September 27, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office commented on the incident in a statement published on the ministry’s official Facebook page in which it quoted Lord Ahmed, Minister of Middle East Affairs, as saying, “The sinking of a Lebanese boat off the Syrian coast is very painful.” The statement also quoted Jonathan Hargreaves, the UK Special Representative on Syria, as saying, “There is a need for Syria to be safe and secure to prevent these desperate attempts [to reach] safety and better living conditions.” On 28 September, the [pro-Syrian regime newspaper Al-Watan reported that](#) 101 victims’ bodies had been recovered from the boat, with 73 of these being handed over to their families, including 45 Syrians, 23 Lebanese and 5 Palestinians. The Syrian Network for Human Rights recorded the death of 55 Syrian citizens in this incident, bringing the total number of deaths documented on SNHR’s database as dying during irregular migration since the end of 2011 up to October 2022 to about 2,398 people drowned to death, whether they travelled from Syria to neighboring countries or from other countries towards safer areas, from the end of 2011 until October 2022. The SNHR emphasizes that the Syrian regime and its allies are responsible for forcing Syrians to risk their lives on such desperate irregular migration journeys in order to simply reach a safer country that provides the most basic requirements for them to live in dignity.

On the subject of refugees in Turkey, calls for a convoy of a number of Syrian refugees in Turkey to cross into the European Union spread on social media in September, with the UK’s [Guardian newspaper reporting](#) on September 21 that Yoko Narushima, the spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had stated, “We are concerned for the safety of the people who have decided to participate in this convoy, which - based on previous experiences with similar movements around the world - may be fraught with danger.”

On the subject of political and human rights:

On August 31, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, issued a [study](#) “on how to strengthen efforts, including through existing measures and mechanisms, to discover the fate - and clarify the whereabouts - of missing persons in Syria, identify the owners of the remains and provide support to families.” The study said that during the period of consultations, most actors and most UN member states had agreed to establish a new international body dedicated specifically to the issue of missing persons in Syria, in parallel with taking immediate measures within the framework of existing processes. The study recommended that the entity be independent. The Syrian Network for Human Rights was among the organizations that contributed to the preparation of this study, and we stressed the need to take effective and serious steps to discover the fate of the forcibly disappeared in Syria, whose number has now reached about 112 thousand, 87% of whom are in the hands of Syrian regime forces.

On September 3, [the official Vatican News Agency reported](#) a statement from Pope Francis, the head of the Catholic church, in which he said that the crisis in Syria remains one of the most serious crises in the world, in terms of destruction, increasing humanitarian needs, social and economic collapse, poverty and famine, having reached catastrophic levels, with nearly 14 million people, or nearly half the population affected by the crisis, living in a state of internal displacement or asylum outside the country. In the same context, the [Catholic News Agency](#) reported on the same day a statement by Cardinal Mario Zinari, the representative of the Pope of the Vatican in Syria, saying that "more than 90% of the population in Syria lives below the poverty line, and statistics indicate that many children suffer from hunger or malnutrition."

On September 8, Human Rights Watch issued [a report](#) entitled 'It was really difficult to protect myself: the impact of the armed conflict in Syria on children with disabilities'. The report documented children with disabilities in Syria being subjected to discrimination, exclusion, verbal abuse and threats. According to the United Nations, about 28% of Syrians suffer from a specific disability, which is about twice the global rate.

On September 13, the [European Union mission to Syria](#) tweeted on its official Twitter account that all Syrians have the right to return to their homes, but so far there is not yet a suitable climate for return, as the conditions must first be provided in accordance with international law for a safe, voluntary and dignified return, and when these conditions exist, the European Union will support the return of refugees and displaced persons organized by the United Nations.

Also on September 13, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Refugee Protection Watch issued [a statement](#) regarding the visit of Filippo Grande, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to Syria from 10 to 15 September. The statement urged the UNHCR and other United Nations agencies to stop programs that could stimulate early and unsafe return. The statement stressed that Syria remains unsafe for return, noting that "the conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of displaced Syrians remain elusive in Syria."

On September 14, following his visit to Syria, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, [Filippo Grandi, said](#) that more support must be provided to meet Syria's massive humanitarian needs. Commenting on the visit, the Syrian Network for Human Rights issued [a statement](#) on September 22, in which it noted that the Minister of Interior of the Syrian regime is involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes, and his meeting with the High Commissioner for Refugees harms the issue of Syrian refugees. The statement clarified that the minister, Muhammad Rahmon, who is one of the most prominent figures in the Syrian regime's security services involved in the planning and management of the internal security file of the Syrian regime, has been on the US sanctions list since 2017, and was added to the sanctions lists issued by the United Kingdom and the European sanctions list in 2019, due to his direct association with the Syrian chemical weapons program, in addition to his involvement in the arrest and forced disappearance of thousands of Syrians.

On September 14, the International Independent Investigation Commission on Syria issued [its twenty-sixth report](#), covering the period between 1 January and 30 June 2022. On September 15, the Syrian Network for Human Rights issued [a statement](#) commenting on the commission's report, which stressed that Syria is not a safe country for the return of refugees, and underlined the lack of security in all areas under the Syrian regime's control. It also stressed the continuation of arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and deaths due to torture against citizens, including refugees or displaced persons returning to areas under the Syrian regime's control. It added that the Syrian Network for Human Rights has cooperated with the International Commission of Inquiry since 2011, supports the continuation of its mandate, and welcomes its recommendations.

On September 14, the Office of the High Commissioner of the United Nations Human Rights Council issued [a press statement](#) commenting on the report of the International Independent Investigation Commission on Syria. The statement said: "Syrians are facing increasing suffering and hardships resulting from the disastrous consequences of more than a decade of war amid the escalation of hostilities in the northern regions of Syria." The statement added that millions of Syrians are suffering in displacement camps, while needs are increasing, and donor support is decreasing. Militarily, Russia continues to support the Syrian regime.

On September 15, the French Press Agency published [an investigation](#) about the Syrian regime's infamous Sednaya military prison. The investigation cited testimonies from former detainees in the prison who revealed the existence of two rooms full of salt which were used by the Syrian regime forces to store and preserve the bodies of detainees who died due to torture, hunger or disease inside the prison before being transferred to another location. The investigation added that around 30,000 people have been detained by the Syrian regime forces in Sednaya prison since the beginning of the conflict, with only 6,000 of them being released.

On September 17, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in [a tweet](#) published on its official Twitter account that an aid convoy - the seventh such convoy - was part of the mechanism for the delivery of aid crossing the lines of control had entered the northwestern region of Syria from the areas controlled by the Syrian regime forces in the city of Aleppo, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2585 and 2642 regarding the cross-border delivery of aid in Syria and the lines of control. The convoy included 16 World Food Program (WFP) trucks loaded with food rations, wheat flour and food supplements.



On September 19, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) issued [a situation report](#) on the situation in the north-western region of Syria, in which it stated that, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, at least 14 civilians, including 6 children, had been killed in previous weeks as a result of the shelling of the region. More than 30 civilians, including 10 children, were also injured during the previous month, August. The report added that 13,260 more people had been displaced in the region during August, twice the number recorded in July, due to the sharp deterioration in the economic situation.

On September 22, Economist magazine, [in](#) its classification of the living conditions in cities around the world, said that Damascus is now classified as the worst city in the world in terms of living conditions, as it also was last year, adding that "about 90% of people in Syria live in poverty under the brutal rule of dictator Bashar al-Assad."

On September 29, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, said in her briefing to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme in Syria that "no progress has been made with regard to the efforts of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) to clarify all outstanding issues related to the initial declaration and subsequent declarations of the Syrian Arab Republic since the Council's last meeting on this issue." She added that the Syrian regime continues to set conditions that prevent the deployment of the United Nations team, which has frustrated the attempts of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to organize the twenty-fifth round of consultations with the Syrian regime in Damascus.

At the level of accounting and advocacy:

On September 7, [Amnesty International](#) issued a statement in which it said that the tragic death of Bashar Abdul Saud, a Syrian refugee who had been tortured in a Lebanese prison, should serve as a warning to the Lebanese authorities to address the issue of torture in their detention facilities. In its statement, Amnesty International also called on the Lebanese authorities to investigate and prosecute the case under its justice system. On 9 September, the Syrian Network for Human Rights issued [a joint press release](#) with a number of fellow human rights organizations on the situation of Syrian detainees and prisoners in Lebanon. The statement revealed that the Lebanese State Security apparatus had arrested the Syrian refugee Bashar Abd al-Saud on August 30, 2022, with a number of officers subsequently torturing him to death. On September 26, Human Rights Watch, Legal Agenda, Amnesty International and Minna for Human Rights issued [a joint statement](#) asserting that “the Lebanese judicial authorities should refer the investigation of elements and officers of the security forces accused of torturing a Syrian refugee and causing his death from military justice, which is inherently unfair, to the ordinary criminal justice system”. The statement added that the referral of the investigation to the military justice authorities was contrary to international law as interpreted by the international human rights treaty bodies.

On September 7, the Syrian Network for Human Rights issued [a statement](#) commenting on the thirteenth report of the International Coalition for the Elimination of Cluster Munitions and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL-CMC), [issued](#) on August 25. The statement summarized the findings of the report on Syria, affirming that Syria has consistently been ranked as the worst country in the world since 2012 in terms of the number of cluster munition victims. The highest number of victims to date was also recorded in 2021, amounting to 37 in total, representing approximately 25% of the total number of victims worldwide in 2021. The report further revealed that two-thirds of the victims documented in 2021 were children.

On September 23, the Syrian Network for Human Rights, in cooperation with the US Department of State's Office of Democracy and Human Rights, held an [event](#) entitled 'Bridging the Gap: Striving for Accountability in Syria' on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, sponsored by six countries, namely the United States of America, France, Britain, Germany, Canada and the Netherlands. On September 27, the Syrian Network for Human Rights issued [a statement](#) on the event.

On September 30, the Syrian Network for Human Rights issued our [seventh annual report](#) on the most prominent violations committed by Russian forces since Russia's military intervention in Syria on 30 September 2015. The report documented the killing of 6,943 civilians, including 2,044 children, and 1,243 attacks on vital civilian centres by Russian forces. The report revealed that, since the start of Russia's military intervention up until 30 September 2022, Russian forces have committed at least 1,243 attacks on civilian vital centres, including 223 schools, 207 medical facilities, and 60 markets.

The report also documented at least 237 attacks with cluster munitions, in addition to at least 125 attacks with incendiary weapons, launched by these forces since the start of Russia's military intervention in Syria. The report further indicated that the escalating scale of violence by Russian forces has had the greatest impact on the movement of displacement and forced displacement, with Russian attacks contributing, in parallel with the attacks launched by the Syrian Alliance, to the displacement of approximately 4.8 million people. Most of these civilians have been displaced more than once.

In September, the Syrian Network for Human Rights informed the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, and the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, of six cases of enforced disappearance, one of which is of a child.

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

This report outlines the most notable human rights violations committed by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria that were documented by the SNHR in September.



A. Extrajudicial killing:

In September, SNHR documented the deaths of 74 civilians, including 21 children and three women (adult female), most of whom were killed at the hands of other parties. We also documented the deaths of seven individuals due to torture, in addition to documenting at least one massacre. We issued a report on the first of this month detailing the civilian victims documented killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.

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

A. The main parties:

- **Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias)²:** Eight civilians.
- **Russian forces:** Seven civilians, including two children.
- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):** Six civilians, including one child.
- **US-led Coalition forces:** One civilian.

B. Other parties:

We documented the deaths of 52 civilians, including 18 children and three women, at the hands of other parties, distributed as follows:

- Landmines whose source we have not been able to identify: 11 civilians, including nine children.
- Gunfire whose source we have been unable to identify: 11 civilians, including one child and two women.
- Bombings whose perpetrators we have not been able to identify: Five civilians, including one child.
- Killings by parties we have been unable to identify: 18 civilians, including five children and one woman.
- Drowning: Two civilians, including one child.
- Turkish border guards: Two civilians.
- Turkish forces: Two civilians, including one child.

B. Arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance:

In September 2022, SNHR documented at least 167 cases of arbitrary arrests, including 13 children and eight women (adult female), at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria. Most of these arrests were carried out by Syrian regime forces in the governorates of Damascus Suburbs, then Damascus, followed by Daraa. We issued a report on the second of this month detailing the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearances which we documented in September at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.

² We generally use the term 'the Syrian regime' rather than 'the Syrian government', because the nature of the ruling power in Syria is a totalitarian dictatorship based on ruling the nation in an authoritarian fashion through a very limited group of individuals, primarily the President of the Republic and his selected leaders of the security services, while the ministers, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior, play a restricted, largely ceremonial role, which is limited to implementing precisely what the ruling regime orders, without any decision-making power or active role; this means that the government's role is wholly subordinate and limited to serving the regime, with all the main powers being concentrated in the hands of the President of the Republic and the security services. Governance in Syria is wholly decided by the autocratic authority of the ruling family and there is no independent decision-making structure. Rather, the government is an empty façade there for show; the Minister of Interior receives orders from the security branches over which he nominally presides which are in reality under the command of the President, while the Minister of Justice cannot summon a civilian-level security agent other than the head of a security branch; the security branches, along with the president, are the true power and the governing regime in Syria.

The record of cases of arbitrary arrests was distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces as follows:

- **Syrian regime forces:** 76, including four children, six women.
- **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham³:** 11, including three children.
- **All Armed Opposition factions/Syrian National Army:** 31, including two women.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 49, including six children.

C. Attacks on vital civilian facilities:

In September 2022, SNHR documented at least three incidents of attacks on vital civilian facilities, all of which took place in Aleppo governorate.

Among these attacks, we documented three on places of worship and two on IDP camps.

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

A. The main parties:

- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** Two.
- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces:** One.

B. Other parties:

Three attacks, distributed as follows:

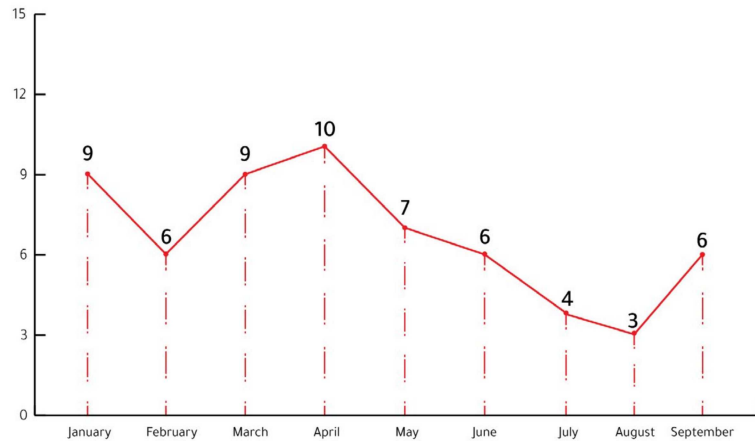
- **Bombings whose perpetrators we have been unable to identify:** Two.
- **Shells whose source we have been unable to identify:** One attack which is still under investigation, with the primary parties suspected of responsibility for the attack being either Syrian regime forces or Syrian Democratic Forces.

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

Perpetrator Party Attacked Facility	Syrian regime forces	Syrian Democratic Forces	Other parties	
			Bombings whose perpetrators we have been unable to identify	Shells whose source we have been unable to identify
Places of Worship				
Schools	2			1
Communal Facilities				
Markets			1	
Camps for IDPs				
Official camps		1	1	
Total	2	1	2	1

³ United Nations designated it a terrorist organization

The record of attacks on vital civilian facilities documented since the start of 2022 up to October of the same year at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria has now reached 60 in total, distributed monthly as follows:



The table above shows that the record of attacks on vital civilian facilities in September was higher than the previous two month, July and August, with September accounting for 10% of the total record of attacks on vital facilities documented to date by SNHR in 2022.

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

On Tuesday, September 6, 2022, Syrian regime artillery forces bombed the southern outskirts of Shanan village in Jabal al Zaweya in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. One of the [shells fired in this bombardment hit the middle of a main street near Omar Ibn Al-Khattab Mosque, known as al Mafrag Mosque](#). The explosion wounded one woman and caused moderate damages to the windows and the external walls of the mosque building. The village was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham at the time of the incident.



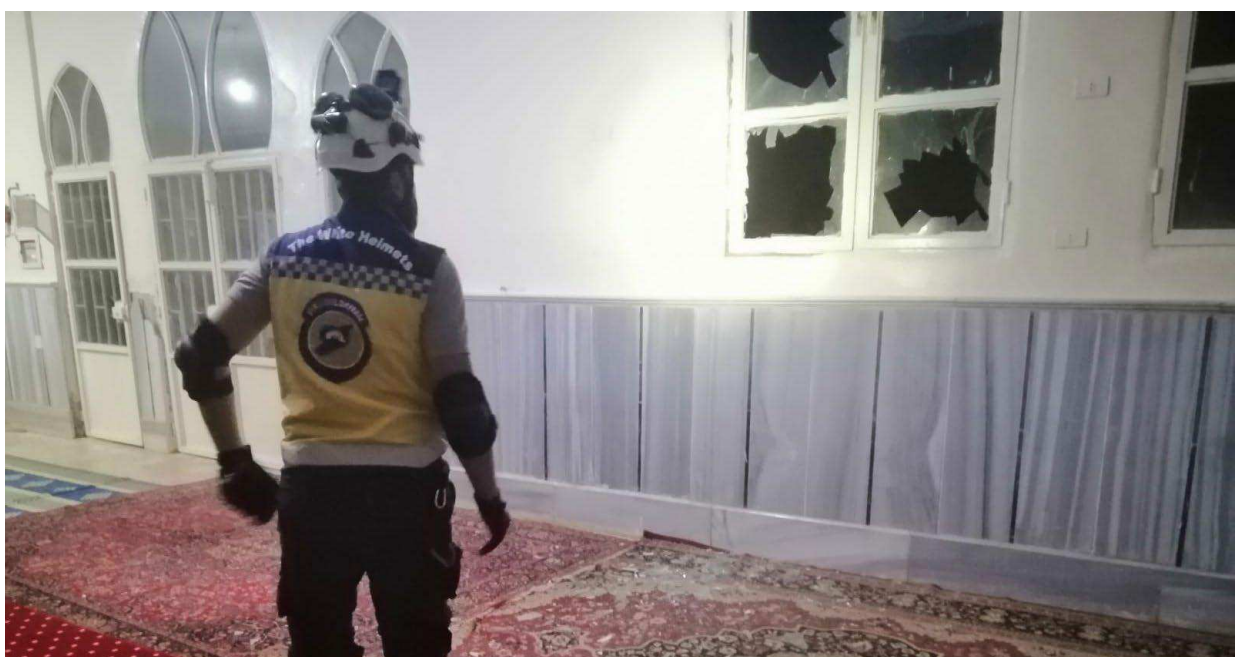
On Monday, September 12, 2022, a motorcycle bomb, whose source we have so far been unable to identify, exploded in [the Washokani IDP camp](#), located west of Hasaka city, about 10 km from the city center. The explosion killed one civilian and injured four others, including two children, in addition to damaging the camp facilities. The Syrian Network for Human Rights is still trying to reach witnesses and survivors of that incident to obtain more details of the incident. The area was under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces at the time of the incident.

On Tuesday, September 20, 2022, Syrian Democratic Forces, using a missile launcher, targeted an area near [Kuwait al Rahma Camp for IDPs](#), located near Ternada village in Jabal al Ahlam area, southeast of the city of Afrin in the northern suburbs of Aleppo. The missiles fell to the southeast of the camp near a building used as a kindergarten for young children in the camp, damaging [the wall of the kindergarten building](#). The area was under the control of the National Army at the time of the incident.

SNHR notes that the camp is constructed of concrete blocks and is supervised by Sham al Kheir Association.

On Thursday, September 15, 2022, the Uleshli village of al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was subjected to bombardment by heavy machine guns. SNHR was unable to determine it's the perpetrators as of this writing, and believe that the attack was carried out by either Syrian regime forces or Syrian Democratic Forces, since the bombardment originated from areas under their control. Investigations are still underway to determine which party is responsible for the attack.

This bombardment hit the Omar bin al Khattab Mosque in the village, wounding the imam of the mosque and damaging the mosque building. The village was under the control of the Syrian National Army at the time of the incident.



Damages caused by bombardment by unidentified perpetrators on Omar bin al Khattab Mosque in Uleshli village in Aleppo on September 15, 2022

D. Indiscriminate attacks and attacks using outlawed weapons:

SNHR was unable to document any indiscriminate attacks or attacks using outlawed weapons in September.

IV. Attachments

[74 Civilians, Including 21 Children, Three Women, and Seven Victims Who Died Due to Torture. Were Documented Killed in Syria in September 2022](#)

[At Least 167 Arbitrary Arrests/Detentions Documented in Syria in September 2022, Including 13 Children and 8 Women](#)

V. Conclusions and Recommendations**Conclusions:**

- The evidence we have gathered indicates that attacks continue to be directed against civilians and civilian objects. Syrian-Russian alliance forces have committed various crimes, including extrajudicial killings, arrests, torture, and enforced disappearances. In addition, the indiscriminate bombardment and other attacks carried out caused the destruction of facilities and buildings. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the war crime of attacking civilians has been committed in many cases.
- The Syrian government has not only violated international humanitarian law and customary law, but has also breached a number of UN Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2139, resolution 2042 on the release of detainees, and resolution 2254, all without any accountability.
- We could find no record of any warnings being issued by the Syrian Regime or Russian forces prior to any attack under the requirements of international humanitarian law. This has been the case since the beginning of the popular uprising for freedom, providing another blatant demonstration of these forces' total disregard for the lives of civilians in Syria.
- The magnitude and frequency of the violations, the disproportionate use of military force, the indiscriminate manner of the bombing, and the coordinated approach of these attacks lead to the inescapable conclusion that these acts are wholly deliberate and based on high-level orders, and as such constitute a part of state policy.
- The indiscriminate and disproportionate bombardment carried out by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces is considered to be a clear violation of international humanitarian law, with indiscriminate killings amounting to war crimes.
- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham has violated international humanitarian law, causing the death of many civilians, as well as damage to vital civilian facilities.

- All Armed Opposition factions/Syrian National Army violated UN Security Council Resolution 2139 through carrying out attacks that are considered to violate customary international humanitarian law, causing civilian casualties or accidental injuries.
- All the attacks documented in this report, particularly bombings, caused massive collateral damage that involved loss of lives, injuries, or significant damage to civilian objects. There are strong indicators suggesting that this damage was excessive compared to the anticipated military benefit.
- The use of explosive arms to target densely populated areas reflects a criminal and wholly deliberate mindset, with the perpetrators clearly intending to inflict the greatest possible number of deaths, which is a clear contravention of international human rights law and a flagrant violation of the Geneva IV Convention (arts. 27, 31, 32).

Recommendations:

UN Security Council

- The Security Council must take additional steps following its adoption of Resolution 2254, which clearly insists that “ all parties immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such.”
- The Syrian issue should be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible for violations should be held accountable, while Russia must stop using the veto, as it is a party to the Syrian conflict, and the UNSC states’ veto power should be withheld when crimes against humanity and war crimes are committed.
- Ensure peace and security and implement the principle of responsibility to protect civilians’ lives and to save the Syrian people’s heritage and historical artifacts from destruction, looting and vandalism.
- The Security Council should adopt a resolution banning the use of cluster munitions and landmines in Syria, similar to the existing prohibition on the use of chemical weapons, and include advice on how to safely remove the remnants of such dangerous weapons.
- The four other permanent member states should put pressure on the Russian government to end its support for the Syrian regime, which uses chemical weapons, and to expose its involvement in this regard.
- Request that all relevant United Nations agencies make greater efforts to provide food, medical and humanitarian assistance in areas where fighting has ceased, and in internally displaced person camps, and to follow-up with those States that have pledged voluntary contributions.

International Community

- In light of the split within the Security Council and its utter inability to take any effective action, action should be taken on the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people by protecting them from daily killing and by lifting sieges, as well as by increasing support for relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction should be enacted in local courts regarding these crimes in order to conduct fair trials for all those who were involved.
- SNHR has repeatedly called for the implementation of the 'Responsibility to Protect' in dozens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) after all political channels through the Arab League's plan and then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan have proved fruitless, along with the Cessation of Hostilities statements and Astana agreements that followed. Therefore, steps should be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, while the norm of the 'Responsibility to Protect', which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, should be implemented. The Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.
- Renew pressure on the Security Council to refer the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- Work on fulfilling justice and achieving accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and to activate the principle of universal jurisdiction.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

- The OHCHR should submit a report to the Human Rights Council and other organs of the United Nations on the incidents mentioned in this report and previous reports since these attacks were perpetrated by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI)

- Launch investigations into the cases included in this report and previous reports. SNHR is willing to cooperate and provide further evidence and data.
- Focus on the issue of landmines and cluster munitions within the next report.

International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

- Collect further evidence about the crimes documented in this report.

The United Nations Special Envoy to Syria

- Condemn the perpetrators of crimes and massacres, and those who were primarily responsible for dooming the de-escalation agreements.
- Re-sequence the peace process so that it can resume its natural course despite Russia's attempts to divert and distort it, empowering the Constitutional Committee prior to the establishment of a transitional governing body.

The Syrian regime

- Stop indiscriminate shelling and targeting of residential areas, hospitals, schools and markets, and end the use of outlawed weapons and barrel bombs.
- Ensure compliance with UN Security Council resolutions and customary humanitarian law.

The Russian regime

- Launch investigations into the incidents included in this report, make the findings of these investigations public for the Syrian people, and hold those responsible accountable.
- Compensate all the damaged centers and facilities, rebuild and rehabilitate them, and compensate all the families of victims who were killed by the current Russian regime, as well as all the wounded.
- Completely cease the bombing of hospitals, protected objects, and civilian areas, and respect customary international law.
- As a guarantor party in Astana talks, the Russian regime must stop thwarting de-escalation agreements, and apply pressure on the Syrian regime in order to end all indiscriminate attacks and to allow unconditional passage of humanitarian aid to besieged areas.

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

- The states supporting the SDF should apply pressure on these forces in order to compel them to cease all of their violations in all the areas and towns under their control.
- Syrian Democratic Forces must immediately stop conscripting children, hold the officers involved in such violations accountable, and pledge to return all children who have been arrested for conscription immediately.

All Armed Opposition factions/Syrian National Army

- The Armed Opposition/Syrian National Army must ensure the protection of civilians in all areas under their control. These forces should also take care to distinguish between civilians and military targets and cease any indiscriminate attacks.
- Take punitive action against those who commit violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Humanitarian Organizations

- Develop urgent operational plans to secure decent shelter for internally displaced persons.
- Provide protected facilities and vehicles, such as medical facilities, schools, and ambulances, with distinctive signs that can be distinguished from long distances.

Acknowledgments

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to all family members, relatives and friends of the victims, as well as eyewitnesses and local activists whose contributions have enriched this report.



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