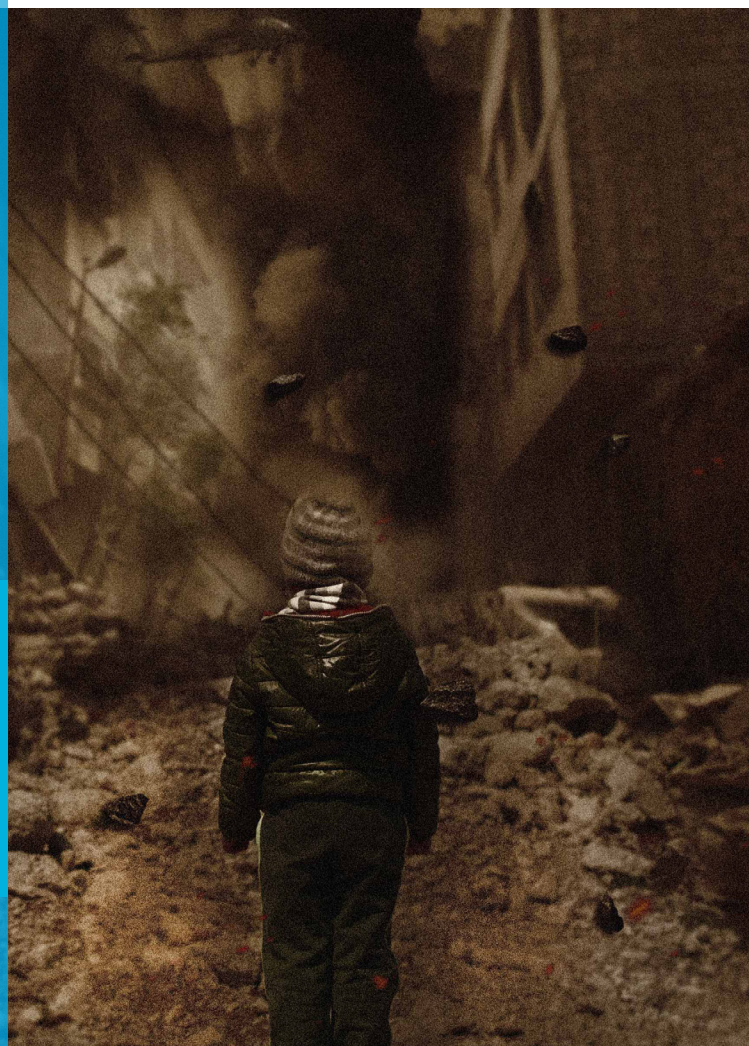


Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1916
Land:	Syrien
Kilde:	The Syrian Human Rights
Titel:	501 Civilians, Including 71 Children, 42 Women, and 20 Individuals Who Died due to Torture, Were Documented Killed in Syria, in the First Half of 2023, 118 Civilians, Including 15 Children, 19 Women, and Four Individuals Who Died due to Torture Documented Killed in June 2023
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501 Civilians,
Including 71 Children, 42
Woman, and 20 Individuals
Who Died due to Torture
Documented Killed in Syria,
in the First Half of 2023

118 Civilians, Including 15 Children,
19 Women, and Four Individuals
Who Died due to Torture
Documented Killed in June 2023



Sunday 02 July 2023

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.

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I. Background and Methodology

This report documents the death toll of victims whose deaths were documented by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) as taking place at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria in the first half of 2023, up to and including June. The report sheds light particularly on victims who died due to torture, and victims among medical personnel. In addition, the report focuses on documenting massacres perpetrated by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria which the SNHR team was able to document during this period; it should be noted that we use the term, 'massacre' to refer to an incident in which no fewer than five peaceful individuals were killed. The report also includes a summary of the most notable incidents during this month. Full details of every incident are maintained on the SNHR database.

Documenting deaths in Syria has been one of the most important roles performed by SNHR since March 2011. This task is all the more crucial since murder is the most prevalent of all the violations perpetrated, and the one which most profoundly affects the Syrian people, with countless families suffering incalculable and irreparable trauma through the loss of parents, spouses, children, siblings, friends, etc.

These violations have become so widespread primarily due to the systematic killing of civilians by Syrian regime forces and their affiliated militias. Between March 2011, and the beginning of 2012, Syrian regime forces were responsible for the overwhelming majority of deaths in Syria. The regime began by using tanks and artillery, then proceeded to also use warplanes and helicopter gunships which were deployed in attacks using barrel bombs, in addition to ballistic missiles and chemical weapons.

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

The killing of civilians in Syria has continued for the 12th consecutive year, as it has done continuously ever since the initial outbreak of the popular uprising for democracy in Syria in March 2011, resulting in casualty figures that are among the highest worldwide; this underlines the fact that Syria is still the most dangerous nation in the world for civilians, and remains an exceptionally insecure and perilous environment wholly unsuitable for the return of refugees.

This report catalogues the death toll of victims at the hands of the parties actively engaged in the Syrian conflict. It should be noted that accurately ascribing responsibility sometimes requires more time and investigation than usual, especially in the case of joint attacks. We also face additional challenges in assigning responsibility for attacks in some incidents of ground-based bombardment, especially those in which the bombardment originates from an area adjacent to the one targeted, which is controlled by a different party. In such cases, SNHR tries to thoroughly investigate each incident, in order to conclusively identify the party responsible for the bombardment.

Despite these efforts, however, there are cases in which we are unable to definitively assign responsibility for a particular killing to one of two possible parties due to the area's proximity to the lines of engagement, the use of similar weapons, or other reasons. In such cases, the incident is classified within the category 'other parties' until such time as we have gathered sufficient evidence to conclusively assign responsibility for the violation to one of the two parties.

The parties to the conflict documented by SNHR as having as committed extrajudicial killings in this report are:

1. Main parties:

- Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)¹
- Russian forces
- ISIS
- Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)
- Armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA)
- Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)
- International coalition forces

2. Other parties

While we at the SNHR are keen to accurately attribute incidents to the responsible parties, we exclude two types of attacks from the process of assigning responsibility, namely anti-personnel landmines, and remote explosions, including suicide or forced suicide attacks. We discussed this issue previously in [detailed reports](#).

As for the anonymous victims whose names we have not yet been able to determine or on whom we have so far been unable to find any identifying information or any picture or video footage, these cases are catalogued in a separate archive until any information confirming those victims' identity is received which would enable their cases to be transferred to the victims' archive, with their names and other details registered accordingly.

Through use of SNHR's extensive database, we can catalogue the victims according to the governorate where they were killed, as well as by their governorate of origin. However, we choose in our monthly report to document the death toll of victims according to the governorate in which they were killed, rather than by their place of origin.

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

The methodology adopted by SNHR in documenting the victims can be found at this link.²

1. 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 where power is concentrated in the hands of a small circle of individuals, namely the President of the Republic and the heads of the security apparatus. As a result, 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, with no real decision-making power or active role of their own. Syria is under autocratic/family rule, with no independent decision-making structure. Rather, the government is an empty façade merely for show. The Minister of Interior receives orders from the security branches over which he supposedly presides. The Minister of Justice cannot even summon a low-ranking security office, let alone a security branch head. Syria is ruled by the president assisted by the heads of the security branches.

While we are aware that the United Nations and its agencies use the term 'the Syrian government', we believe that this is a completely inaccurate and misleading term in the Syrian context.

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

This report draws upon the constant daily monitoring of news and developments by SNHR's team, and on information from our extensive network of various sources that has been built up over the course of our work since 2011. The SNHR also provides [a special form](#) that can be completed by victims' relatives with victims' names and personal information so that the Victims Documentation Department can follow up on the information provided, verify its accuracy and then include it in the database.

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

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

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

II. The Syrian Regime Has Failed to Register Hundreds of Thousands of Citizens It Killed Since March 2011 in the Death Records of the Civil Registry

Although hundreds of thousands of Syrian citizens have been killed, 'disappeared' or gone missing since the early days of the popular rising in March 2011, they have not been officially registered as dead by the relevant official state departments, namely the Civil Registry Department. The Syrian regime unconscionably controls the issuance of death certificates, which are not made available to any of the families of the victims, whether they were killed at the hands of the Syrian regime or by other parties, or to the families of the missing and forcibly disappeared. The regime only allows death certificates to be issued for those who meet the narrow criteria set by the regime and its security services. In many previous reports, we have discussed the phenomenon of the regime's forcing victims' families to sign false statements written by the security authorities beforehand, stating falsely that 'armed terrorist gangs', rather than the regime, killed their loved ones, if they wish to obtain a death certificate. The Syrian regime has not only failed to launch any investigations into the causes of death for hundreds of thousands of Syrians but has also failed to hold to account even one member of its security or military forces for their involvement in these killings.

In order to obtain a death certificate, the Syrian regime relies on three things:

- Medical reports prepared by regime personnel, citing a false cause of death, such as a heart attack for those forcibly disappeared in its detention centers, or claiming falsely that the victim died as a result of injuries from war munitions.
- Statements from the local neighborhood headman or 'Mukhtar' and from any witnesses, who are asked to confirm the death.
- Acknowledgement from the victims' families, who often urgently need to obtain a death certificate; for this reason, family members understandably feel they have no choice but to remain silent about the true cause of death and the identity of those responsible for it.

Through our exhaustive monitoring and investigation process, we have been able to document **three methods used by the Syrian regime to register the deaths of a limited number of its victims who were killed, or forcibly disappeared then subsequently killed**, which we detailed in a report we issued on August 19, 2022, entitled ['The Syrian Regime, Through Its Security Services and State Institutions, Controls the Incidents of Registering the Deaths of Victims Killed/'Disappeared' in the Armed Conflict Since March 2011'](#).

It is worth noting that the vast majority of victims' families are unable to obtain death certificates from the Syrian regime, for fear of linking their name with that of a person who was detained by the regime and killed under torture, which implies that their deceased family member had been a dissident who had opposed the Syrian regime, or had been registered as a 'terrorist' if he or she had been wanted by the security services. Additionally, many victims' families have been forcibly displaced outside the areas controlled by the Syrian regime.

On August 10, 2022, the Minister of Justice in the Syrian regime government issued [Circular No. 22](#) specifying the procedures for the conduct of proceedings related to registering deaths at Sharia courts. The circular included new conditions stipulating that five items of evidence must be submitted to and approved by the relevant judges in proceedings related to registering the death. It also requires that all relevant courts involved in death registration cases comply with the circular's content. The circular also gave security clearance to judicial authorities to register death cases, increasing the security services' intrusion. We issued a [report](#) in which we analyzed the constitutional and legal violations contained in this circular's text and the consequences thereof.

III. Brief on the Most Notable Incidents of Killing in June

SNHR documented the killing of 118 civilians, including 15 children, 19 women, and four victims who died due to torture in the month of June 2023. Through our daily monitoring, seven observations stood out in June:

1. In June, we documented the killing of five civilians in an aerial attack by fixed-wing warplanes believed to be Russian on Idlib city. This is the first case in which victims were killed by Russian forces which SNHR has documented in 2023.

On Saturday, June 24, 2023, fixed-wing warplanes believed to be Russian fired multiple missiles targeting Basbat village in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate. The bombardment directly targeted civilian homes in the area, as well as agricultural land where two brothers, [identified as Abdou Mustafa Sino and Osama Mustafa Sino](#) from Mar'and village in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, were killed, while they were harvesting their wheat crop. Two other civilians were also wounded in the bombardment, which completely destroyed the houses targeted. The area is under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham.

At least [three civilians at least were killed](#) on Sunday, June 25, 2023 in an airstrike by fixed-wing warplanes believed to be Russian, which fired two missiles at the vegetable market on the eastern outskirts of Jisr al-Shoghour city in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate.

It should be noted that the market is adjacent to the vocational high school which was being used by the Turkistani Islamic Party as a military headquarters. A number of fighters were killed in the airstrikes, which completely destroyed the school building.

2. We documented that 63 victims, including five children and 11 women, died by drowning on migration routes in June

First incident

On Sunday, June 4, 2023 at dawn, a boat capsized and sank near the coasts of Larhat town in Tipaza in Algeria. The boat, which was bound for Spain, was carrying 25 refugees, who were mostly from the Koubani area, in addition to a family from Afrin in northwestern Aleppo. A total of 15 individuals drowned, including three children and four women.

Second incident

On the morning of Friday, June 9, 2023, a boat carrying 700 migrants, including children and women, set off from the Libyan coast towards Europe. On Wednesday, June 14, 2023, the boat capsized and sank in the Mediterranean Sea near Kalamata city in southern Greece while it was on its way to Italy. We documented the deaths of 48 individuals, including two children and seven women, who were mostly from Daraa governorate, while the fate of hundreds others is still unknown.

3. In June, three children were killed by landmine explosions, bringing the total number of victims killed by landmines in Syria since the start of 2023 to 86 civilians, including 19 children and seven women.

Thirteen-year-old [Taha Nu'man al-Turki](#) from Mazra'et Hawwa village in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate was killed by the explosion of a landmine whose source we have not yet been able to identify while harvesting shafiah crops along with other workers in Um al-Khlakhiel area in the eastern suburbs of Idlib. The area is under the control of Syrian regime forces.

4. In June, we recorded the killing of 20 civilians, including one woman, by gunshot of unidentified source, mostly in Daraa governorate.

Thirty-four-year-old [Ahmad Mohammad Yousef al-Qarqati](#), a Palestinian national from Daraa City camp, was shot dead on Monday, June 24, 2023, by gunmen we have not yet been able to identify in the market in Mzayreeb town in the western suburbs of Daraa. The area was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

5. In June, we documented the killing of one civilian by international coalition forces; the third victim to be killed at the hands of the international coalition since the beginning of 2023.

[Faraj Mutlaq al-Shemmari](#) from Salham village near al-Dshiesha village in the suburbs of Hasaka governorate on the Syrian-Iraqi borders, was shot dead on June 11, 2023, by international coalition personnel while he was trying to flee his home when the personnel landed in the village, which is under the control of the SDF.

6. Meanwhile, Syrian regime forces killed eight civilians, including one child and one woman, in June 2023

On Wednesday, June 21, 2023, Mousab Barakat, his son Mohammad Mousab Barakat, and Salim Darwish from Kafr Noran town in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate [were killed](#) in an artillery attack by Syrian regime forces who fired multiple shells at the town. One of the shells hit a main street in the town center near the municipality building, while a second landed near a street vendor on the main road between the two towns of Kafr Noran and Ma'aret al-Na'san. In addition to the fatalities, eleven other civilians were injured in the attack, including a woman and a number of children. The area was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and the HTS at the time of the incident.

7. In June, HTS killed four civilians, including two women, bringing the total number of victims killed at the hands of the group since the beginning of 2023 to seven, all of them civilians, including two women.

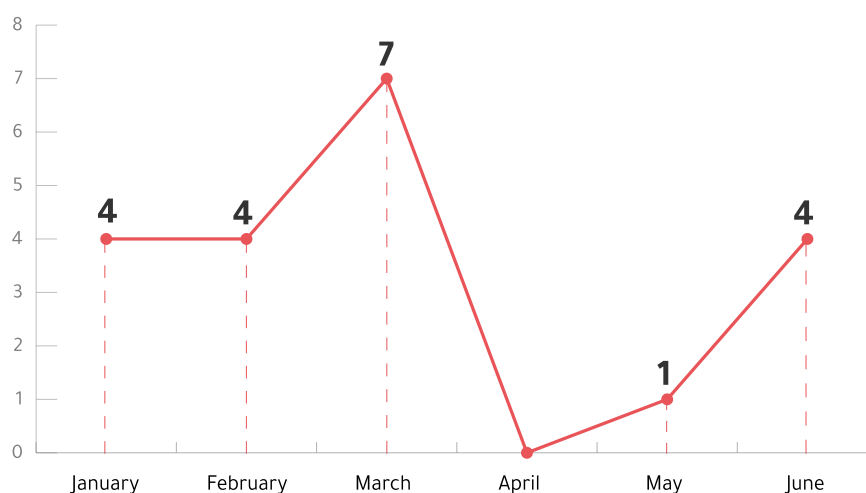
IV. Death Toll of Civilian Victims

A. First half of 2023

SNHR documented the killing of 501 civilians, including 71 children and 42 women (adult female) at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria in the first half of 2023.

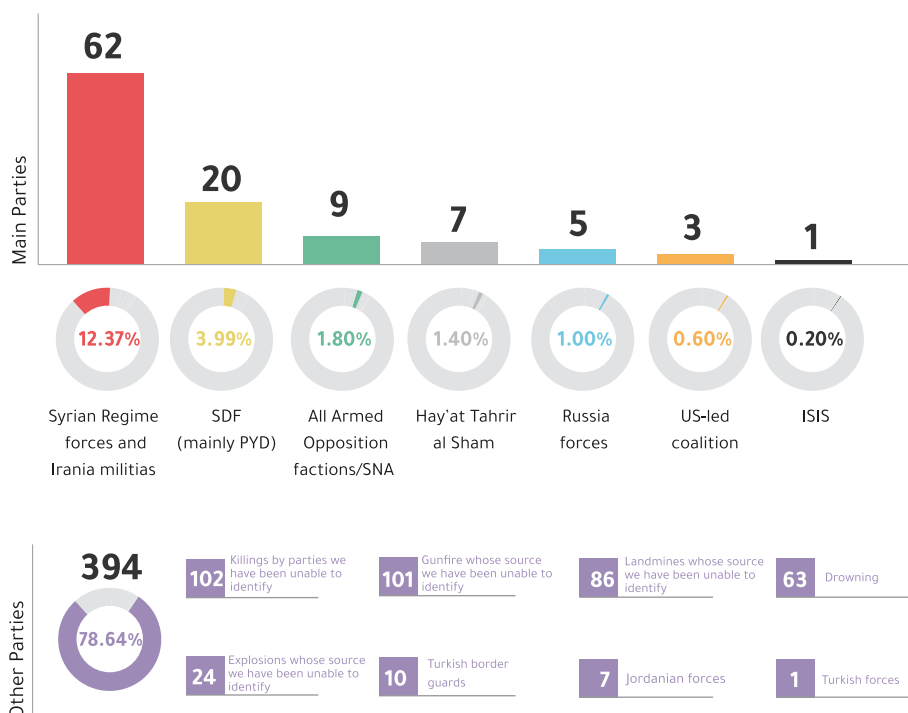
The toll of civilians killed since the beginning of 2023 at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria is distributed by month as follows:

501 Civilians were killed in Syria in the first half of 2023

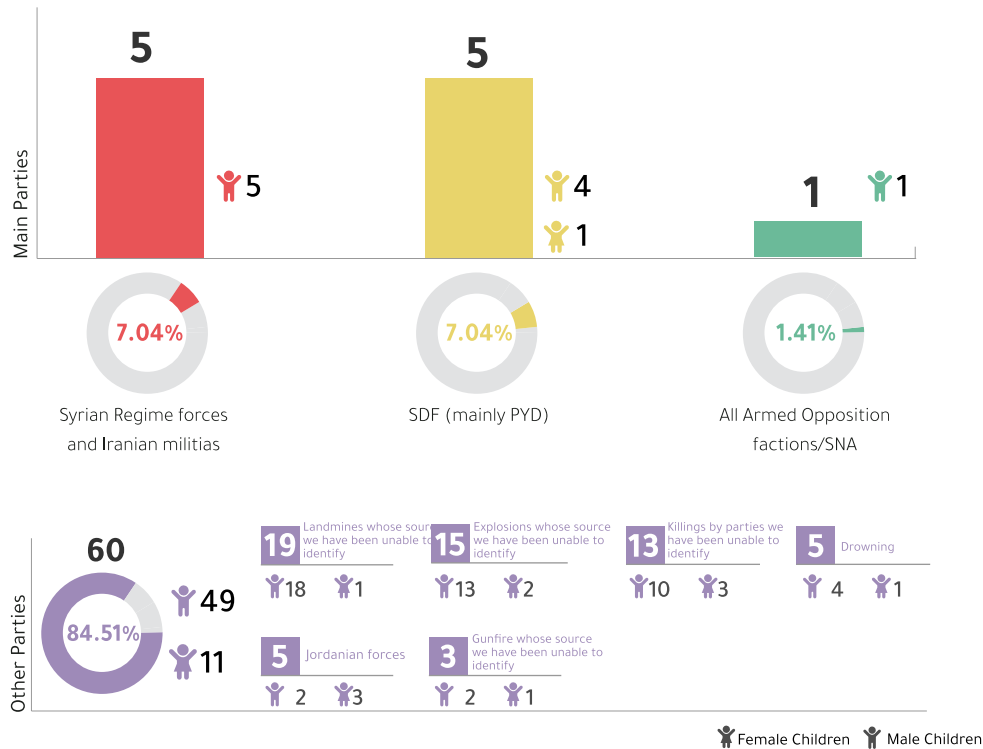


As the graph shows, June saw the highest monthly death toll in the first half of 2023, accounting for approximately 23 percent of the total number of victims documented so far this year, followed by April with approximately 20 percent, then March with approximately 19 percent. Meanwhile, May saw the lowest monthly death toll in the first half of the year with approximately eight percent.

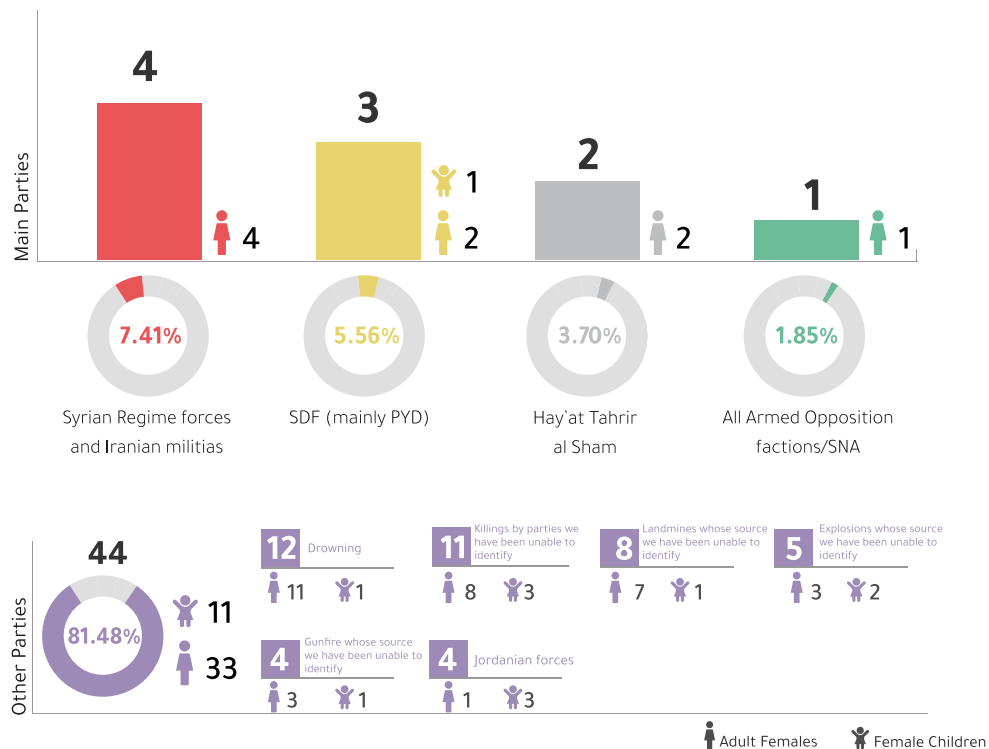
The death toll documented in the first half of 2023 is distributed according to the responsible parties to the conflict and controlling forces as follows:



71 children were killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria in the first half of 2023



54 females were killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria in the first half of 2023



A. Main parties:

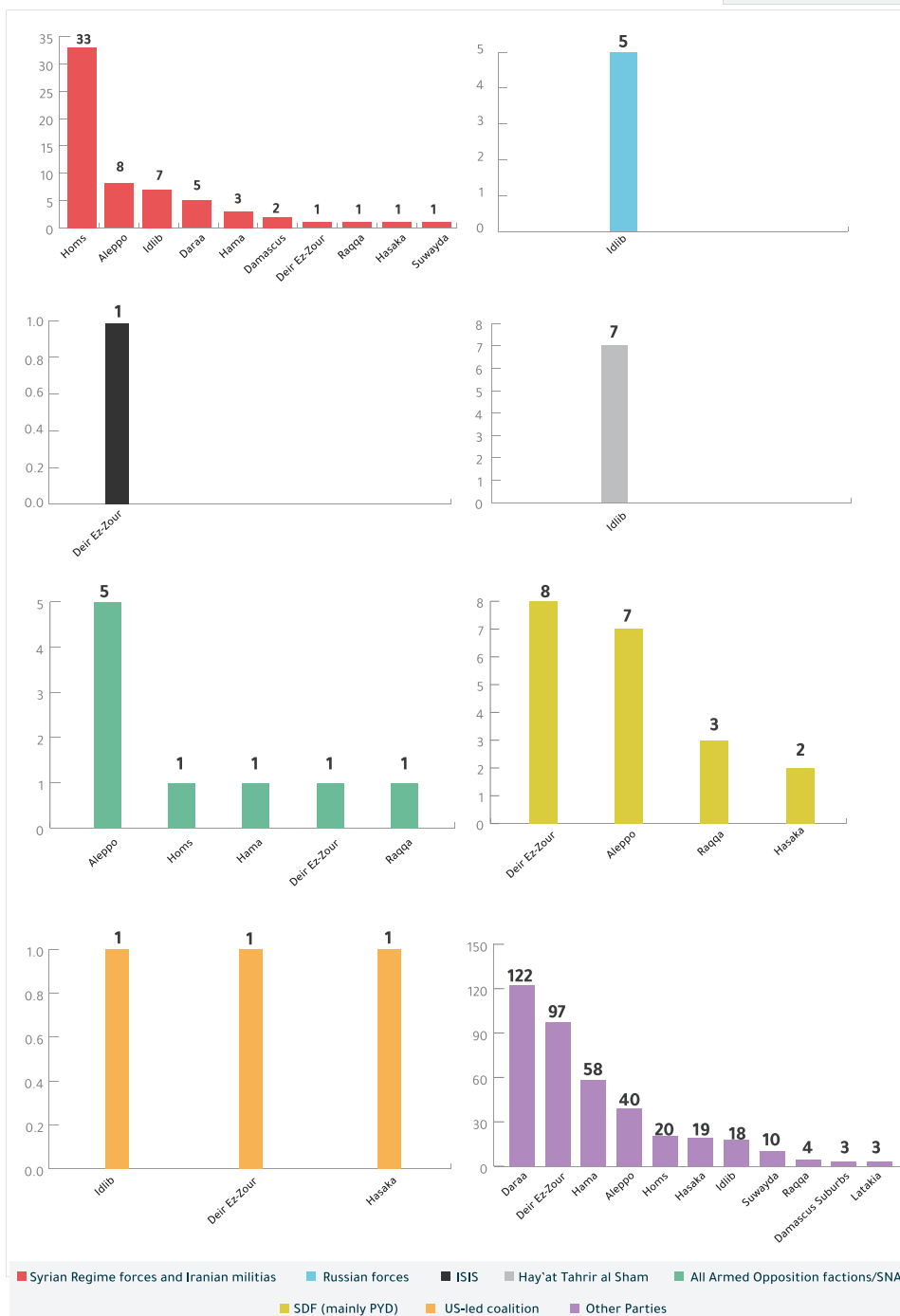
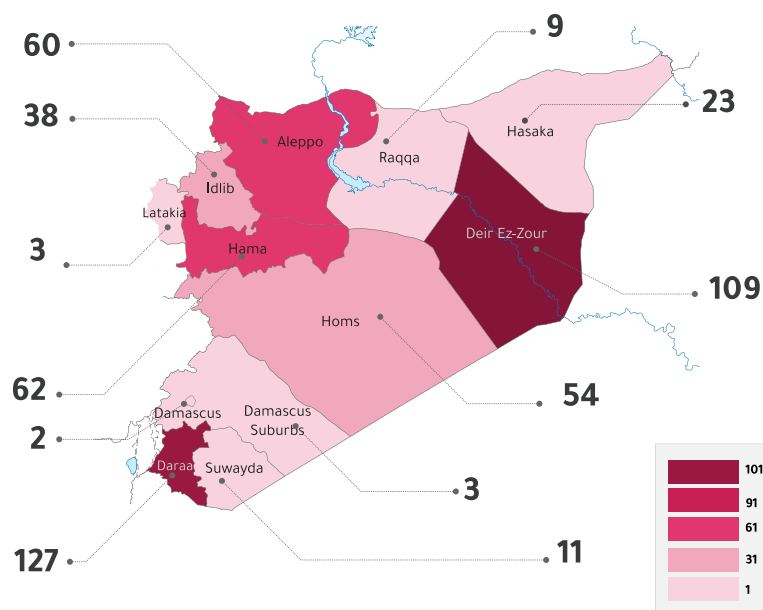
- **Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):**
We documented the killing of 62 civilians at the hands of Syrian regime forces, including five children and four women (adult female).
- **Russian forces:**
We documented the killing of five civilians at the hands of Russian forces.
- **ISIS:**
We documented the killing of one civilian at the hands of ISIS.
- **HTS:**
We documented the killing of seven civilians at the hands of HTS, including two women.
- **All armed opposition factions/SNA:**
We documented the killing of nine civilians at the hands of all armed opposition factions/SNA, including one child and one woman.
- **Kurdish-led SDF (Democratic Union Party/PYD)**
We documented the killing of 20 civilians at the hands of the SDF, including five children and two women.
- **International coalition forces**
We documented the killing of three civilians at the hands of international coalition forces.

B. Other parties:

We documented the killing of 394 civilians, including 60 children and 33 women at the hands of other parties, distributed as follows:

- **Landmines whose source we have been unable to identify:** 86 civilians, including 19 children and seven women.
- **Gunfire whose source we have been unable to identify:** 101 civilians, including three children and three women.
- **Bombings whose perpetrators we have been unable to identify:** 24 civilians, including three children and three women,
- **Killings by parties we have been unable to identify:** 102 civilians, including 13 children and eight women.
- **Turkish forces:** one civilian.
- **Jordanian forces:** Seven civilians, including five children and one woman.
- **Death by drowning:** 63 civilians, including five children and 11 women.
- **Turkish Border Guard:** 10 civilians.

The toll of civilians killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria, in the first half of 2023 is distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



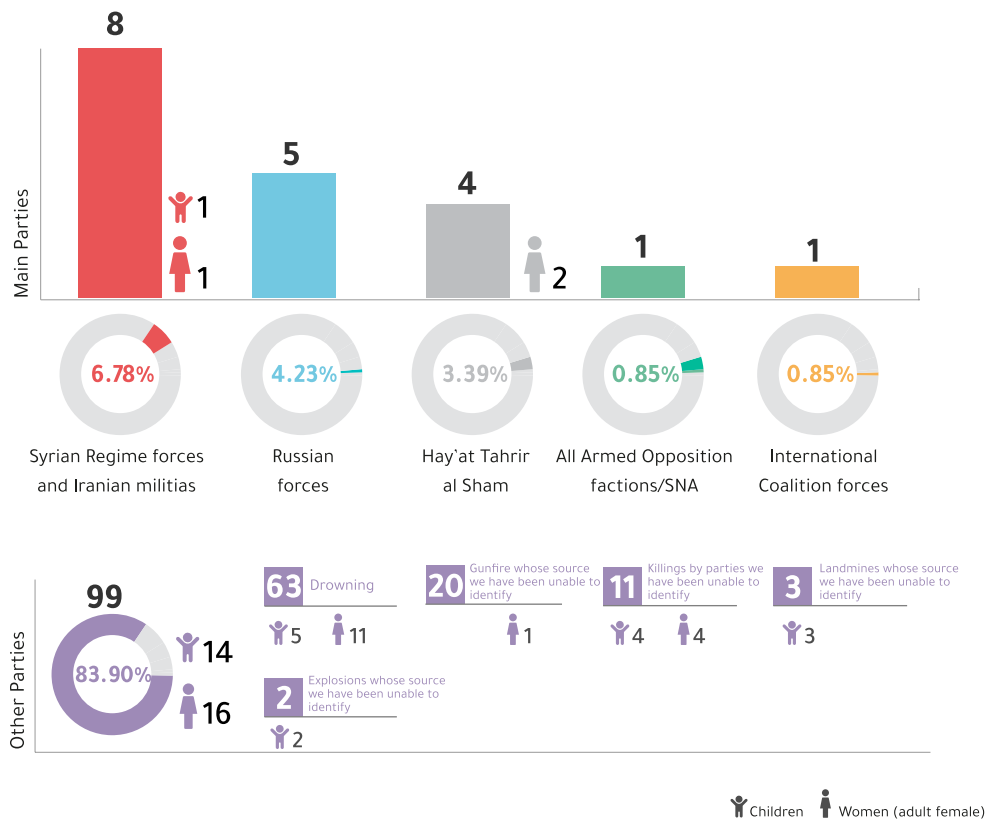
Daraa governorate saw the highest death toll of victims documented killed in the first half of 2023, accounting for approximately 25 percent of the total death toll, followed by Deir Ez-Zour governorate with approximately 22 percent, then the governorates of Aleppo and Hama with approximately 12 percent each. Most of the victims were killed by other parties.

B. June 2023

In June, SNHR documented the killing of 118 civilians, including 15 children and 19 women (adult female) at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.

The toll of civilians killed by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria, in the month of June is distributed as follows:

118 civilians were killed in Syria in June 2023



A. Main parties:

- Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):**
 We documented the killing of eight civilians at the hands of Syrian regime forces, including one child and one woman.
- Russian forces:**
 We documented the killing of five civilians at the hands of Russian forces.
- HTS:**
 We documented the killing of four civilians at the hands of HTS, including two women.

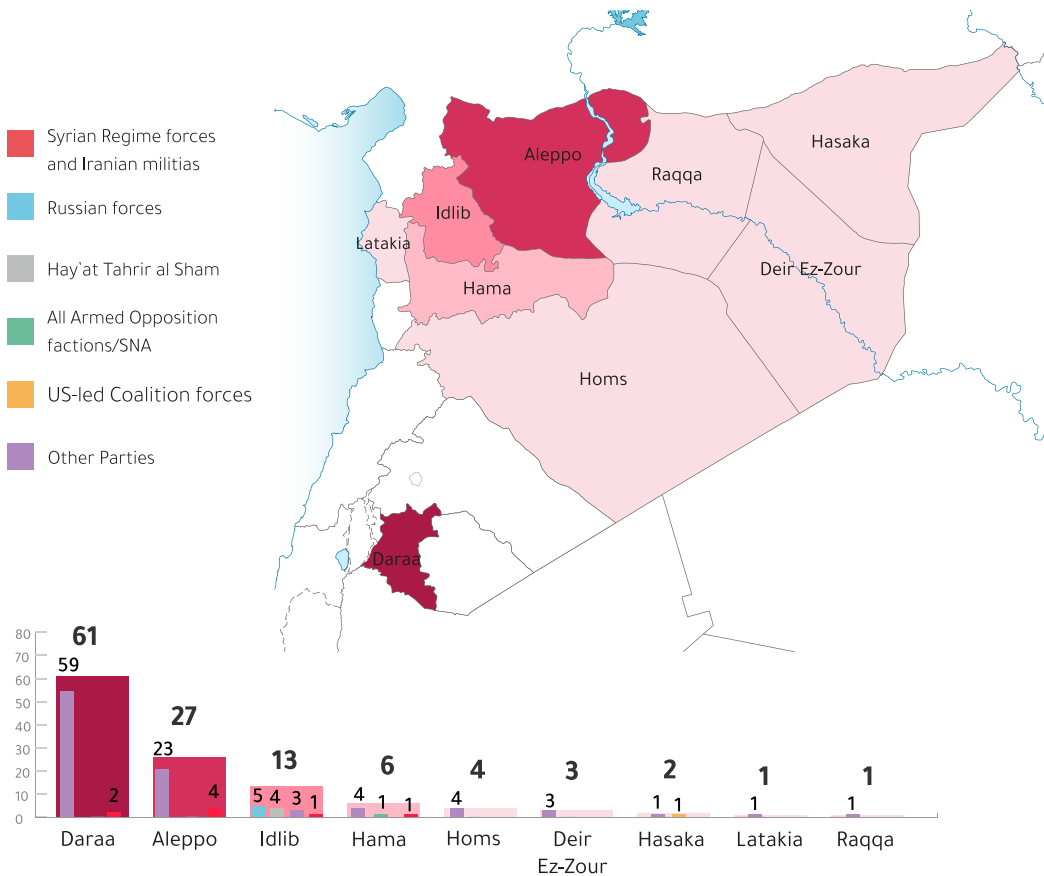
- **All armed opposition factions/SNA:**
We documented the killing of one civilian at the hands of all armed opposition factions/SNA.
- **International coalition forces**
We documented the killing of one civilian at the hands of international coalition forces.

B. Other parties:

We documented the killing of 99 civilians, including 14 children and 16 women at the hands of other parties, distributed as follows:

- **Gunfire whose source we have been unable to identify:** 20 civilians, including one woman.
- **Landmines whose source we have been unable to identify:** Three children.
- **Killings by parties we have been unable to identify:** 11 civilians, including four children and four women.
- **Bombings whose perpetrators we have been unable to identify:** Two children.
- **Death by drowning:** 63 civilians, including five children and 11 women.

The death toll of civilians killed at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria, in June 2023 is distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



Daraa saw the most victims this month, accounting for approximately 52 percent of all victims killed in June, followed by Aleppo governorate with approximately 25 percent. Most of the victims killed in the two governorates were killed by other parties.

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

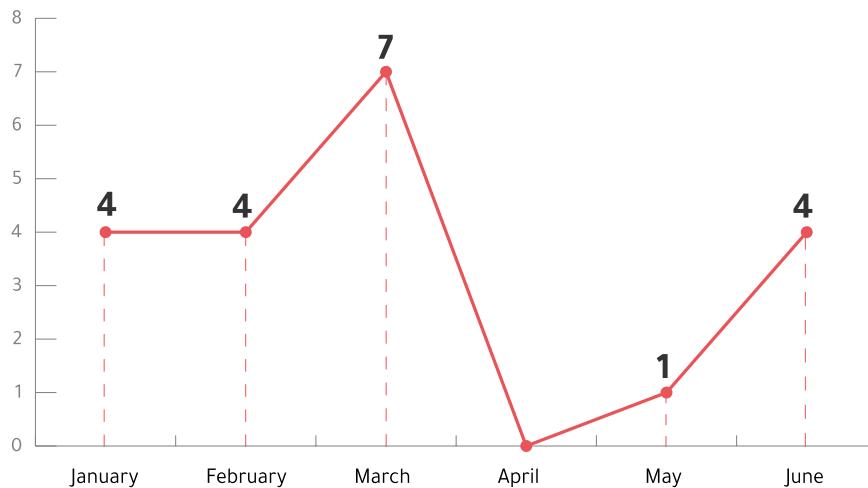
A. Toll of victims who died due to torture

A. First half of 2023

SNHR documented that 20 individuals, including one child and one woman, died due to torture in the first half of 2023 at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria.

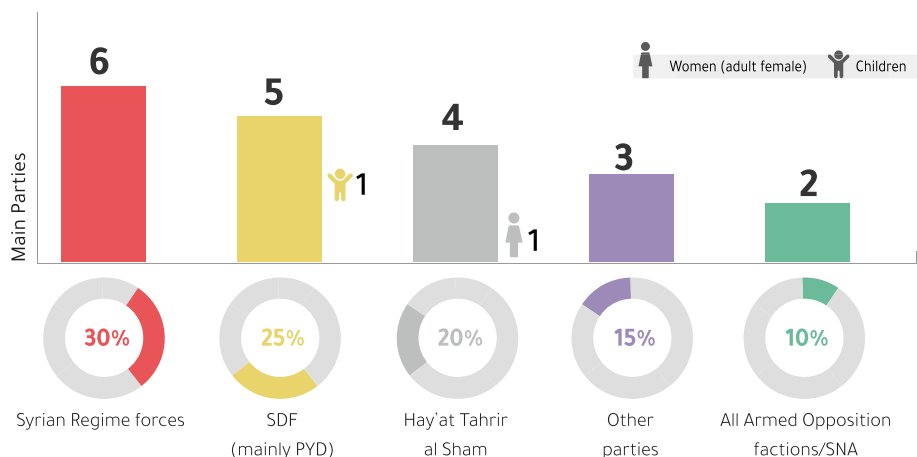
The victims who we documented as having died due to torture in the first half of 2023 at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria are distributed by month as follows:

20 individuals died due to torture in Syria in the first half of 2023



As the graph shows, March saw the highest monthly number of victims documented as dying due to torture in the first half of this year, accounting for 35 percent of the death toll during this period. The Syrian regime is responsible for the deaths of approximately 30 percent of all the victims documented as having died due to torture in the first half of this year at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria.

The victims who we documented as having died due to torture in the first half of 2023 at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria are distributed as follows:



A. Main parties:

- **Syrian regime forces:** Six victims.
- **HTS:** Four victims, including one woman.
- **All armed opposition factions/SNA:** Two victims.
- **SDF:** Five victims, including one child.

A. Other parties: Three victims

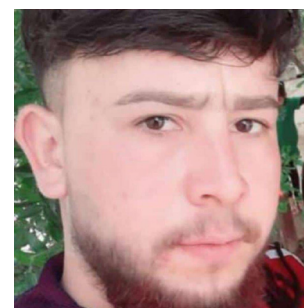
Below are the most notable cases:

Yahya Ali al-Eissa, born in 1962, from Khattab town in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, who worked in construction, was arrested on Wednesday, May 7, 2014, by Syrian regime forces in a raid on his house in the town. He was initially taken to a detention center in Deir Shmiel village in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, before being transferred to the Syrian regime's Air Force Intelligence branch in Hama. He has been classified as forcibly disappeared ever since, with Syrian regime authorities denying any knowledge of his whereabouts and refusing to let anyone visit him, even a lawyer. On Friday, January 6, 2023, his family learned that he had died in a regime detention center in December 2017. SNHR can confirm that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating a strong probability that he died due to torture and medical negligence. SNHR can also confirm that Syrian regime forces have not returned Yahya's body to his family.



Yahya Ali al-Eissa

Walid Khaled al-Hussein, born in 2001 from Hatla town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was 17 years old when he was arrested in April 2022, by personnel from the Syrian regime's Military Security in a raid on his family's home in the town. He was taken to a regime detention center in Deir Ez-Zour city, and was then transferred to al-Balouna Prison in Homs governorate. He has been classified as forcibly disappeared ever since, with Syrian regime authorities denying any knowledge of his whereabouts and refusing to let anyone visit him, even a lawyer. On Wednesday, February 1, 2023, Syrian regime forces informed his family that he had died in al-Balouna Prison, returning his body to them two days later on February 3. SNHR can confirm that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating a strong probability that he had died due to torture and medical negligence.



Walid Khaled al-Hussein

Abdul Samad Mahmoud al-Sayel, a child born in 2005 from Theyban town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was aged 16 years when he was arrested by SDF personnel on Monday, July 27, 2020, in a raid on his family's home in the town on charges of being affiliated with ISIS. He was taken to Ghwayran Prison in Hasaka city.

On Monday, February 27, 2023, his family received notification from an SDF official that Abdul Samad needed to undergo surgery, for which his family members had to pay the SDF a sum of money, after contracting tuberculosis in detention.



Abdul Samad Mahmoud al-Sayel, child

On Sunday, March 5, 2023, Abdul Samad's family received another notification from an SDF official summoning them to the National Hospital in al-Aziziya neighborhood in Hasaka city to visit Abdul Samad. When they arrived at the hospital, they were informed that Abdul Samad had died of tuberculosis. His body was returned to the family.

SNHR can confirm that Abdul Samad was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating a strong probability that he died due to torture and medical negligence.

Wael Abdul Mu'ti Iliwi, born in 1983, from al-Dar al-Kabira town in the northern suburbs of Homs governorate, was arrested in 2022 by SDF personnel at a checkpoint in Raqqqa city. He was taken to an undisclosed location. On Thursday, May 4, 2023, SDF informed his family in Raqqqa city that he had died and returned his body to them. SNHR can confirm that Wael was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating a strong probability that he died due to torture and medical negligence.

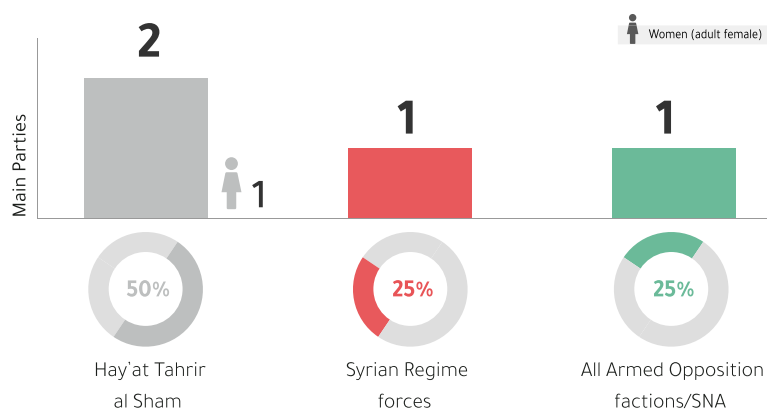


Wael Abdul Mu'ti Iliwi

B. June 2023

In June 2023, SNHR documented the death of four people, including one woman, as a result of torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, distributed as follows:

- **Syrian regime forces:** one victim.
- **HTS:** two victims, including one woman.
- **All armed opposition factions/SNA:** one victim.



Below are the most notable cases:

Rami Mohammad al-Hariri, from Seyda town in the eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, was 37 years old when he was arrested in 2021 by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint in Damascus city while heading for the Syrian-Lebanese borders to cross into Lebanon informally. Rami, who had previously agreed to a security settlement with the Syrian regime, has been classified as forcibly disappeared ever since, with the Syrian regime forces denying any knowledge of his whereabouts and refusing to let anyone visit him, even a lawyer. On Wednesday, June 14, 2023, his family learned that he had been registered as dead in the civil registry's records. SNHR can confirm that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating a strong probability that he had died due to torture and medical negligence. His body has not yet been returned to his family.



Rami Mohammad al-Hariri

B. Death toll of medical personnel

1. First half of 2023

SNHR documented the killing of three medical personnel, including one woman, in the first half of 2023 at the hands of Syrian regime forces.

Below are the most notable cases:

On Thursday, January 26, 2023, Ali Ahmad al-Saed, a 51-year-old doctor and neurological specialist from al-Mzayereeb town in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate, was shot dead in al-Kashef neighborhood in Daraa city when he was hit in crossfire between two groups from the Syrian regime's Military Security division. Dr. Al-Saed was a civilian who was never involved with any military formations in the governorate. The area is under the control of Syrian regime forces.



Doctor Ali Ahmad al-Saed

On Sunday, February 19, 2023, Lilyan al-Ouda, a female pharmacist, was killed when the Syrian regime's air defense systems stationed in Mount Qasyoun and al-Mazza Military Airbase fired rockets in response to Israeli airstrikes. This resulted in some of the rockets landing in residential neighborhoods in Damascus, including al-Mazra'a Square in the center of the Syrian capital.



Pharmacist Lilyan al-Ouda

2- June 2023

We recorded no deaths among medical personnel in June 2023.

B. Death Toll of media workers

1. First half of 2023

We recorded the killing of one media worker in the first half of 2023 at the hands of other parties.

Below are the details of this case:

On Monday, April 3, 2023, Ahmad Fa'our al-Saa'di, a 23-year-old media worker, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen near his house in al-Mzayreeb town in western Daraa. Ahmad had been a member of an armed opposition faction before the Syrian regime took over Daraa governorate in 2018, since which he had worked as a media activist with the Shahed Media Agency, and recently as a reporter with the local news website 18 Athar (18 March). The area was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.



Ahmad Fa'our al-Saa'di

2- June 2023

We recorded no deaths among media workers in June 2023.

B. Death Toll of Civil Defense personnel

1. First half of 2023

We recorded the killing of one civil defense worker in the first half of 2023 at the hands of other parties.

On Saturday, February 25, 2023, [Jneid al-Eis](#), a 34-year-old fireman with the Aleppo Firefighting Team, was killed by the explosion of a landmine left behind by earlier shelling, while he and his colleagues were responding to a call about a fire that broke out in the hall of an abandoned warehouse in al-Shqeif area near the al-Layrmoun & Bani Zaid Highway in Aleppo city. Jneid came from Aran village in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo. The area was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.



Jneid al-Eis

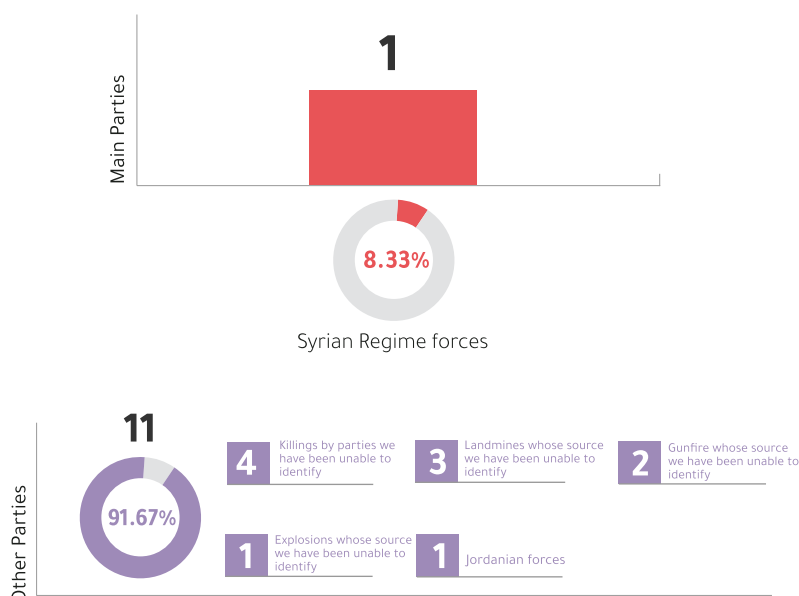
2- June 2023

We recorded no deaths among Civil Defense personnel in June 2023

VI. Record of Most Notable Massacres

1. First half of 2023

SNHR documented 12 massacres in the first half of 2023, distributed as follows:



A. Main parties

- Syrian regime forces and pro-regime militias: One massacre.

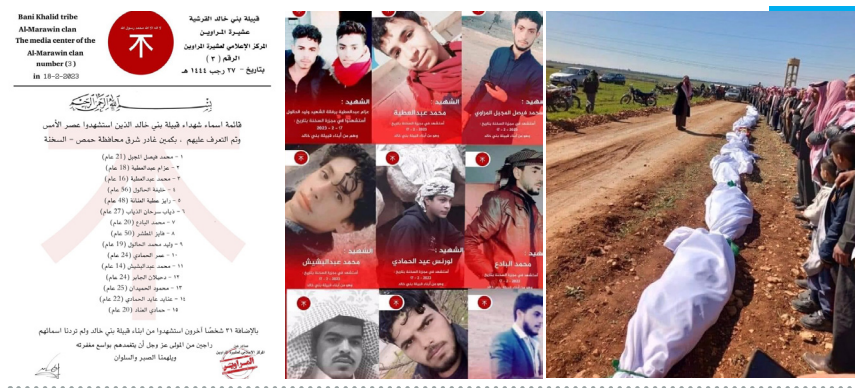
B. Other parties:

- Killings by unidentified parties: Four massacres.
- Landmines of unidentified source: Three massacres.
- Gunfire of unidentified source: Two massacres.
- Bombings by unidentified parties: One massacre.
- Jordanian forces: One massacre.

Below are the most notable massacres:

On Sunday, January 14, 2023, a family of five civilians (father, mother, and three children) were killed by the explosion of an unidentified object (which we believe was a landmine) under their car while they were at work moving stones in Dubai village, located in the vicinity of Jabal Kawkab in eastern Hasaka governorate. The family lived in al-Salihiya neighborhood in Hasaka city. The area was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

On Friday, February 17, 2023, the bodies of at least [40 civilians](#), including three children, were [found](#). The victims had been [killed](#) by pro-Syrian regime Iranian-backed militias in the area located 20 kilometers to the east of eastern Tadmur suburbs which is administratively part of Homs governorate in central Syria. The killing came about as a result of disputes over the harvest of dessert truffles that is a vital source of income for the residents of the Syrian badiya (desert area) at this time of year. The Iranian militias, however, prohibit the collecting of desert truffles without their supervision, and order that the harvest must be supplied and sold through them, so they can dictate the prices and take most of the profit. The area was under the control of Syrian regime forces and Iranian-backed militias at the time of the incident.



On March 23, 2023, the bodies of seven civilians were found by local residents in the area between Jarf Marina and Hariba in eastern Ath-riya in the suburbs of Salmaiya in the eastern badiya or desert area of Hama in the eastern suburbs of Hama governorate. The victims were killed while they were looking for desert truffles. The area was under the control of Syrian regime forces and Iranian militias at the time of the incident.



On Sunday, April 9, 2023, seven civilians from al-Treif town in the western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, were killed by a landmine whose source we have not been able to identify which exploded under their car in the vicinity of Jabal al-Beshri in the northwestern badiya or desert area of Deir Ez-Zour while they were on their way to harvest desert truffles. The area was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

At around dawn on Monday, May 8, 2023, two warplanes entered Syrian airspace from Jordan, both of them believed to be affiliated with the Royal Jordanian Air Force (RJAF), before carrying out two simultaneous attacks on two targets in southern Syria.

The [second attack](#) was carried out against al-Sha'ab village in the far southeast of Suwayda governorate. The targeted site was [a residential house](#) occupied by [the](#) 45-year-old Mer'ie Ruwished al-Ramthan, a local from the village. Al-Ramthan is believed to have been the head figure of a massive drug trafficking network in southern Syria responsible for distributing Captagon and other narcotics in southern Syria. Village residents told SNHR that at around 04:30 on May 8, they heard two warplanes coming from the direction of Jordan. A few minutes later, two consecutive explosions shook the village. The residents later found out that the attack targeted Al-Ramthan's home. SNHR documented the killing of seven civilians in this airstrike, identified as: Mer'ie, his 36-year-old wife Hend al-Ramthan, and their [five children](#) whose ages ranged from two to 10 years old. Additionally, a girl named Asil al-Ramthan, who sustained [critical injuries](#) in the attack, was transferred to the intensive care unit in Suwayda National Hospital.



Photo of Mer'ie al-Ramthan and his sons Hamza and Abbas who were killed in a targeted airstrike carried out by fixed-wing warplanes believed to be affiliated with the Royal Jordanian Air Force on May 8, 2023

2- June 2023

We recorded no massacres in June 2023.

VII. What is SNHR Doing About the Extrajudicial Killing Issue?

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

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

For nearly 12 years, we have issued [daily death tolls of victims](#), as well as [daily news reports](#) on killing incidents. We also issue a [monthly report](#) detailing the death toll of victims, whose deaths were documented in Syria during the previous month, amongst civilians, as well as of those who died [due to torture](#), in addition to issuing a biannual report and annual report, as well as dozens of other special reports [documenting the total death toll](#) or the death toll at the hands of one of the parties to the conflict in particular, in addition to a [monthly report](#) and special and periodic reports documenting the [massacres](#) committed on Syrian soil.

We have also turned the victims' database into a map and interactive charts accessible on our website, which categorize the victims by governorate, gender, age group, the party responsible for their deaths, and other criteria. There are also charts detailing the death toll of victims killed at the hands of all parties to the conflict, as well as others giving information on specific groups, such as specifically detailing the death toll among women and children victims, with all of these being updated regularly.

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

It should be noted that the United Nations has relied on SNHR for all the statistics it has used in its analysis of victims in the conflict, given SNHR's prominent role as one of the most credible sources. SNHR also has signed a [Memorandum of Understanding with Humanitarian Outcomes on contributing to its Aid Worker Security Database \(AWSD\)](#) project. The MoU stipulates the establishment of a joint coordination and cooperation mechanism aimed at documenting and archiving violations and violence affecting aid workers. SNHR has also partnered with numerous United Nations bodies, in addition to various states' governments, to provide them with statistics from our databases, in order to serve the justice process, and ultimately to ensure the accountability and prosecution of criminals. SNHR is also used as a trustworthy source by a large number of Arab and international news agencies and many international human rights organizations.

VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- The evidence we have collected regarding incidents involving deaths indicates that the attacks documented in this report were deliberately directed against civilians and civilian objects. Syrian-Russian alliance forces have committed various crimes of extrajudicial killings, including fatal torture. Their attacks and indiscriminate bombardment have resulted in the destruction of facilities and buildings. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the war crime of attacking civilians has been committed in many cases.
- A large proportion of the Syrians killed have died as a result of landmine explosions, with none of the perpetrator forces involved in the Syrian conflict issuing maps revealing the locations where landmines were planted. This indicates total indifference by all parties to the lives of civilians, and children in particular.
- The Syrian regime has not only violated international humanitarian law and customary law, but has also breached a number of UN Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2139 and resolution 2042 on the release of detainees, as well as resolution 2254, all without any accountability.
- The indiscriminate and disproportionate bombardment carried out by Syrian Democratic Forces is considered a clear violation of international humanitarian law, with the crimes of indiscriminate killing amounting to war crimes.
- The use of remote bombings to target densely populated areas reflects a criminal mindset intent on deliberately inflicting the greatest possible number of deaths, which is a clear contravention of international human rights law and a flagrant violation of the Geneva VI Convention, Articles 27, 31, and 32.
- We have documented cases of extrajudicial killings committed by various controlling forces against the populations under their control, which constitute serious violation of international human rights law.

Recommendations

UN Security Council

- The Security Council should take additional steps following the adoption of Resolution 2254, which clearly demands that all parties should, *"...Immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such, including attacks against medical facilities and personnel, and any indiscriminate use of weapons, including through shelling and aerial bombardment."*
- The Syrian issue should be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those involved in perpetrating crimes against humanity and war crimes should be held accountable.
- Members of the Security Council must stop using their veto to protect the Syrian regime, which has committed hundreds of thousands of violations over the past ten years, many of which constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes.

- Establish security and peace in Syria and implement the 'Responsibility to Protect' norm (R2P) in order to preserve Syrians' lives, heritage, and cultural artifacts from being destroyed, looted, and ruined.
- Request that all relevant United Nations agencies make greater efforts to provide humanitarian and food aid and medical assistance in areas where the fighting has ceased, and in internally displaced persons' camps, and follow up with those states that have pledged the necessary contributions.
- Seriously work to achieve a political transition under the Geneva Communiqué and Security Council Resolution No. 2254, to ensure the stability and territorial integrity of Syria, and enable the dignified and safe return of refugees and IDPs.
- Allocate a significant amount of money for clearing mines left over by the Syrian conflict from the United Nations Mine Action Service, particularly in areas prepared to carry out this task with transparency and integrity.

International Community

- In light of the split within the UN Security Council and its utter incapability, action should be taken at the national and regional levels to form alliances to support the Syrian people and increase support for relief efforts. Additionally, the principle of universal jurisdiction should be applied 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' doctrine (R2P) in dozens of studies and reports and as a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICR2P) after all political channels through the Arab League's plan and then Mr. Kofi Annan's plan were exhausted, with the Cessation of Hostilities statements and Astana talks that followed proved equally fruitless. Therefore, steps should be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and the norm of the "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly, should be implemented. The UN Security Council is still hindering the protection of civilians in Syria.
- Refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court, or quickly establish a tribunal dedicated to trying crimes against humanity and war crimes to end the cycle of impunity that has now spanned 12 years in Syria.
- Work on fulfilling justice and achieving accountability in Syria through the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and to activate the principle of universal jurisdiction.
- Work to launch projects to create maps revealing the locations of landmines and cluster munitions in all Syrian governorates. This would facilitate the process of clearing them and educating the population about their locations.

- Support the political transition process and impose pressure to compel the parties to implement the political transition within a period of no more than six months so that most of the violations end and millions of displaced people can safely return to their homes without fear.
- Stop any forcible return of Syrian refugees, since the situation in Syria continues to be extremely unsafe, and put pressure on the Syrian regime to achieve a political transition that would ensure the automatic return of millions of refugees.

UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR)

- The OHCHR should submit a report to the Human Rights Council and other organs of the United Nations on the violations mentioned in this report and previous reports and should shed greater light on the issue of the continuing killing in Syria.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI)

- Launch extensive 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.
- Work on identifying the responsibility of individuals within the Syrian regime who are involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes, publish their names to expose them to international public condemnation, and end all dealings with them at every political and economic level.

International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

- Collect further evidence about the crimes documented in this report, and provide an exchange of experiences with Syrian organizations working in the field of documentation, data collection and analysis.

The United Nations Special Envoy for Syria

- Condemn the perpetrators of these crimes and of the 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 transitional governing body.
- Call for rapid implementation of democratic political change that restores victims' rights and embodies the principles of transitional justice.
- There is no sense in pursuing any political process in light of the continued bombing of hospitals and UN aid, and the pursuit of a zero-security military solution by the Syrian regime and its allies, and the UN Envoy must acknowledge this.
- Clearly assign responsibility to the party responsible for the death of the political process, and disclose to the Syrian people the timing of the end of the political transition process.

Syrian regime

- Stop indiscriminate shelling and targeting of residential areas, hospitals, schools and markets.
- End the acts of torture that have caused the deaths of thousands of Syrian citizens in detention centers.
- Ensure compliance with UN Security Council resolutions and customary humanitarian law.
- Provide detailed maps of the locations where the regime planted landmines, especially in civilian areas or near residential communities.

Russian regime

- Completely cease the bombing of hospitals, protected objects, and civilian areas, and respect customary international law.
- As a guarantor party in the Astana talks, the Russian regime must stop thwarting de-escalation agreements, and apply pressure on the Syrian regime in order to end all indiscriminate attacks and allow the unconditional passage of humanitarian aid to besieged areas.
- Provide detailed maps of sites where Russian forces have launched cluster munition attacks, issue these to the United Nations and inform the Syrian public about them, thus facilitating the disposal of unexploded ordnance.

The Coalition (US-led coalition and SDF)

- The states supporting the SDF should cease all forms of support until the SDF commits itself to complying with the rules of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. This is primarily the responsibility of the supporting states.
- The SDF should form a special committee to investigate incidents of violations committed by SDF forces, disclose the details of their findings and apologize for them, hold those responsible accountable, and compensate the victims and affected.
- Provide detailed maps of the locations where the SDF has planted landmines, especially in civilian sites or near residential communities.

All Armed Opposition factions/SNA

- 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.

- Launch investigations into the human rights violations that have taken place, hold those responsible accountable and make the findings of these investigations public for the Syrian people.
- Provide detailed maps of the locations where the Armed Opposition factions/Syrian National Army planted landmines, especially civilian sites or near residential communities.

Humanitarian organizations

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

Acknowledgment

We extend our most heartfelt gratitude to the victims' families and friends, and to eyewitnesses and local activists, for their significant and valued contributions to this report.



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