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The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in January 2021

Failure in the Geneva Negotiations
Adds to Inability to Stop the
Egregious Violations in Syria

Thursday 4 February 2021

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

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I. 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 in January 2021, and catalogues the death toll of civilian victims whom we documented killed by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces during this period, as well as the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearance. The report also highlights the 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. Summary of the Most Notable Events in January:

In regard to bombardment and military operations:

The Syrian regime's forces and allies continued carrying out artillery and missile bombardment on the cities and towns in the southern suburbs of Idlib and the western suburbs of Hama throughout January, as well as using anti-armor weapons, targeting many civilian cars at distances of up to approximately 5 km from the front lines, in the western suburbs of Hama for the second consecutive month, injuring civilians.

Areas outside the control of Syrian regime forces in the north and east of Syria saw continuing attacks using explosives, primarily concentrated in Ras al Ein city in the northwestern suburbs of Hasaka governorate and Tal Abyad city in the northern suburbs of Raqqqa governorate, with these explosions causing civilian casualties.

Assassinations continued throughout Syria, particularly in the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib, Daraa and Deir Ez-Zour, killing and injuring dozens of people, including Ibrahim Shashou, the former Minister of Justice with the Salvation Government, who was assassinated in Idlib city on the 4th of last month. On January 6, [Bahaa al Halabi](#), a Syria TV reporter, was shot by unknown persons in al Bab city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo. Meanwhile, the assassinations in Daraa governorate targeted personnel from Syrian regime forces, regime collaborators and former regime opponents.

On January 6, we documented Russian helicopters and warplanes flying over the eastern suburbs of Hama, reaching the al Badiya region, which appear to have been deployed due to repeated attacks on fuel tanks and military vehicles belonging to the Syrian regime on the Raqqqa-Hama road by unknown gunmen; responsibility for these attacks has been claimed via social media accounts believed to be associated with ISIS, with SNHR documenting [the deaths of four civilians](#) due to gunmen targeting one of these tanks on January 3.

On January 9, we recorded several Russian airstrikes on al Kbaina area in Latakia suburbs. The Tal Tamer-Ras al Ein contact line in the suburbs of Hasaka and the vicinity of Ein Eisa city in the suburbs of Raqqqa also witnessed intermittent clashes and battles during January between Syrian Democratic Forces and Syrian National Army forces, resulting in no advance on the ground by either party.

We documented many incidents of artillery bombardment by Syrian Democratic Forces on Izaz city in the north of Aleppo governorate, with Turkish forces in the area responding by shelling the Tal Rifaat area in the northern suburbs of Aleppo using artillery, which caused the deaths of four civilians. We also recorded numerous mine explosion incidents in Aleppo, Hama and Homs suburbs, [resulting in civilian casualties](#).

Since January 8, Syrian Democratic Forces have imposed a siege on the security square in al Qameshli city, which is under the control of Syrian regime forces (this includes al Wasti and Tayy neighborhoods, and al Quwatli Street, within which the Military Security Branch, the Political Security Branch, the Military Police are located, along with a number of government department offices such as the Regional Directorate and the Justice Palace). We note that the entire city is under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces, except for the security square. The SDF's checkpoints surrounding the security square completely cut off passage to and from the security square for Syrian regime forces personnel, while allowing civilian citizens to cross on foot.

Regarding the reasons for imposing this siege, Mazloun Abdi, commander of Syrian Democratic Forces, said in a television interview broadcast [on al Hadath TV channel](#) on January 30: "The regime imposed a siege on al Shahbaa area in the suburbs of Tal Rifaat in Aleppo and some Kurdish neighborhoods in Aleppo city, and arrested civilians from the SDF's and Asayish forces' families, in addition to the regime's threat to launch military action against the areas under the control of the SDF."

The SDF siege was accompanied [by intermittent clashes with light and heavy weapons](#) between both parties in addition to civilians in the security square holding protests calling for the withdrawal of Syrian Democratic Forces from the vicinity of the square. The siege and the clashes caused disruption to the work of government departments and schools, a shortage of foodstuffs, and strike action by staff in some bakeries, in addition to damage to residential buildings resulting from the clashes between the two parties. Ghassan Khalil, the governor of Hasaka, asserted in [an interview published by the Sham FM website](#) on January 21 that what happened in Hasaka governorate was a siege by Syrian Democratic Forces of the forces of the Syrian regime army and citizens living in the city center, adding that he viewed this siege as an attempt to obtain gains in Aleppo governorate or attain some unrealistic demands.

On January 24, the fiercest confrontations in two years broke out near Tafas city in the western suburbs of Daraa between opposition factions' fighters and forces from the Syrian regime's Fourth Division, with the latter backed by local groups of individuals who had previously settled their status with the Syrian regime under the coercive settlement agreements; the fighting began after the Fourth Division deployed its forces in the vicinity of Tafas city over the previous two days, with the aim of pressuring the opposition groups to submit to the Fourth Division's conditions, after which it planned to impose full control over the areas of western Daraa suburbs adjacent to the borders with Jordan and the occupied Golan. Following these clashes, meetings were held that included representatives of the Central Committee in the western suburbs of Daraa and officers from the Syrian regime, in the presence of a Russian delegation, with the Syrian regime forces demanding the displacement of six

residents of Tafas city along with their families to northern Syria, along with the return of government buildings in the city to the regime's control; this demand was rejected, however, and fighters of the armed opposition factions launched attacks on checkpoints of Syrian regime forces in the eastern and western suburbs of Daraa.

Between January 20 and 25, we monitored ground attacks, in addition to air strikes using missiles and barrel bombs, launched by the Russian and Syrian regimes' air forces on areas under the latter's control in the northern suburbs of Hama and the southern suburbs of Idlib; according to reports published on [pro-Syrian regime](#) social [media](#) accounts, the aim was to film a TV series about the regime forces' military operations in the region.

In the past month, Israeli warplanes launched several raids on sites belonging to Syrian regime forces in the governorates of Suwayda, Damascus Suburbs, Deir Ez-Zour and Hama, with one of the anti-aircraft missiles used by Syrian regime forces to repel the Israeli attack on Hama governorate on January 22 resulting in [the deaths of four civilians](#) from one family in the Kazuo neighborhood of Hama city.

In regard to arrests and enforced disappearances:

Syrian regime forces in January continued to persecute and arrest individuals who had concluded settlements of their security status with the regime in areas that had previously concluded related settlement agreements; these arrests have been concentrated in Damascus Suburbs governorate. We also recorded arrests of pro-Syrian regime media personnel in connection with their filming of reports critical of the working practices of state personnel employed in service institutions, as well as arbitrary arrests of citizens solely for criticizing the deteriorating living conditions in regime-controlled areas.

Meanwhile, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces continued enforcing the group's policies of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance in January, with the number of such incidents increasing this month, meaning that the rate of arrests documented as taking place at the hands of the Syrian Democratic Forces this month was the highest in this category amongst all the parties to the conflict. Syrian Democratic Forces have targeted civilians for their kinship relationships with individuals in the Armed Opposition/ Syrian National Army, as well as carrying out campaigns of mass raids and arrests, targeting many civilians, including children, on the pretext of fighting ISIS cells, with some of these campaigns backed by US-led coalition helicopters. We also documented arrests of media activists. All these arrests were concentrated in the governorates of Deir Ez-Zour and Raqqa. In addition to these incidents, we also recorded detentions carried out by the SDF against teachers and students

over their participation in protests held to condemn the earlier arrest of other teachers by the SDF. These detentions were accompanied by beatings and verbal insults against students, who were also taken to an undisclosed location. We also note that all the students detained are children aged between 15 to 17 years old, with their juvenile status not taken into consideration by those detaining them.

January also saw Hay'at Tahrir al Sham detaining civilians, with the targets of these arrests, which were concentrated in Idlib governorate, including activists working with civil society groups, media workers and doctors; most of these arrests occurred due to the detainees expressing opinions critical of the HTS's management of areas under its control.

The Armed Opposition/ Syrian National Army also continued carrying out arbitrary detentions and kidnappings in January, most of which occurred on a mass scale, targeting IDP civilians and activists, under the pretext of having kinship with ISIS, before releasing them later; we also recorded mass arrests targeting those coming from areas under the control of the Syrian regime. In addition, we recorded detentions carried out under an ethnic pretext, with these incidents being concentrated in areas under the Armed Opposition/ Syrian National Army's control in Aleppo governorate.

As for the COVID-19 pandemic:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage all Syria's regions, with dozens of related deaths being recorded daily, amid an almost complete absence of precautionary measures and massive negligence by the different controlling forces, along with the public's failure to follow these measures due to dire economic and social conditions. Through our monitoring of reports of infections and deaths among citizens, we at the SNHR have become more certain of the widening gap between the actual numbers of coronavirus cases and fatalities and those announced by the ruling authorities, particularly by the Syrian regime.

The Syrian regime's Ministry of Health in January officially announced 2,614 cases of infection and 210 deaths, bringing the official total announced numbers to [14,048 cases of infection with 921 deaths, as of January 31](#).

On January 7, [al Watan newspaper](#) quoted the head of the Syrian Doctors Syndicate, Dr. Kamal Asaad Amer, as announcing the recent deaths of 130 doctors, of whom 100 were confirmed to have died due to being infected with the COVID-19 virus; although the rest supposedly died of other causes, some of these are suspected to have also been infected with the virus, although it's believed that this was not officially acknowledged as the cause of death because it was not diagnosed; According to al Watan's article, Dr. Amer said that Syria has been losing its medical personnel due to the increase in deaths among them.

In northwestern Syria, more infections and deaths due to coronavirus were recorded in January, with the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN) announcing the documentation of 727 infections and 55 deaths for the month; this brought the total number of infections and deaths announced by EWARN [as of January 31](#), to 20,997 cases of infection and 440 deaths.

On January 29, [Mark Cutts](#), Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syrian Crisis, said at a press briefing in Geneva that, as of January 26, some 21,000 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in northwest Syria: "Despite a reduction in new cases, the number of deaths... [the rate] increased by some 46 per cent to 380 since mid-December".

In northeastern Syria, [as of January 31](#), a total of 8,476 coronavirus infection cases, including 296 deaths, had been announced by the Health Authority in the Self-Management Authority of Northern and Eastern Syria. We note that 452 cases of infection and 25 deaths were recorded in January.

Sonia Khush, Save the Children's Syria Response Director, said in [a statement](#) issued by the organization on January 7, "There is every reason to believe that the situation is much worse than the numbers tell us. But even with the data that we currently have, it is clear that the numbers of COVID-19 cases are increasing far more rapidly than the limited capacity of the health and hygiene sectors in Syria."

On the [International Day of Education](#) on January 24, Muhannad Hadi, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis, and Ted Chaiban, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, stated that, "Inside Syria, there are over 2.4 million children out of school, nearly 40 per cent are girls. This number has likely increased in 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which exacerbated the disruption to education in Syria. One in three schools inside Syria can no longer be used because they were destroyed, damaged or are being used for military purposes. Children who are able to attend school often learn in overcrowded classrooms, and in buildings with insufficient water and sanitation facilities, electricity, heating or ventilation."

In regard to living conditions:

The repercussions of the economic collapse continue to have a severe negative impact on the lives of citizens in light of the Syrian regime's mismanagement of the situation which forces the Syrian people to bear the brunt of this collapse. On January 24, [the Syrian Central Bank](#) introduced a new banknote with a denomination of 5,000 SYP which will be issued alongside the other banknotes of various denominations already in circulation in Syria.

On January 19, [the Ministry of Internal Trade announced](#) increases in the selling price of premium gasoline to 475 Syrian pounds per subsidized liter, and 675 pounds per unsubsidized liter, and also increasing the price of 95 octane gasoline to 1,300 Syrian pounds, with the price increases taking effect from the following day. We note that this was the third time that the prices of these fuels have been increased within three months.

Regarding the deficit in securing electricity services, Ghassan al Zamil, the Minister of Electricity, [said in a statement to al Watan Syrian newspaper](#) published on January 4 that while Syria's daily electricity need stands at 7,000 megawatts, the current available amount is less than 3,200 megawatts, explaining that 800 megabytes of the electricity produced are not subject to rationing, being allocated for mills, bakeries, hospitals, water pumps, some strategic units, etc. This confirms the Syrian regime's inability to secure the main needs of the country's citizens in areas under its control.

Meanwhile, the villages and towns of al Sh'aitat, al Sh-heil, al Sousa and al Baghouz in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour continue to witness many demonstrations calling for improvements in the services and living conditions in the region, and for securing job opportunities for the unemployed. The cities of Hasaka and Qameshli witnessed a suffocating crisis in the availability of bread in January, as a result of a strike by local bakery owners over high production costs and the failure of controlling authorities to subsidize the bakeries with the necessary allocated quantities of wheat.

A number of schools in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zourr also witnessed strikes by students and teachers in protest against the conscription campaigns launched by Syrian Democratic Forces against the educational staff.

In regard to displacement and forced displacement:

The camps in northern Syria witnessed [several rainstorms](#), [accompanied by snow](#) on the night of January 20, leading to flooding that submerged or swept away many tents, with [one child dying](#) due to the collapse of a wall supporting his family's tent. Incidents of fires caused by the use of inappropriate heating methods have continued to cause the death of IDPs, with SNHR documenting [the death of a female child](#) as a result of this on January 10.

Since January 27, Tafas city in the western suburbs of Daraa has witnessed a displacement movement, the first of its kind since the city was subject to a settlement agreement two years ago, with some 10,000 residents (about a third of the city's population) being displaced due to the threats issued by the Syrian regime's Fourth Division to launch an attack on the city; meanwhile, the city's markets have been almost empty of food, with the main one of these being al Hal market, which supplies vegetables and fruits to stores.

In al Hawl Camp¹, we documented in January [the deaths](#) of [12 civilians](#) at [the hands](#) of [unknown gunmen](#) believed to be affiliated with ISIS cells; this is the highest death toll from assassinations by unknown attackers within a one-month period since the camp was established. On January 22, the [United Nations called](#) on the authorities controlling security at al Hawl Camp to ensure the safety of its residents and humanitarian workers.

On January 13, [France repatriated](#) seven young French minors who were in northeast Syria.

Meanwhile, on January 19, Syrian Democratic Forces allowed nearly 100 IDPs from Hasaka city and its suburbs to leave al Hawl Camp and return to their villages and towns. This was [the tenth group](#) to leave the camp since the [SDF issued a decision to empty it](#) on October 10 2020; on January 28, the [eleventh group](#) of nearly 240 people from the Manbej area in the suburbs of Aleppo left and returned to their villages and towns.

[Samir Jazairli](#), a member of the Damascus Governorate Executive Office, revealed in an interview published by the al Watan newspaper on January 6, that 1,200 citizens amongst the residents of al Yarmouk refugee camp had submitted requests to return to the neighborhood since November 10, 2020, with 500 of these applications being approved due to meeting the three conditions set out by the local authorities, namely the applicant's entitlement to ownership, the structural integrity of their property, and approval by the competent authorities. This means that the Syrian regime refused to allow the return of most of those of the neighborhood's residents who are still in areas controlled by the Syrian regime, and who submitted requests.

On January 9, [foreign media outlets reported](#) that Albanian military ships and police had rescued 50 Syrian refugees who were stranded due to bad weather while trying to reach Italy by boat.

On January 16, German Deputy Interior Minister [Stephan Mayer stressed](#) that the decision to lift the ban on deporting Syrians to their country would not apply to all Syrian refugees in Germany, and would focus only on potential perpetrators of crimes who pose a serious threat to the country's security.

¹ A camp located east of Hasaka city, near the Iraqi-Syrian border, which houses nearly 60,000 people

In regard to political and human rights issues:

Deputy Russian Foreign Minister, [Sergey Vershinin](#), [claimed](#) in an interview with RIA Novosti Agency, published on January 4, that calls by some countries to refuse to recognize the presidential elections scheduled to take place this year in Syria undermine the stable performance of official institutions in the country.

On January 5, [the final statement](#) of the 41st Gulf Cooperation Council Summit held in al Ula city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, attended by the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council member states, affirmed the participants' support for a political solution in Syria and for the return of refugees and IDPs to their towns and villages, and condemned the Iranian presence there.

On January 5, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, [Izumi Nakamitsu](#), said during her regular monthly briefing on the implementation of resolution 2118 of 2013, that the outstanding issues related to Syria's initial declaration of its chemical weapons stockpile and program still cannot be considered "accurate and complete".

On January 7, Russia 1 TV broadcast a movie entitled 'There's No Mistake, Christmas Visit to Damascus,' which included [statements by Russian President Vladimir Putin](#) in which he claimed that what happened in recent years in Syria proved that the start of the Russian military operation in Syria was a correct decision, in his words.

On January 10, the World Health Organization (WHO) published a news report via its social media accounts indicating that a quantity of medical supplies related to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had been stored in the organization's warehouses in the Emirate of Dubai, had arrived at Benghazi Airport in Libya. The picture accompanying the news report showed that the supplies had been transferred to Libya through the Cham Wings Company, indicating that the organization has provided material support to one of the companies affiliated with the Syrian regime that is subject to a range of sanctions. The Syrian Network for Human Rights condemned the WHO's use of this company [in a report](#) and called on the organization to open an investigation into this incident.

On January 18, Russian Foreign Minister [Sergey Lavrov](#) [held](#) an online press conference during which he outlined Russia's diplomatic achievements in 2020, and discussed the prospects for Moscow's international relations, including with the new US administration, and affirmed that Russia does not intend to expel US forces from Syria or to enter in armed clashes with them, but strongly calls on them not to use force against Syrian regime sites.

On January 20, the UN Special Envoy for Syria, [Geir Pedersen](#), said in his briefing at the UN Security Council session on Syria: "Today, millions inside the country and the millions of refugees outside, are grappling with deep trauma, grinding poverty, personal insecurity, and lack of hope for the future", adding that "addressing the conflict in Syria is high among our shared priorities," and noting that "the political process is not delivering real change, and that free and fair elections seem far into the future".

On January 21, nearly 90 prominent figures amongst the supporters of the Syrian regime [submitted a letter](#) to US President Joe Biden, specifically calling for the lifting of economic sanctions against it. The letter's content was based largely on a statement issued by Ms. Alena Douhan, the 'Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights', on 29 December 2020.

Mrs. Douhan, from Belarus, was subsequently interviewed by Russia Today, which enthusiastically celebrated her statement, as well as by the Kremlin-affiliated Grayzone website, which previously presented a deceptive and slanderous report on the Syrian Network for Human Rights, which is a website even below the level of yellow journalism. We are surprised that Ms. Douhan accepted being interviewed by such a disgraced propaganda outlet.

As for Ms. Douhan's statement, the first of its kind on Syria, it was clearly aimed at a specific target, namely the US sanctions against the Syrian regime. We have heard no statements of any kind from Ms. Douhan concerning the numerous unilateral coercive measures taken against the Syrian people, such as the regime's allies sending tens of thousands of militiamen and mercenaries who have been responsible for massive numbers of killings and other crimes in Syria, or about those crimes perpetrated directly by Russia. We believe that the UN Human Rights Council should review the background and the reasons behind the statement issued by Ms. Douhan, especially since it was utilized by Russia Today, the Grayzone website, and the letter from the Syrian regime's supporters addressed to the US President.

On January 21, [a delegation from the Cairo and Moscow platforms](#) ² held a meeting in Moscow with Sergey Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, with the participants discussing the current status of the political process in Syria and the need to push for the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 2254.

On January 21, UN Secretary-General [António Guterres announced](#) in a statement the establishment of a Senior Advisory Panel to strengthen the mechanism by which humanitarian workers and sites are better protected from attacks in Syria.

² Two Syrian groupings, which were announced in Egypt and Russia in 2014, representing a spectrum of the Syrian opposition

Between January 25 and 29, [the work of the fifth round](#) of the Syrian Constitutional Committee meetings began at the United Nations office in Geneva.

On January 28, [the second joint 'Syrian-Russian' press conference](#) was held in the Syrian capital, Damascus, with the aim of following up on the outcomes of the international conference calling for the return of Syrian refugees.

On January 28, [the guarantor states](#) of the 'Astana Format issued a joint statement announcing that the fifteenth international conference would be held in Sochi on February 16-17, 2021.

On January 29, the UN Special Envoy for Syria, [Geir Pedersen, stated](#) during a press conference held at the end of the fifth round of the Geneva negotiations that the participants could not continue the meetings of the Constitutional Committee on Syria without changing the method of work, and that the latest round had been disappointing, without specifying which party was responsible for stalling the negotiations. Pedersen expressed his willingness to travel to Syria in order to discuss how to implement all the broader aspects of Security Council resolution 2254, although he did not specify a new date for the resumption of negotiations.

In early January, [the US Carter Center](#)³ for Research published a report entitled "A Path to Conflict Transformation in Syria - A Framework for a Phased Approach," in which it talked about seven urgent negotiating paths to get out of the current situation in Syria. The first is political reform according to Security Council Resolution 2254, which calls for a political process in Syria, the drafting of a new constitution, and the organization of free and fair elections supervised by the United Nations.

In the last week of January, [a protest movement erupted](#) against the Syrian regime by citizens in the squares and streets of Suwayda city in response to an officer with the Syrian regime's forces offending the spiritual head of the Druze community, Hekmat al Hijri; the protesters smashed pictures of the president of the Syrian regime, Bashar al Assad, while the Syrian regime, according to reports from local sources, hurried to assuage the offence caused by one of its officers and apologized.

³ A non-governmental, non-profit center founded in 1982 by former US President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn Carter. It works for the advancement of human rights and the alleviation of human suffering and seeks to improve the quality of life of people in more than 70 countries

On the political and human rights level:

On January 1, following its exit from the European Union, the United Kingdom [announced](#) its commitment to holding accountable those responsible for crimes in Syria and transferring the European Union sanctions applied against the Syrian regime and its partners to the special UK sanctions regime.

On January 4, [the Wall Street Journal reported](#) that the US Treasury Department had fined Union de Banques Arabes et Françaises SA Bank \$ 8.6 million, for its processing of payments for blacklisted Syrian financial institutions.

On January 15, [the European Union added](#) Faisal al Miqdad, the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the list of people subject to the European Union's restrictive measures on Syria, bringing the number of people targeted by the travel ban and asset freeze to 289, in addition to 70 entities subject to an asset freeze.

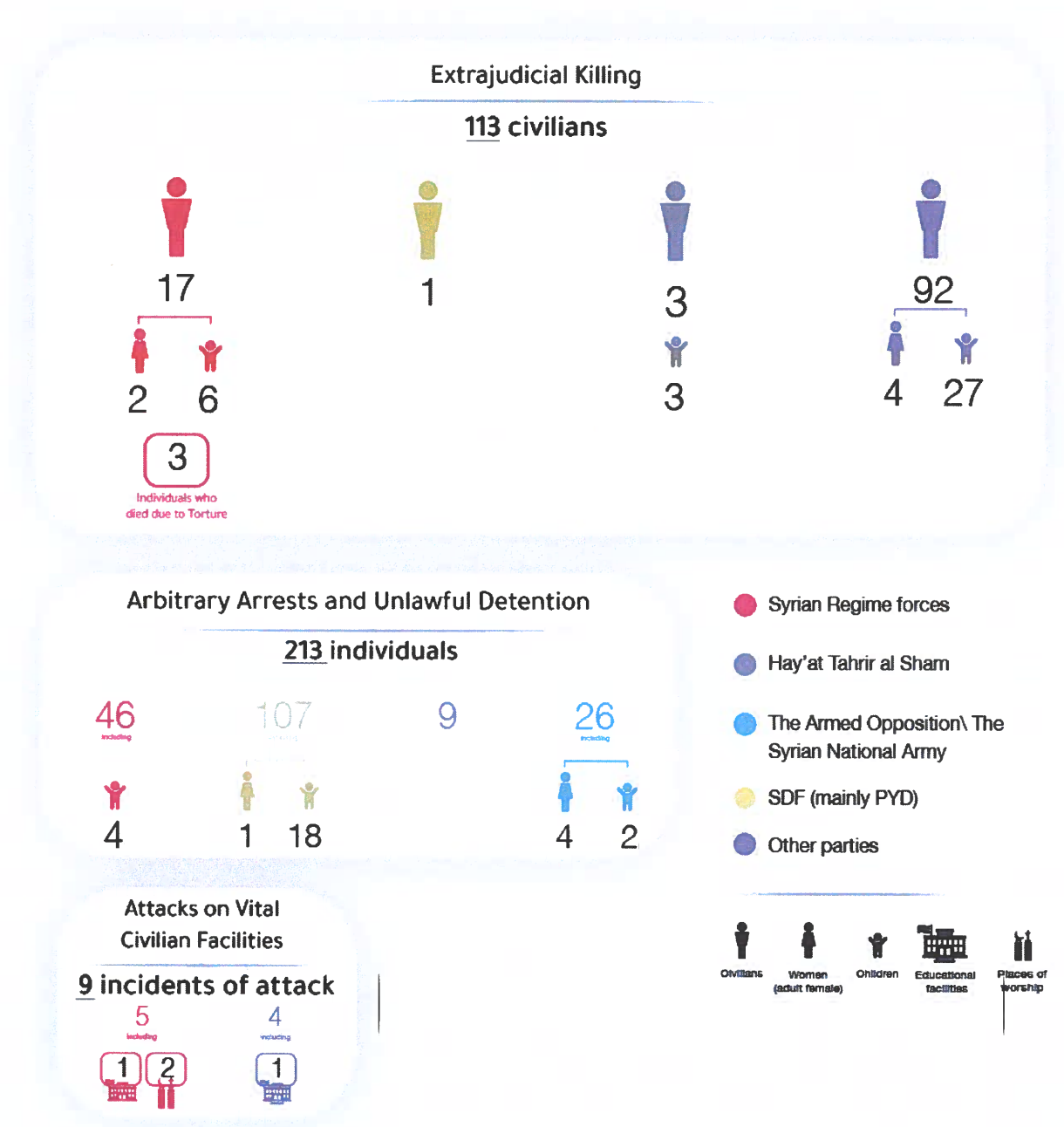
On January 18, [the Federal Prosecutor's Office in Karlsruhe, Germany, announced](#) that it had filed a lawsuit against two men before the High Regional Court in Düsseldorf in mid-December 2020, suspected of participating in an execution by Syrian regime forces in 2012.

On January 27, [the United Nations Human Rights Committee issued](#) a resolution affirming Italy's failure to respond to distress calls from a boat that had been carrying more than 400 adults and children when it sank in the Mediterranean on October 10, 2013, leading to the death by drowning of more than 200 refugees, including 60 children. The committee's decision came in response to a joint complaint filed by three Syrians and a Palestinian citizen who survived the accident but lost their families.

On January 28, [the Federal Supreme Court in Germany issued](#) an important decision at the level of universal jurisdiction to prosecute criminals against humanity and war criminals, to remove the immunity of any officer or official who enjoys immunity in his country and who has committed war crimes or crimes against humanity.

III. The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in January:

This report outlines the most notable human rights violations that were documented by the SNHR in January 2021 at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.



A. Extrajudicial killing:

In January 2021, SNHR documented the deaths of 113 civilians, including 36 children and six women (adult female), the largest percentage of whom were killed at the hands of other parties; among the victims were three individuals who died due to torture. We issued a report on the first of this month detailing the civilian victims documented killed in January 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)⁴ : 17 civilians, including six children and two women.
- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham⁵ : Three children.
- Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party): One civilian.

B. Other parties:

We documented the deaths of 92 civilians, including 27 children and four women, at the hands of other parties, distributed as follows:

- Landmines of unknown source: 18 civilians, including 16 children.
- Gunfire of unknown source: 36 civilians, including two children and two women.
- Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified: Seven civilians, including two children.
- Killings by unknown persons: 24 civilians, including five children and one woman.
- Turkish border guards: Three civilians.
- Turkish forces: Four civilians, including two children and one woman.

B. Arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance:

In January 2021, SNHR documented at least 213 cases of arbitrary arrests, including 24 children and five women (adult female), at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria. The largest number of arrests was carried out by Syrian Democratic Forces in the governorate of Deir Ez-Zour, then Raqqa governorate. We issued a report on the second of this month detailing the record of cases of arrests and enforced disappearances which we documented in January at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria.

⁴ We generally use the term 'the Syrian regime' rather than 'the Syrian government', because the nature of the ruling power in Syria is a totalitarian dictatorship based on ruling the nation in an authoritarian fashion through a very limited group of individuals, primarily the President of the Republic and his selected leaders of the security services, while the ministers, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior, play a restricted, largely ceremonial role, which is limited to implementing precisely what the ruling regime orders, without any decision-making power or active role; this means that the government's role is wholly subordinate and limited to serving the regime, with all the main powers being concentrated in the hands of the President of the Republic and the security services. Governance in Syria is wholly decided by the autocratic authority of the ruling family and there is no independent decision-making structure. Rather, the government is an empty façade there for show; the Minister of Interior receives orders from the security branches over which he nominally presides which are in turn under the command of the President, while the Minister of Justice cannot summon a civilian-level security agent other than the head of a security branch; the security branches, along with the president, are the true power and the governing regime in Syria.

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

⁵ The United Nations has designated it as a terrorist organization

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: 46, including four children.
- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham: Nine.
- The Armed Opposition/ Syrian National Army: 51, including two children and four women.
- Syrian Democratic Forces: 107, including 18 children and one woman.

C. Attacks on vital civilian facilities:

In January 2021, SNHR documented at least nine incidents of attacks on vital civilian facilities, five of which were perpetrated by Syrian regime forces, which concentrated in Idlib governorate.

Among these attacks, we documented two attacks on educational facilities (schools and kindergartens) and two on places of worship.

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

A. The main parties:

- Syrian Regime forces: Five.

B. Other parties:

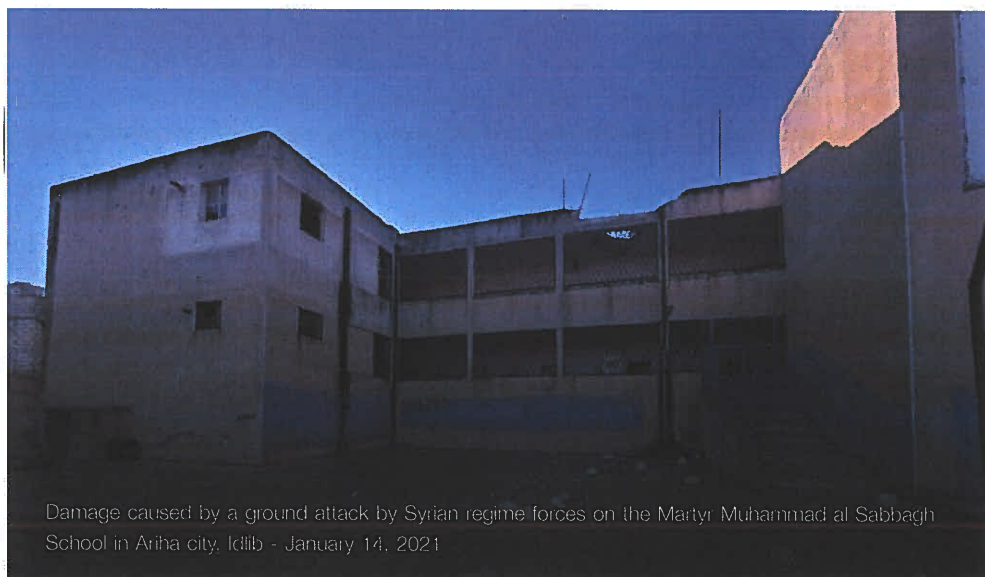
- Bombings whose perpetrators have not yet been identified: Four.

The record of attacks documented in January 2021 on vital civilian facilities was distributed according to the perpetrator parties as follows:

Attacked Facility	Perpetrator Party	
	Syrian Regime forces	Other parties
Places of Worship		
Mosques	2	
Vital Educational Facilities		
Schools	1	1
Communal Facilities		
Markets	1	2
Infrastructure		
Bakeries		1
Industrial facilities	1	
Total	5	4

The most notable attacks on vital civilian facilities in January:

On Thursday, January 14, 2021, Syrian regime forces used [a missile](#) launcher to shell the Martyr [Muhammad al Sabbagh School](#) in Ariha city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, [partially destroying](#) the [school structure](#). Ariha city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.



Damage caused by a ground attack by Syrian regime forces on the Martyr Muhammad al Sabbagh School in Ariha city, Idlib - January 14, 2021

On Thursday, January 14, 2021, Syrian regime forces used a missile launcher to shell al Hal Market in Ariha city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, causing [severe material damage](#) to several shops and the market's facilities. Ariha city was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

On Sunday, January 17, 2021, an IED of unknown origin exploded in the main vegetable market in the center of Sejjo town in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, resulting in casualties, in addition to [causing moderate material](#) damage to [a number](#) of [shops](#) in [the market](#). SNHR is still trying to contact witnesses to obtain more details of the incident. The town was under the control of the Syrian National Army at the time of the incident.



Damage caused by the explosion of an IED of unknown origin in the main vegetable market in the center of Sejjo town, Aleppo - January 17, 2021

On Saturday, January 23, 2021, Syrian regime artillery forces, stationed in the so-called security square in al Qameshli city in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, fired a mortar shell at the Haklou neighborhood in the city. The shell landed near the [Sheikh al Shuhadaa Muhammad Ma'shouq](#) al Khaznawi Mosque, known as al Sheikh Ma'shouq Mosque, causing moderate material damage to the mosque's yard and walls. SNHR can confirm that the mosque is located within a residential area and is free of any military presence. Haklou neighborhood is located within the area of Qameshli city under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces.

On Tuesday, January 26, 2021, a motorcycle bomb of unknown origin exploded in a popular market near the Dawwar al Baladiya area in the city center of Tal Abyad in the northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, causing moderate material damage to [several shops](#) and the market's facilities. SNHR is still trying to contact witnesses and survivors to obtain more details of the incident. The city was under the control of the Syrian National Army at the time of the incident.

D. Record of indiscriminate attacks and attacks using outlawed weapons:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights was unable to document any indiscriminate attacks or attacks using outlawed weapons in January.

IV. The Syrian Regime Bears Primary Responsibility for the Spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic:

The COVID-19 pandemic has swept across most of the world, and caused massive numbers of infections and deaths, with most of the world's stable countries worldwide dealing with it seriously and taking exceptional measures to protect the population; many countries have announced their desire to attract and employ more medical personnel, and some governments have released large numbers of imprisoned people and detainees as a precautionary measure to stop the disease from spreading.

By contrast, since the beginning of the global pandemic outbreak, the Syrian regime has dealt with it with callous, total and extreme disregard and absolute negligence, with several countries announcing the arrival of infected cases from Syria since the beginning of March 2020. Despite this, the Syrian regime continued to deny the existence of any infections in Syria until March 22.

The COVID-19 coronavirus does not distinguish between one person or another or between one region and another, and all the regions of Syria, particularly Idlib and surrounding areas, that have witnessed bombings, destruction and forced displacement are suffering from further challenges in addition to the usual ones, which cannot be compared to those in any other location; at the forefront of these challenges are the nearly 1.1 million Syrian citizens displaced between mid-December 2019 and the beginning of March 2020, with exceptional humanitarian aid efforts required to focus particularly on these people in the areas to which they were displaced. There are a number of factors which make them more vulnerable than others to infection with COVID-19, most notably:

- The Idlib region and the northwestern suburbs of Aleppo and its environs are already experiencing massive overcrowding due to the earlier displacement of tens of thousands of Syrians to these places from several areas such as the Eastern Ghouta, the northern suburbs of Homs, southern Syria, and recently the suburbs of Idlib and Hama, which has caused a drastic increase in the existing overcrowding, making the process of social physical distancing virtually impossible.
- Most of these people live in hastily constructed camps or structures which are wholly inadequate and unsuitable for housing (such as schools, shops, unfinished apartments, demolished buildings, caves, etc.), which lack the most basic sanitary infrastructure such as toilets, functioning sewage networks, or clean water, which makes the available water allocations necessary for periodic personal hygiene for each person far less than would be available in normal conditions or in other areas in Syria. The IDPs are struggling to obtain enough tents, and are sometimes forced to live in a tent collectively, which particularly negatively affects women due to their special needs.

- The healthcare system in and around Idlib continues to suffer from the repercussions of violent and focused targeting by the Syrian and Russian regimes' forces, which has contributed to a large number of health centers being put out of service. According to estimates from a number of local relief and humanitarian organizations, the number of doctors in the region ranges between 500 to 600, while the number of beds in medical centers ranges between 2,500 to 3,000, with the number of beds in intensive care units numbering 201 in total; in addition, only 95 ventilators are available for adults, with all of these being in use. The tremendous disparity between these figures and the population levels in northwest Syria shows the immensity of the grave deficit.

On April 14, 2020, Médecins Sans Frontières [warned](#) that the health system in Idlib, which is currently overstretched and low on supplies, will be overrun if COVID-19 spreads there.

The Syrian Jazira region (Deir Ez-Zour, Hasaka, Raqqqa), which is controlled by the Kurdish-majority Syrian Democratic Forces, suffers from a similar situation, and also includes large numbers of IDPs living in camps. Russia's use of its United Nations veto has caused the cancellation of three of the four crossings, with al Ya'rubiya crossing with Iraq being one of the crossings canceled; this caused the region to be denied direct UN aid, which is now provided exclusively through the Syrian regime that deliberately creates obstacles to aid provision and systematically carries out large-scale extortion, which we addressed extensively in our report: [Sanctions Are Linked to the Syrian Regime's Continuing Violations and Don't Include Medical Supplies and Food, Which Shouldn't Be Delivered Through the Regime](#), with the United Nations Secretary-General speaking about this in [his report issued on February 21, 2020](#). [Human Rights Watch also issued a report](#) on the crisis facing the medical sector in that region and the complex difficulties it faces due to the closure of al Ya'rubiya crossing.

As for the areas under the control of the Syrian regime, whilst these are better off than the Idlib region, its environs, and the Syrian Jazira region, they suffer mainly from the exodus of medical personnel, and from the massive corruption in all the regime's organs, as well as from the depletion of the Syrian state's monetary reserves, which are spent on bombings, military operations, and security services at the expense of supporting the medical sector and services. SNHR has also demanded that Russia, a massively wealthy country, help its ally, the Syrian regime, given the circumstances of the spread of the COVID-19, as this would be far better and less costly than air strikes on medical facilities, cities and towns in and around Idlib.

In short, the whole of Syrian society suffers from mismanagement of the coronavirus crisis, in all areas of control:

One: In the areas under the control of the Syrian regime, these shortcomings are summarized in the following main points:

1. The Syrian regime denied the existence of any cases of COVID-19 in areas under its control until March 22; it should be borne in mind that when the regime finally admitted the existence of a case of infection, it was in a girl coming from outside the country. Another problematic factor is the complete lack of any transparency in the announcement of cases of infection and deaths, which are certainly far greater than those officially announced, due particularly to the constant contact with Shiite religious groups, individuals and militias coming from Iran and Iraq (most notably the al Nujaba Movement, the Imam Ali Brigade, the Fatemiyoun Brigade, the Quds Corps Brigade, the Abu al Fadl al Abbas Brigade and the Haideriyoun Brigade) via the al Boukamal land crossing, with the Syrian regime failing to close the al Sayyidah Zaynab area, which is known to be very crowded with Iranians and Iraqi Shiites, until April 2.
2. The Syrian authorities have not taken any effective measures to limit air traffic from other countries, with Damascus International Airport still witnessing multiple flights to and from many countries, including Iran.
3. Quarantine centers are not equipped and lack the minimum levels of hygiene, in addition to lacking the most basic conditions for healthcare and medical protection and the facilities to provide the medical procedures and services related to COVID-19, which are supposedly intended to contribute to curbing the spread of the disease if discovered. [Press websites](#) and social media platforms have published photos and [videos showing](#) the [dire situation](#) of [the Quarantine Center in al Dwair area](#), where people were placed after arriving on a trip from Iran
4. The Syrian regime has not taken any serious measures to prevent overcrowding of citizens in front of retail outlets or in commercial areas, in front of bakeries, or in markets, as we have mentioned in a wide range of [news reports](#) in recent months.

Two: In and around opposition-held areas in Idlib:

1. The areas under opposition control suffer from an absence of a central authority to issue unified instructions, a shortcoming largely reflected in the disparity seen in the individuals' approach to prevention and medical treatment of the COVID-19.
2. There is a low degree of medical and religious awareness of the dangers of overcrowding and gathering. We have noted numerous instances of dozens of people gathering in marketplaces, or attending sporting events in playgrounds and sports halls, without the controlling authorities imposing any restrictions to limit overcrowding or to prevent holding college student graduation ceremonies within the faculties' headquarters, despite the rapid spread of the pandemic in recent times in northwest Syria, particularly among IDPs in camps. This is greatly bolstered by a sense of indifference prevailing among many people, primarily caused by what they have been subjected to, including bombings, displacement and torture by Syrian regime's forces and allies.

Based on all the above facts, there is no doubt that the negligence shown by the Syrian regime and its disastrous mismanagement of the Syrian state in recent years are further clear indications of the regime's indifference to citizens' wellbeing, showing once again that the only Syrians which it cares about protecting are the ruling family, the regime's inner circle, and its wealthy elite; this indifference to the Syrian public may well lead to massive additional numbers of deaths among Syrian citizens. It should always be remembered that the Syrian regime and its Russian ally have been primary accused of the targeting, bombing and destruction of most medical facilities in Syria, and the killing of hundreds of medical personnel, as documented on the SNHR's database, with dozens of these lifesaving medics still classified as having been forcibly disappeared at the regime's hands.

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

V. Attachments:

(1) [Extrajudicial Killing Claims the Lives of 113 Civilians, Including 36 Children, Six Women, and Three Victims Due to Torture, in January 2021](#)

(2) [At least 213 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest/ Detention Documented in Syria in January 2021, Including 24 Children and Five Women](#)

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Conclusions:

- The evidence we have gathered indicates that attacks continue to be directed against civilians and civilian objects. Syrian-Russian alliance forces have committed various crimes, including extrajudicial killings, arrest, torture, and enforced disappearance. In addition, the indiscriminate bombardment and other attacks carried out caused the destruction of facilities and buildings. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the war crime of attacking civilians has been committed in many cases.
- The Syrian government has not only violated international humanitarian law and customary law, but has also breached a number of UN Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2139, resolution 2042 on the release of detainees, and resolution 2254, all without any accountability.

- We could find no record of any warnings being issued by the Syrian Regime or 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 the attacks documented in this report, particularly bombings, caused massive collateral damage that involved loss of lives, injuries, or significant damage to civilian objects. There are strong indicators suggesting that this damage was excessive compared to the anticipated military benefit. The use of explosive arms to target densely populated areas reflects a criminal and wholly deliberate mindset, with the perpetrators clearly intending to inflict the greatest possible number of deaths, which is a clear contravention of international human rights law and a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention (arts. 27, 31, 32).

Recommendations:

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.
- 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 removing them and educating the population about their locations.

OHCHR

- The OHCHR should submit a report to the Human Rights Council and other organs of the United Nations on the incidents mentioned in this report since these attacks were perpetrated by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces.
- Train Syrian organizations to undertake clearance of mines and other unexploded ordnance, and raise local awareness of the dangers of such ordnance.
- Establish a platform that brings together a number of Syrian organizations active in documenting violations and humanitarian assistance, in order to facilitate an exchange of skills and experiences within Syrian society.
- Work on preparing a special report on the use of landmines in Syria and the risks they pose to civilians, and identify the most prominent locations where landmines were planted.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI)

- Launch investigations into the cases included in this report and previous reports. SNHR is willing to cooperate and provide further evidence and data.

International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

- Collect further evidence about the crimes documented in this report.
- Focus on the issue of landmines and cluster munitions within the next report.

The United Nations Special Envoy to Syria

- Condemn the perpetrators of crimes and massacres, and those who were primarily responsible for dooming the de-escalation agreements.
- 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.
- End the acts of torture that have caused the deaths of thousands of Syrian citizens in detention centers.
- Reveal the fate of some 84,000 Syrian citizens arrested by the security services whose fate has been concealed to date.
- Ensure compliance with UN Security Council resolutions and customary humanitarian law.
- Provide detailed maps of the locations where the regime planted landmines, especially in civilian areas or near residential communities.

The Russian regime

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

and to allow unconditional passage of humanitarian aid to besieged areas.

- Stop using incendiary weapons in populated areas, compensate the victims and their families for all human and material damage caused by the use of these weapons, and provide treatment for dozens of civilian casualties.
- Provide detailed maps of sites where Russian forces have launched cluster munition attacks, issue these to the United Nations and inform the Syrian public about them, thus facilitating the safe disposal of unexploded ordnance.
- Begin to achieve a breakthrough in the issue of detainees by revealing the fate of 83,000 people forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime.

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

- The states of the coalition must unequivocally and sincerely acknowledge that some of their bombing operations have resulted in the deaths of innocent civilians. Rather than attempting denial, these states should take speedy steps to launch serious investigations, and immediately compensate and apologize to the victims and all those affected.
- The states supporting the SDF should apply pressure on these forces in order to compel them to cease all of their violations in all the areas and towns under their control.
- The states supporting the SDF should cease all forms of support until the SDF commits itself to complying with the rules of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. This is primarily the responsibility of the supporting states. Providing the SDF with weapons and support while knowing that the SDF violates the rules of international humanitarian law can be seen as a contribution to these violations.
- 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.
- Provide detailed maps of the locations where the SDF planted landmines, especially civilian sites or near residential communities.

The Armed Opposition/ Syrian National Army

- The Armed Opposition/ the 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.
- Pledge to cease any arbitrary arrests, and investigate incidents that have resulted in violations of international humanitarian law.
- Take punitive action against those who commit violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.
- Provide detailed maps of the locations where the Armed Opposition/ Syrian National Army planted landmines, especially civilian sites or near residential communities.

Humanitarian Organizations

- Develop urgent operational plans to secure decent shelter for internally displaced persons.
- Exert efforts in landmine clearance operations in parallel with relief operations whenever the opportunity arises.
- Provide protected facilities and vehicles, such as medical facilities, schools, and ambulances, with distinctive signs that can be distinguished from long distances.

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