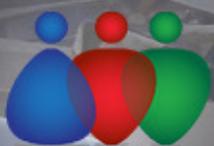


The Most Significant Human Rights Violations in Syria during 2015



The Syrian Network for Human Rights is an independent and non-governmental, non-profit human rights organization that investigates and documents all violations committed by all conflict parties involved in the Syrian conflict since 2011. The network, that does not adopt any ideology, was founded in June 2011 and aims to defend the human rights of the Syrian people. It also includes 27 researchers and human rights activists stationed in Syria and in other neighboring countries.

SNHR is committed to all standards and international conventions of Human Rights issued by the United Nations. It aims to ensure that victims' rights are not exploited and perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes.

SNHR issues periodic reports concerning the most notable daily violations, eight monthly statistical or specialized reports, annual reports, and reports concerning global human rights events. It also issues significant studies and documentaries on a regular basis in order to contribute to raising awareness in the Syrian community.

SNHR is considered to be one of the most distinguished and reliable sources of information and references for all the analytical and statistical studies issued by the United Nations.



sn4hr.org

Email info@sn4hr.org

facebook <https://www.facebook.com/snhr>

twitter <https://twitter.com/snhr>

google+ <https://plus.google.com/+Sn4hrOrg>

SNHR © 2015

Report Contents:

I. Report Methodology:	4
II. Executive Summary	5
III. Main Conflict Parties:	8
A. Violations Committed by Government Forces (Army, local militias, foreign Shiite militias)	8
B. Violations Committed by Russian Forces:	19
C. Violations Committed by Kurdish Self Management Forces:	20
D. Violations by Extremist Islamic Groups:	21
E. Violations Committed by Some Armed Opposition Groups:	23
F. Violations Committed by International Coalition Forces:	24
G. Violations by Unidentified Groups:	25
IV. Recommendations	26
Acknowledgment	26

I. Report Methodology:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) is an independent nongovernmental nonprofit human rights organization that was founded in 2011 to document the ongoing violations in Syria and publish periodic studies, researches, and reports while maintaining the highest levels of professionalism and objectivity as a first step towards exposing violations perpetrators, hold them accountable, and insure victims' rights.

It should be noted that the U.N. relied on SNHR's documentation, as its most prominent source, in all of its statistical and analytical reports concerning the victims of the Syrian conflict. Furthermore, SNHR is approved as a certified source by a wide range of Arabic and international news agencies and many international human rights organizations.

The founder and head of SNHR is Mr. Fadel Abdulghani, the network's team consists of 23 researchers and human rights activists.

SNHR relies in all of its reports and studies mainly on the investigations conducted by its members inside and outside Syria. These investigations are conducted through field-visits or interviews with survivors and eyewitnesses. All of the incidents listed in this report have been documented in extensive reports which were published on the network website in Arabic and English. In this report we selected the most prominent violations that were perpetrated in 2015.

The international humanitarian law and the customary international law in parallel with the international human rights law are all binding upon all the conflict parties.

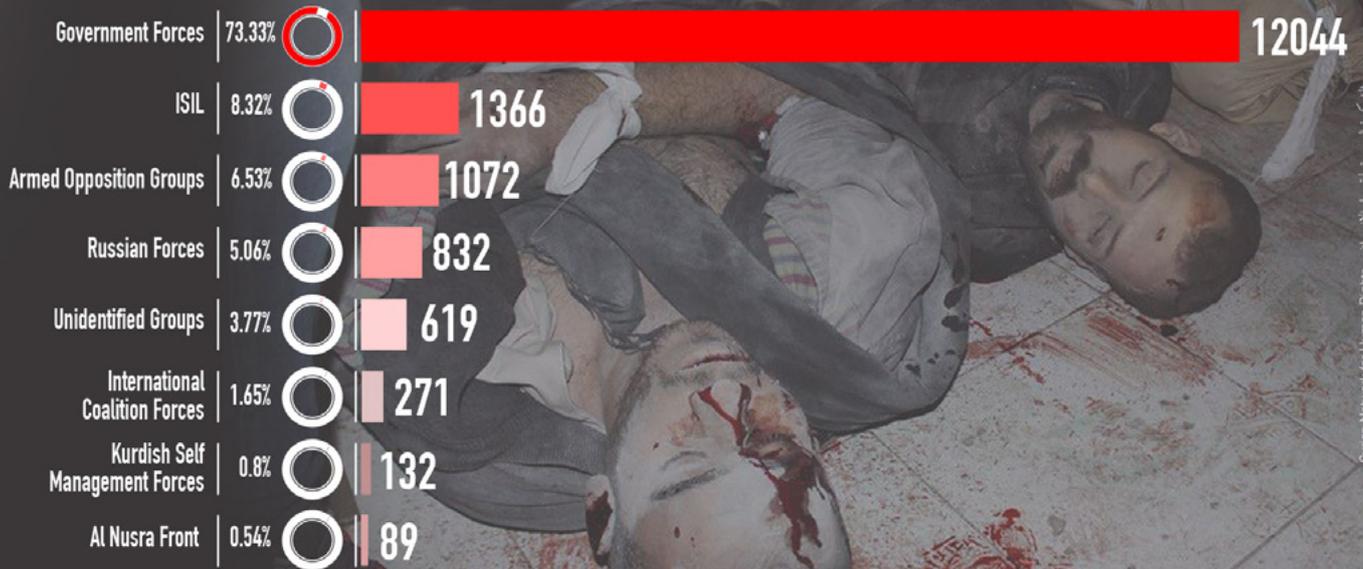
We emphasize that all of the statistics and incidents included in this study reflect minimally the gravity and scale of the ongoing violations that have been perpetrated in Syria since 2011.

II. Executive Summary

This report documents the most significant violations between 1 January 2015 and until 31 December 2015.

Toll of civilians killed in Syria

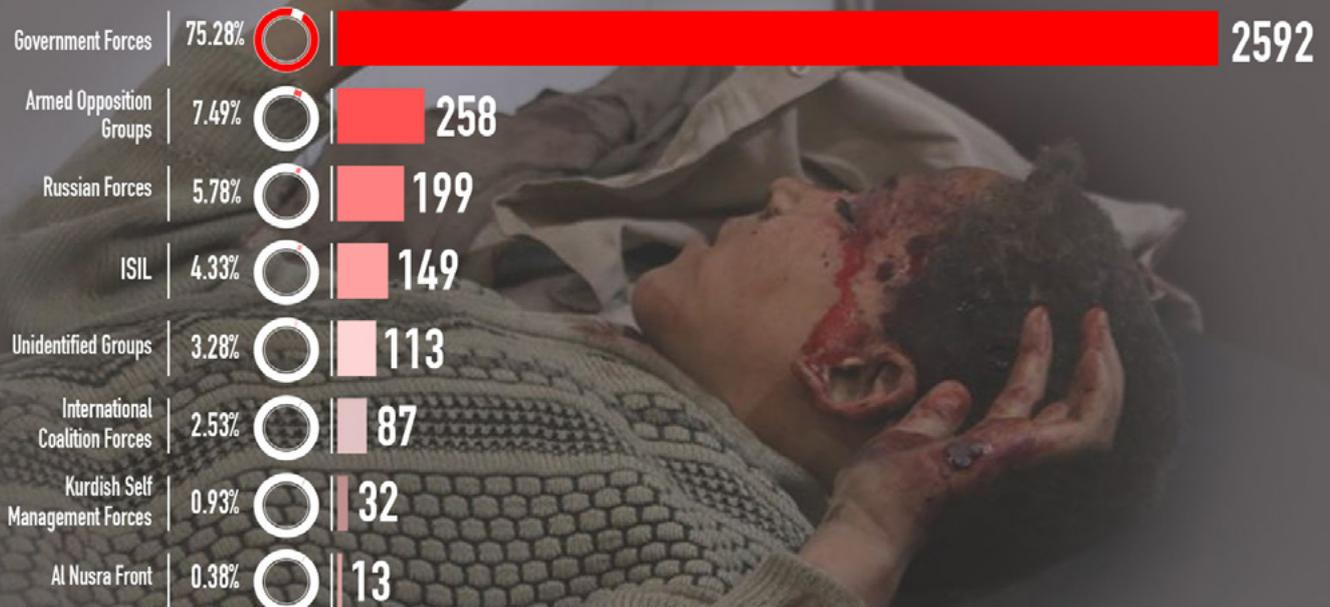
since 1 January 2015 till the end of December 2015



According to Syrian Network For Human Rights

Toll of children killed in Syria

since 1 January 2015 till the end of December 2015



According to Syrian Network For Human Rights

Toll of Women killed in Syria

since 1 January 2015 till the end of December 2015



According to Syrian Network For Human Rights

A. Extrajudicial killing:

SNHR documented the death of 21179 individuals who were killed by the follow

i. Government forces (army, security forces, local militias and foreign Shiite militias) killed 15748 individuals, detailed as follows:

- 12044 civilians, including 2592 children and 1957 women.
- 3704 armed opposition members

ii. Russian Forces:

Russian forces killed 849 individuals, detailed as follows:

- 832 civilians, including 199 children and 109 women
- 17 armed opposition members

iii. Kurdish Self-Management Forces:

KSM Forces killed 132 civilians including 32 children and 12 women

iv. Extremist Islamic Groups killed 2265 individuals, detailed as follows:

1. ISIL killed 2098 individuals, detailed as follows:

- 1366 civilians including 149 children and 188 women
- 732 armed opposition groups

2. Al Nusra Front killed 167 individuals, detailed as follows:

- 89 civilians including 13 children and 11 women
- 78 armed opposition groups

v. Armed Opposition groups killed 1121 individuals detailed as follows:

- 1072 civilians including 258 children and 181 women
- 49 armed opposition members during battles with each other

Toll of victims of death under torture in Syria

حصاد أ

since 1 January 2015 till the end of December 2015



vi. *International Coalition Forces* killed 277 individuals, detailed as follows:

- 271 civilians, including 87 children and 46 women
- 6 armed opposition members

vii. *Unidentified Groups* killed 787 individuals detailed as follows:

- 619 civilians, including 113 children and 111 women. Four individuals died under torture
- 168 armed opposition members

B. Arbitrary Arrests and Enforced Disappearances:

i. *Government Forces* arrested 6909 individuals, including 452 children and 643 women. Also, 1546 individuals were killed under torture.

ii. *Kurdish Self-Management Forces* arrested 846 individuals, including 42 children and 45 women. Also, 4 individuals were killed under torture.

iii. *Extremist Islamic Groups* arrested 2842 individuals, detailed as follows:

1. *ISIL* arrested 1956 individuals, including 245 children and 218 women. Also, not less than 10 individuals were killed under torture.

2. *Al Nusra Front* arrested 886 individuals, including 38 children and 17 women. Also, not less than 19 individuals were killed under torture.

iv. *Armed Opposition Groups* arrested 214 individuals, including 11 children and 9 women. Also, not less than 9 individuals were killed under torture.

v. *Unidentified Groups*: arbitrary arrested more than 1142 individuals including 287 children and 347 women.

C. Illicit Attacks:

i. The use of chemical weapons: We recorded the use of chemical weapons 66 times in 2015, detailed as follows according to the main conflict parties:

- a. Government forces used chemical weapons 64 times during 2015
- b. ISIL used chemical weapons twice during 2015

ii. Cluster Munitions: We recorded the use of cluster munitions 18 times by government forces.

III. Main Conflict Parties:



A. Violations Committed by Government Forces (Army, local militias, foreign Shiite militias)

1. Violations against civilians and persons Hors de combat:

1.1. Massacres and extrajudicial killing:

Since 1 January 2015 until the moment of making this report, SNHR documented the killing of not less than 15748 individuals at the hands of government forces, detailed as follows:

- 12044 civilians including 2592 children and 1957 women.
- 3704 armed opposition members

The percentage of children and women victims is 38% which is an explicit indicator that government forces are deliberately targeting civilians by indiscriminate shelling and executions.

1. On 20 January 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on the livestock market in Al Khansaa town in Al Hassaka governorate that is under ISIL's control which killed 30 individuals including 3 children and a woman.

2. On 21 January 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Al Houla region in Homs suburbs which killed 14 individuals including 2 children and 2 women.

3. On 21 February 2015, SNHR documented the killing of 47 civilians including 10 children and 5 women in Harandteen town in Aleppo. The victims were shot by a death squad at the hands of government forces and foreign militias after they were kidnapped from Raytan near-by town.

4. On 24 March 2015, government forces launched a rocket that targeted Al Hamadeyi neighborhood in Deir Al Zour which killed 7 civilians including 3 children.

5. On 26 March 2015, government forces launched two mortar missiles on Daraa Al Balad neighborhood that is under the control of armed opposition in Daraa which killed 27 individuals including 3 children and two women.

6. On 25 April 2015, government forces killed 27 detainees including a child. The victims were shot to death by a death squad inside a government detention centre that belonged to the military security in Jisr Al Shughour city in Idlib before it withdrew from it.

7. On 23 May 2015, government helicopters [dropped a barrel bomb on one of the residential buildings](#) in Al Hamadeyi neighborhood in Deir Al Zour city that is under ISIL's control which killed 18 civilians including 10 children and a woman. Nearly 25 others were injured.

8. On 11 June 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on Al Rastan city in Homs which killed 7 individuals from one family, including 3 children and 4 women.

9. On 1 July 2015, government warplanes launched an airstrike on Saida town in Daraa which killed 15 individuals including a child.

10. On 8 July 2015, government warplanes dropped a barrel bomb on residential buildings next to Abdulrahman Mosque in Karm Al Beik neighborhood that is under the control of armed opposition groups in Aleppo. 20 individuals were killed including 6 children and 2 women. A three story building was completely destroyed.



11. On 16 August 2015, government aviation launched 4 rockets on [two crowded markets in Douma in Damascus suburbs](#) which killed [115 individuals including](#) 11 children and 2 women.

12. On 21 October 2015, government military aviation launched several missiles on Hama suburbs on Um Al Khanadek town which killed 6 civilians including 4 women. Most of the victims were from one family.

1.2. Arbitrary Arrests and Unlawful Detention:

Raids, arrest, and forced-disappearance all have been policies of government forces. We documented no less than 6909 arrests including 452 children and 643 women.

In most of the cases, the detainees are referred to a court (whether it was a military court, a civil court, or the terrorism court) where charges are pressed without any grounds. Most of the confessions are obtained through torture and oppression while some of the detainees get released but only after paying costly bails. We documented 2912 releases during 2015 where most of the released detainees were ordinary citizens. Activists don't usually get released except in extremely rare cases.

In 2015, several security forces conducted the arrests without referring to the judicial courts. The detainees are imprisoned in special unmonitored prisons and are not treated as the Syrian or international laws state.

Detainees are placed in overcrowded rooms with no judicial supervision. Also, detainees are prohibited from contacting their families or lawyers.

Many detainees became automatically forcibly-disappeared as we gradually become unable to get any new information about them and their families disturbingly lose any contact with them.

Although Syria is not party to the agreements regarding enforced-disappearance, it is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which prohibits enforced-disappearance. By systematically practicing enforced-disappearance on a larger scale, the Syrian government has perpetrated serious violations that can be classified openly as crimes against humanity. In 2015 alone, more than 10,000 were forcibly-disappeared as the total number of recorded forcibly-disappeared persons has exceeded 75,000 since 2011.

In 2015, government forces conducted prisoner-swap deals with armed opposition groups and extremist Islamic factions in several regions like Hama suburbs, Daraa and Aleppo. In exchange for receiving the dead bodies of government forces and foreign militias' members, government forces released women and children who are related to armed opposition members. We recorded the release of 268 detainees including 113 women and 14 children during prisoner-swap deals.

On 6 February 2015, government forces arrested Ali Ahmad Diab, 33, from his residence in Damascus. He is

a soccer player in Al Weh-da team. His fate is still unknown for SNHR.



Amal Asfour, a Syrian-Palestinian female from Al Yarmouk Camp, and a member in the Palestinian

National Commission, was arrested on 5 July 2015 by government forces. She was taken to an unknown location then released on 15 July 2015.

Dr. Abdul Khalek Nasser Zaydane, from Damascus, a medical examiner, was arrested by the government



military security branch on 6 August 2015 while he was passing by one of the government checkpoints. Neither SNHR nor her family was able to identify his whereabouts up to this moment.

Khoulood Abdul Azeez Nasser, from Hilfaya city in Hama suburbs, 17, was arrested on 29 September 2015, was arrested by government forces from her residence in Halfaya city. She was taken to the Air Force Security Branch in Hama. Neither SNHR nor her family was able to identify her fate up to this moment.

Dr. Atef Malak from Al Sawaida city, 51, was arrested on 1 November 2015 by the government military security forces from his residence where he was taken the security branch in his city. His fate is still unknown to his family and SNHR.



Mohamad Saleh, from Al Mabouja town in Homs suburbs, 54, an independent political and humanitarian activist, and a former member in the Syrian Communist Association, was detained on 23 October



2015 when members from the Air-force security branch arrested him from his place of residence in Homs after they raided his house and confiscated his mobile. His fate is still unknown to SNHR and his family.

1.3 Torture inside Detention Centers:

Averagely, SNHR victims' documentation team records the death of 3 detainees under torture.

During 2015, SNHR recorded the death of 1546 individuals under torture at the hands of government forces, detailed as follows:

- 1419 Civilians were killed under torture including 7 children and 4 women. (The percentage of civilians killed under torture is 92 %)
- 127 armed opposition members were killed under torture

SNHR publishes a monthly report that documents the victims who are tortured to death and the most notable cases.

Amongst the total number of the torture victims, there were 659 individuals who were identified and documented through cross-referencing the victims' pictures with images from the leaked Caesar pictures in the "Photographed Holocaust":

- There were 546 civilians including a woman
- 113 armed opposition members

On 24 March 2015, SNHR documented the killing of child Mohamad Saleh Moussa from Al Yarmouk Camp in Damascus. The child was killed under torture after he was arrested by government forces.

On 11 May 2015, SNHR documented the killing of Jack Abdullah from Deir Al Zour. The victim was killed under torture after he was arrested by government forces.

On 20 October 2015, SNHR documented the killing of Mohamad Fakhri, 25, a soccer player in Al Nawae'r soccer club in Hama. He died under torture in Saydnaya Military Prison in Damascus suburbs after he was arrested by government forces on 6 November 2013 when he was passing by a government militia check-point in Hama city.

1.4 Sexual Violence:

Government forces have been sexually abusing women prisoners in a systematic and deliberate manner since 2011 as a punishment whether it was to force them to confess or give away information or even to retaliate against a member of her family. In many cases, women were sexually harassed while being searched inside detention centers. Also, raping during raids is a strategy used by government forces systematically. We documented many cases of mass raping.

Since the beginning of 2015, we recorded not less than 82 cases of enforced marriage for underage females. They were forced to marry members from the government forces and their parents were threatened in case they refused the marriage.

Mona Mohamad, from Hama city, born in 1995, was enforced to marry a member from the military intelligence branch in Hama on 12 September 2015 after he threatened to arrest her family and storm their house every day.

1.5 Violations of Children's Rights

Indiscriminate or deliberate shelling does not distinguish between a child, a man, or a woman. However, the considerably large number of children victims is a clear indicator that government forces are targeting residential areas. Also, it indicates the indiscriminateness and the randomness of the shelling, and the lack of proportionality in these attacks.

During 2015, government forces killed not less than 2,592 children.

7 children were tortured to death inside the Syrian government detention centers.

“Children of Syria... A Lost Dream” is an extensive study in which we published the violations against the children of Syria since March 2011.

On 31 March 2015, government warplanes launched a rocket on Idlib city which killed 13 children.

On 3 June 2015, government forces killed 8 children after it dropped 4 barrel bombs shelling on Tal Refa'at city in Aleppo.

On 26 September 2015, government forces killed 17 children with a surface-to-surface short range missile on a children's park in Al Waer neighborhood in Homs. SNHR issued an extensive and detailed report about the attack.

On 19 November 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb in a house in Al Skheikh Miskeen city in Daraa which killed 5 children.

2. Violations relating to the conduction of hostilities:

2.1. Unlawful attacks

a. Aerial and artillery shelling:

Government forces used barrel bomb, Scud missiles, and other indiscriminate weapons across Syria. 95% of these attacks were extremely indiscriminate that didn't distinguish between fighters and civilians. The remaining 5% targeted fighters and military centers. Most of the attacks didn't respect the principle of proportionality in attacks when the military center is not surrounded by non-military centers.

On 5 February 2015, government helicopters dropped 3 barrel bombs on Ba'eedeen roundabout in Al Halak Al Fawkani neighborhood in Aleppo which killed 16 civilians including 8 children and 5 women.

On 11 April 2015, government helicopters dropped [a barrel bomb on the vegetables market](#) in Al Ma'adi neighborhood in Aleppo which [killed 26 civilians including 6 children and a woman](#).

On 21 August 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on Idlib city that is under the control of armed opposition which killed a mother and her four children, who were displaced.

On 11 September 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel [bombs on a market in Busra Al Sham city](#) in Daraa which [killed 22 individuals](#) including a child and 6 women.

On 30 September 2015, government helicopters dropped 12 barrel bombs on Mo'adameyat Al Sham in Damascus suburbs which killed 3 individuals.



Al-Ma'adi Massacress Aleppo



Al-Ma'adi Massacres Aleppo

مجزرة المعادي - حلب

B. Snipers

When a sniper kills a victim, he accurately observes and identifies his victim through the telescope of his weapon. Therefore, sniping is similar to execution as the killer knows exactly the identity of the victim without caring if he was a child, an elder, a woman, or even a disabled and surely without knowing the religion of the victim.

In 2015, we recorded the killing of 219 civilians, including 14 children and 23 women, who were killed by government snipers.

On 21 January 2015, government forces sniped Mr. Ghabi Sham'oun next to the Assyrians church in Al Hassaka city.

On 23 February 2015, government forces sniped Mr. Zakaria Herra from Al Maleha city in Damascus suburbs while he was trying to leave the city from Al Wafdeen camp crossing point.

On 2 August 2015, government forces sniped Mrs. Montaha Ahmad Al Hajj Ali from Karm Al Beik neighborhood in Aleppo.

On 28 September 2015, Alaa Mer'ashli was killed by government sniper bullets while he was leaving Madaya city in Damascus suburbs. It is worth nothing that Alaa was a special-needs individual.

2.2. Protected persons and establishments

Government forces targeted hospitals, medical points, and pharmacies in addition to repeatedly targeting medics through direct killing, torture, kidnapping, or harassing. In 2015, government forces killed not less than 82 medics including 7 women. Furthermore, we documented the targeting of more than 139 hospitals and medical points. SNHR publishes a monthly report documenting violations against medical establishments and medical personnel.

During August 2015, SNHR recorded the killing of 18 medical personnel were killed at the hand of government forces, amongst which 8 were paramedics.



Mohamad Taha Al Lambadi, a forensic doctor

[Mohamad Taha Al Lambadi](#), a forensic doctor from Douma city in Damascus suburbs, one of the cadres in the Civil Defense team, 50, died on 19 November 2015 due to government warplane shelling with several missiles on Douma city in Damascus suburbs.

During July 2015, SNHR documented the damage in 13 medical facilities due to attacks perpetrated by government forces.

On 21 September 2015, government forces shelled [Al Khareeta makeshift hospital](#) in Al Khareeta town in western Deir Al Zour suburbs that is under ISIL's control [which killed 5 individuals](#). The hospital [went out of service](#) due to the government shelling.

On 6 December 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb next to [Al Radwan Makeshift hospital](#) in Jasem city that is under the control of armed opposition in Daraa suburbs which led to great destruction in the hospital's building and [causing it to go out of service](#).

2- Workers in religious fields and cultural properties:

Government forces purposed targeting worshipping places of mosques and churches, in addition of using them sometimes as headquarters of shelling surrounding areas. We recorded the targeting not less than 166 worshipping places by government forces during 2015. We publish a monthly report about targeting all vital facilities. During March alone, SNHR documented the damage of 18 mosques in different regions due to government attacks.

On 5 April 2015, government forces shelled [Al Ansar Mosque in Damascus suburbs](#) with tank and Gvozdika missiles. [The shelling greatly damaged the mosque](#).

On 22 October 2015, government warplanes launched an airstrike on [Oubayd Mosque](#) in Mesraba town that is under the control of armed opposition in Damascus suburbs which killed 7 individuals and caused great damage to the mosque's building so it [went out of service](#).

On 4 November 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on a [mosque in Al Rabea' town](#) in Lattakia suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition, which led to partial destruction in the mosque's building and its minaret, [thus causing it to go out of service](#).



Al-Rabi'a Mosque – Lattakia

3- Media Activists:

As in 2011, 2012, and 2013, 2014, the methodology of the Syrian government continued in targeting media activists and journalists. Violations against them vary, such as killing and arresting.

Government forces killed in 2015, 57 media activists, including 9 who died under torture.

On 5 January 2015, media activist [Mohamad Najjar](#), also known as Kays Al Halapi, died due to wounds he sustained with a sniper bullet in his head that was shot by government forces in Al Mallah region in Aleppo while he was covering the news there.

Mohamad was from Maree' town in Aleppo suburbs and was a resident in Salah Al Deen neighborhood also in Aleppo.

On 9 June 2015, media activist Abdullah Al Kassem (nicknamed as Abu Baker), from Al Sanamen City in Daraa suburbs was killed due to fragment of a missile fired from government military aviation on Al Harak City in Daraa suburbs while he was covering the news in the area.

2.3. Use of Illegal Weapons:

1. Chemical Weapons:

During 2015, government forces used toxic gases as a weapon 64 times and therefore without a doubt, breached and violated UN Security Council resolutions: 2118, 2209, and 2235.

These chemical attack incidents killed 24 individuals, detailed as follows:

- 16 civilians, including 8 children and 3 women
- 8 armed opposition members

On 10 March 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb that was loaded with toxic gases on Al Shkeef region in Aleppo which caused 15 suffocation cases.

On 3 May 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb that was loaded with toxic gases on Ebleen town in Idlib which caused 12 suffocation cases.

On 8 July 2015, government forces targeted [Deir Al Zour city](#) with a rocket that was loaded with toxic gases which fell next to a residential building. Therefore, 5 civilians from one family suffocated till death, including a woman and 3 children.

2. Cluster Munitions:

According to SNHR documentation, Syrian government forces used cluster munitions not less than 18 times during 2015.

On 12 January 2015, government warplanes targeted the “Musalas” region in Al Halak neighborhood in Aleppo with a rocket that was loaded with cluster munitions which injured one of the residents.

On 13 March 2015, government forces, which were centered in Tafas city in Daraa, launched three rockets that were loaded with cluster munitions. The rockets fell near a mosque in the city therefore, 5 individuals were injured.

2.4. Siege:

Syrian government forces applied a besieging policy against opposition-controlled areas, such as Eastern Ghouta and Daraya in Damascus countryside. The continuing besiegement caused malnutrition and dehydration to some residents, in addition to spreading of many diseases caused by environmental pollution resulted of tailings piling and sewage networks damage. All of that killed not less than 166 individuals, including 88 children and 53 women.

On 11 January 2015, child Mohamad Nour Shab’anya was killed in Beit Sahem town in Damascus suburbs due to the siege that was imposed on the region.

On 23 April 2015, Mariam Moustafa Moukeir died in Al Mo’adamyia in Damascus suburbs due to the lack of food and medicine that was imposed on eastern Ghouta.



child Mohamad Nour Shab’anya was killed in Beit Sahem town in Damascus suburbs due to the siege that was imposed on the region.

Violations by fighting Shiite militias in Syria:

Indications about presence of Shiite rebels and factions fighting with the Syrian regime began in late 2011, when rebels arrested fighters from Mahdi Army affiliated to the Iraqi Shiite leader Moqtada Sadr, who many reports talked about his recruiting fighters and sending them to Syria, although his public denial until recent time. The most prominent turn point in the Shiite militias existence in Syria was in 2012 summer, when Abo alFadl alAbbas brigade showed up, and many fighting in Syria calls showed up, to protect the Shiite shrines in Syria in general and Sayyida Zaynanb shrine especially. This was accompanied with a sect. mobilizing propaganda adopted by various media mass, from daily newspapers to TV channels to social media.

The flow of Shiite fighters from various factions continued, to fight under Abo alFada alAbbas brigade umbrella. The public entrance of Lebanese Hezbollah in the conflict, in April 2013, in Al Qusayr and its neighborhood, was an important turning point in the regional Shiite fighting backing the regime. The following months witnessed another turning point in the Shiite factions existence in Syria, when factions affiliated to its original factions in Iraq began to show more explicitly, which means the publicity fighting to the side of the government forces for most Shiite political and military forces in Iraq and for the Iraqi government which works on easing this fighters flow, in addition to evidences indicate to its actual participating in the conflict.

While Iraqi and Lebanese fighters were the most percentage among the nationalities fighting in the side of government on a sect. base, existence and killing of various nationalities (Afghani, Pakistani, Yemeni, and even African nationalities) was documented.

Those militias conducted widespread violations in all the Syrian governorates, but in 2014 it was concentrated in Aleppo, which they went to after deciding alQusayr battle.

Aleppo countryside faced massacres against residents, and extra-judicial executions, in addition to many sexual violence operations, which portray crimes that rise to be crimes against humanity.

Conclusions:

Government forces committed various crimes from extra-judicial killings to sexual violence and torturing, and other crimes that rise to be crimes against humanity, because of its methodology and breadth together. They also committed war crimes by besieging, indiscriminate shelling, and destroying facilities and buildings. The Syrian government didn't only violate the Humanitarian International Law and the Customary Law; it also violated UN Security Council Resolutions, especially Resolution 2118 related of not reusing poison gases, Resolution 2139, and the former Resolution 2442 related of releasing detainees. All of that was without accounting, but with legitimacy through Russian and Chinese veto and Western silence.

B. Violations Committed by Russian Forces:

A. Extrajudicial Killings:

On 30 September 2015, Russian forces commenced air strikes on Syria and announced that it will target extremist Islamic groups (i.e. ISIL, An-Nusra Front, and Jund Al Aqsa group). However, their actions on the ground contradicted statements made Russian officials. It seems that these air strikes deliberately killed civilians and targeted regions that were never under the control of extremist Islamic groups. We documented 159 attacks by alleged Russian warplanes, detailed as follows:

- 117 attacks which targeted civilian targets
- 10 attacks which targeted military targets

32 attacks targeted civilian locations in regions under the control of extremist Islamic groups and therefore it is challenging to determine the shelling aftermath in these regions or even the military casualties regarding these groups.

These attacks resulted in the killing of 849 individuals detailed as follows:

- 832 civilians, including 199 children and 109 women.
- 17 armed opposition members (which is the bare minimum of what we were able to record due to the secrecy of armed opposition regarding their security issues)

On 30 September 2015, alleged Russian warplanes shelled Al Rastan city with rockets that killed 8 individuals, including 4 children and a woman. Not less than 20 individuals were injured.

On 2 October 2015, alleged Russian warplanes shelled the vegetables market in Al Bab city. We recorded the death of 21 civilians including 2 children and a woman. A number of individuals were injured as well; several shops and cars were burned.

On 13 October 2015, alleged Russian warplanes shelled [Hayyan town](#) with rockets which killed 7 civilians, including 5 children and a woman. [A mosque's building was damaged as well.](#)



Hayyan Massacrss- Aleppo

On 20 October 2015, alleged Russian warplanes launched two rockets on northern of [Sermeen city](#) with the difference of 15 minutes between the first and the second rocket. The attacks targeted the makeshift hospital in Sermeen and two schools which killed 13 civilians including a child, a civil defense member, a psychotherapist, and a police member. [The X-ray room was damaged](#) along with its equipment and the laboratory was damage as well. The schools were damaged as well.

On November 2015, alleged Russian warplanes launched several rockets on residential houses southeast of Al Soura town in Daraa which killed 6 individuals including 2 armed opposition members and 4 civilians, including 3 children. The shelling also [destroyed 3 houses completely.](#)

B. Displacement and Enforced Displacement:

After three months of the Russian military airstrikes, not less than 1.2 million Syrians have been displaced; amongst which quarter of a million residents were displaced from Idlib only since it is the most affected governorate.

In November 2015, we documented the displacement of not less than 20 thousand individuals from Maheen and Houwareen towns in Homs suburbs due to the violent Russian shelling after ISIL gained control over it.

Conclusions:

Russian forces violated UN Security Council resolution 2139 through its indiscriminate and deliberate shelling thus committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. Russian forces should abide by the International Humanitarian Law, and therefore responsible for these violations since the beginning of the attacks. Russia must bear the consequences of all these violations, and avoid its recurrence.

C. Violations Committed by Kurdish Self Management Forces:

A. Extrajudicial Killing:

Kurdish forces joined other conflict parties in Syria when YPG forces, (the armed wing of the PYD party), established the Kurdish Self-Management Forces which was announced in January 2014 and seized control over some regions in north and east of Syria. The PYD party constitutes the main core of the movement that was called later on the “Kurdish Self-Management Forces”.

During 2015, SNHR documented the death of 132 civilians at the hands of Kurdish Self Management Forces, including 32 children and 12 women; amongst which, 24 individuals who were killed by KSM sniper bullets, including a woman and 3 children.

On 1 August 2015, KSM (Kurdish Self Management Forces) gathered the residents of Sareen town in Aleppo suburbs in one of the town’s squares after it gained control over it from ISIL. The KSM forces shot at the residents which killed 8 individuals including 3 children and 3 women.

On 14 October 2015, KSM forces killed Mr. Moustafa Al Shatwi from Al Rahyat town in Raqqa while he was going back to his town. The KSM forces shot him while he was passing by their checkpoint.

B. Arbitrary Arrests and Enforced Disappearances:

Arresting policy used by YPG and PYD Kurdish forces concentrate on arresting civilians in aim of conscription mainly, in addition to the activists who belong to political parties opposing them. Arrested people by Kurdish forces, according to SNHR documentation, are about 846 people, including 42 children and 45 women, where many of them faced very bad and compelling arresting and torturing conditions, where four people were killed by until the moment. Also, 4 individuals were killed under torture.

KSM forces released 359 individuals, but we recorded the enforced disappearance of not less than 317 individuals.

[Child Nayrouz Houssien Houssien](#), 17, from Efreeen city in Aleppo, was arrested by KSM (Kurdish Self Management) forces on 14 January 2015 by KSM forces from her residence. The aim behind her arrest was to forcibly recruit her into their party.

[Atallah Merie Al Mouhaysen](#), 30, from Tal Abyad in Al Raqqa city and a member in the Youth Caucus of Tal Abyad, was arrested by the KSM forces on 1 October 2015 at the Bawaba border region in Tal Abyad. His fate is still unknown to his family and SNHR.

[Media activist Kulal Liani](#), from Rmaylan city in Al Hassaka governorate, was arrested on 29 November 2015 by Kurdish Self Management forces from his residence and he was taken to its headquarters in the city. His fate is still unknown for his family and SNHR.

D. Violations by Extremist Islamic Groups:

1. ISIL:

A. Extrajudicial Killings:

During 2015, SNHR documented the death of 2098 individuals who were killed by ISIL during executions, random shelling or torture, detailed as follows:

- 1366 civilians, including 149 children and 188 women.
- 732 armed opposition members.

Also, we recorded the death of 15 individuals who were killed by ISIL snipers, detailed as follows:

- 13 civilians, including 2 children and a woman
- 2 armed opposition members

On 30 March 2015, ISIL stormed Al Mabo'uja town in Hama and killed 43 civilians including 2 children and 11 women. ISIL members slaughtered or executed the victims by gun-shots.

On 22 May 2015, ISIL slaughtered 7 individuals in Al Masrab town in Deir Al Zour. They decapitated the victims then crucified them for three days. They charged the victims of belonging to government militias and supporting the regime with information.

On 8 September 2015, ISIL killed [Mohamad Al Dawood](#) from Al Breej town in Al Hassaka where he was shot to death. They accused him of mocking the Islamic religion.

B. Arresting and forcibly disappearing:

During 2015, SNHR recorded the arrest of not less than 1928 individuals; half of them are considered as enforced disappeared individuals. Amongst the total number of arrested individuals, there are 245 children and 218 women. Also, we recorded the release of 431 individuals.

On 18 January 2015, ISIL arrested [Iyad Rafee Al Sabekhan](#), 39, an activist in the medical field and an X-ray technician from Deir Al Zour then released him later.

On 15 October 2015, ISIL arrested media activist Othman Al Sultam from Al Koureya city in Deir Al Zour suburbs from his residents. His fate is still unknown for his family and SNHR.

C. Tightening on Civilians:

ISIL imposed on its civilian controlled areas differentiating rules and legislated punishments on their violating. After its full control of Al-Raqqa city and its countryside, ISIL published a statement on 20 January 2014, containing instructions that touch the lives of the people and their privacies, concerning their livings and moving in the city, even the clothes. This was not exclusive on ar-Raqqa, but it included all the areas controlled by the organization.

Women are forbidden of moving unless they wear specific clothes (loose gown, Hijab, face veil, and gloves). Women, also, are prohibited of moving without “Mahram”: her husband or those whom she can’t marry of. ISIL warned that any violation of the statement will result punishment.

D. Illicit Attacks:

- Use of Chemical Weapons:

SNHR documented the use of chemical weapons twice by ISIL during 2015. The attacks took place in Mare’e city in Aleppo suburbs on 21 August 2015 and on 1 September 2015 when the shelling affected 113 individuals. The injuries were restricted to skin and respiratory symptoms.

2-Al Nusra Front:

A. Extrajudicial Killings:

During 2015, we recorded the death of 167 individuals who were killed at the hands of Al Nusra front, detailed as follows:

- 89 civilians, including 13 children and 11 women.
- 76 armed opposition members.

Amongst the victims, there were 3 individuals who were killed by Al Nusra snipers.

On 10 June 2015, Al Nusra Front shot at the residents of Kalb Lawza that is next to Harem town in Idlib. The shooting happened after an argument between Al Nusra members and one of the residents about seizing his house. As a result, [25 individuals were killed including 2 children](#).

On 25 November 2015, Al Nusra Front members killed a woman, IbtisamSermini, after they shot her directly since she cursed them when they seized her house.

B. Arresting and Enforced Disappearance:

During 2015, Al Nusra front arrested not less than 872 individuals including 38 children and 17 women. Amongst the total number, there are 218 individuals who are considered as enforced disappearing individuals. However, we recorded 281 releases.

On 18 February 2015, Al Nusra Front members arrested [Kusay Ali Al Mulla](#), 41, a commander of an armed opposition group, from his residence in Ezmareen town in Idlib. On 22 February 2015, his family was informed with his death under torture in one of the detention centers.

[Mohamad Maher Karman](#) from Aleppo city, 51, a political consultant for the Rebel Council of Aleppo, was arrested on 8 November 2015 by ISIL members from Al Kallasa neighborhood in Aleppo. His fate is still unknown for his family and SNHR.

Conclusions:

Extremist organizations violated many basic human rights, such as the right of live. It, also, committed many violations such as torturing and forcibly disappearing, which all rise to be crimes against humanity, in addition to many war crimes such as indiscriminate shelling operations, displacing, looting, kidnapping, and torturing.

E. Violations Committed by Some Armed Opposition Groups:

A- Extra-judicial killing:

Many armed opposition factions committed many violations, represented by indiscriminate shelling by mortars on the government forces areas, which killed many civilians, mainly in Damascus and Aleppo. In 2015, we documented the killing of not less than 1121 individuals, distributed as follows:

- 1072 civilians, including 258 children and 181 women.
- 49 armed opposition members during clashes between each other.

Amongst the victims, we recorded the killing of 12 civilians who were killed by snipers, including 4 women and 2 children.

On 23 March 2015, artillery forces stationed in a region under the control of armed opposition shelled several mortar missiles on Al Jamelye neighborhood in Aleppo which killed 17 civilians including 5 children and two women. Nearly 40 others were injured.

On 6 April 2015, armed opposition artillery forces launched rocket-propelled grenades, from regions under its control that fell next to Imam Ismaeil Mosque in Al Selmeya city in Hama. Six civilians were killed including 2 children and more than 18 others were injured.

On 16 June 2015, armed opposition launched a Katyousha rocket on Arnous Square in Damascus which killed 11 civilians including a child and 3 women.

On 11 September 2015, two mortar missiles fell on [Al Douwa'leaa region in Damascus](#). The missiles came from a region that is under the control of Al Islam Army, an armed opposition group. As a result, 8 individuals were killed; including 2 women and not less than 20 others were injured.

On 10 November 2015, a Grad missile fell on Sbiro region in Lattakia. It came from a region that is under the control of Ahrar Al Sham brigade, an armed opposition group. As a result, 20 individuals were killed, including a child and 6 women. [Nearly 50 individuals were injured as well and 14 cars were damaged.](#)

B- Arresting and Enforced Disappearances:

During 2015, we documented the arrest of not less than 214 individuals, including 11 children and 9 women, by armed opposition groups. 54 among them were released. The number of enforced-disappeared individuals reached more than 61.

SNHR documented not less than 9 individuals who were killed under torture by armed opposition groups.

On 15 January 2015, members of an armed opposition group arrested doctor Salem Abu Al Nasser, 49, dentist, from his residence in Al SHa'ar neighborhood in Aleppo.

Child Ameen Ma'youf Al Jasem, from Dghaylib town in Raqqa suburbs, 16 years old, was arrested on 27 August 2015 by "Raqqa Rebels Brigade", an armed opposition group, from his residence in Dghaylib town. Neither SNHR nor his family was able to identify his whereabouts up to this moment.

Conclusions:

Previous incidents and other documented committing of many factions violations rise to be war crimes, through killings by indiscriminate undifferentiating shelling operations. Some opposition factions committed torturing on detainees, and some armed factions committed wide looting and stealing operations in variant areas.

F. Violations Committed by International Coalition Forces:

International coalition forces launched its military campaign against ISIL on 23 September 2014, and launched many raids against Al-Raqqa, Deir Al-Zour, and Idlib governorates.

In 2015, SNHR was able to document the death of 277 individuals detailed as follows:

- 271 civilians, including 87 children and 46 women.

On 1 May 2015, international coalition forces shelled the residential houses in Beir Mahali town in Aleppo with guided missiles which killed 64 civilians including 31 children and 19 women. The incident was documented in the following [repor](#).

On 7 June 2015, International Coalition aviation bombarded a number of residential neighborhoods in Dali Hasan town in Aleppo with thermal rockets killing 8 civilians, amongst 6 children and a woman.

On 11 June 2015, International Coalition warplanes shelled Sulouk town in Raqqa suburbs killing 7 civilians, including 3 children and 2 women.

On 28 July 2015, the International Coalition forces shelled a vehicle that belonged to An-Nusra front in Kafr Hind town in Slqeen northern Idlib with two rockets. One the rockets targeted the vehicle while the other targeted a place next to commercial shops (where the targeted vehicle was moving). 10 civilians died, including 6 children.

Conclusions:

The International Coalition's indiscriminate bombardment is considered a clear violation of the International Humanitarian Law, and these indiscriminate killings amount to war crimes.

G. Violations by Unidentified Groups:

SNHR documentation of 2015 victims includes many categories, such as: drowning victims in asylum-seeking boats, victims of bombardment, where SNHR was not able to confirm the identity of its perpetrators, and victims killed, or abducted by unknown armed groups for SNHR.

In this category, SNHR documented 787 victims at least, distributed as follows:

- 619 civilians, including 113 children and 111 women.
- 168 opposition fighters

On 23 June 2015, a car bomb killed 18 individuals, including 2 children and 2 women, next to Baydar Sultani mosque in Al Tal City in Damascus suburbs. Up to the moment of preparing this report, SNHR was not able to verify the identity of the perpetrators.

On 21 November 2015 we recorded the death of 5 individuals from one family including two children next to [Harjale town in northern Aleppo](#) suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. The victims died while they were trying to pass from the Turkish to the Syrian side. They died to a land mine that was detonated and we have not been able to identify the group who is [responsible for planting the mine](#).

This year was distinguished in the increase of widespread arrest campaigns in unstable regions that are not controlled by any of the conflict parties. The aims behind these arrests were either sectarian grudges or financial blackmail. Therefore, gangs or local armed militias that do not belong to any party emerged and started to arrest or kill residents in these regions. In 2015, we recorded not less than 1142 arbitrary arrest cases, including 287 children and 347 women by unidentified groups.

1. Touhama Mansour Al A'raj, a female, from Al Waer neighborhood in Homs, 31, was abducted on 20 November 2015 by unidentified groups. Her fate is still unknown to her family and SNHR.

2. Child [Roaa Faysal Mounayzel](#), Syrian –Palestinian from Al Mazrbeb in Daraa, 13 years old, was kidnapped by unknown individuals on 27 October 2015. She was released the next day.

IV. Recommendations

To the United Nations:

Since SNHR is a member in the ICRtoP, it demands that the United Nations and the Security Council to implement the principle of “protecting civilians” (ICRtoP) / (R2P), adopted by the General Assembly in 2005. Syrian people should be protected from all perpetrators, firstly the Syrian government, then extremist Islamic groups.

To the UN Security Council:

Applying its Resolutions it published about Syria, including Geneva 1, because conserving safety and civil peace in Syria are its own responsibility.

The UN Security Council must take further action as a year has passed since the adoption of resolution No. 2139 without the Assad regime showing the least commitment to halting indiscriminate shelling, which has caused destruction and daily killings. It must put pressure on the Assad regime and its allies to stop supplying it with arms and military experts after its proven involvement in crimes against humanity and war crimes. It also must pass a resolution to condemn the sides that supply it with weapons. The Syrian file must be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those involved in war crimes and violations must be held accountable. The UN Security Council must establish peace and security and protect Syrian civilians and their heritage from looting, destruction and vandalism. It must expand the sanctions to include all pillars of the Assad and the Iranian regimes as they are directly involved war crimes and crimes against humanity.

To the Nations of the World:

- Given the divisions at the UN Security Council, measures must be made at the national and regional level to build coalitions to aid the Syrian people through protecting it from the daily killings, lifting the siege, and stepping up the relief aid.
- Pressure must be put on the UN Security Council to refer the Syria file to the International Criminal Court.
- It must seek to achieve justice and accountability in Syria through the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and the use of the principle of universal jurisdiction.

Acknowledgment

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciations go to the victims’ families, eyewitnesses, and local activists whose testimonies contributed majorly to this report. Our most profound consolations go out to the victims’ families and friends.