

On the Universal Children's Day: No less than 26,446 Children Have been Killed in Syria since March 2011

Children of Syria... The Glaring Letdown

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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



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I. Introduction

Syria is the world's leading country with respect to a range of violations against children, as the Syrian regime has been the party who is primarily responsible for these violations and by a huge margin in comparison to the rest of the parties to the conflict, even though the Syrian government had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), where the Syrian Arab Republic is bound to follow the tens of obligations in accordance with the CRC, as well as the protocols that the Syrian government had also ratified. However, not only has the Syrian Arab Republic failed to uphold these obligations, but the government itself is the one who is perpetrating crimes against humanity and war crimes in a systematic manner against the children of Syria, through a wide range of violations, rather than a single violations, that include extrajudicial killing, torture, enforced-disappearance, arbitrary arrest, and the use of prohibited weapons against children-populated and resided areas, as well as through the deliberate targeting of hundreds of schools and kindergartens among other cumulative, ongoing crimes since 2011. Certainly, this behavior is no longer strange for the Syrian regime at this point, but we shouldn't forget the 192 states that ratified the CRC -most of the world's countries that is- and are bound by the treaty, as they should ensure that other parties to the treaty are not to commit violations – meaning Syria in this context. These states bear a responsibility to take actual, immediate steps to deter the Syrian regime from its unlimited violations to the CRC and ensure its compliance.



Moreover, the Security Council needs to play a role in this context in light of the ongoing breaches by the Syrian government to the international standards, including its obligations in accordance with the CRC, the international humanitarian law, and the international human rights law, as the Security Council needs to take speedy steps to protect the children of Syria and impose an arms embargo on Syria. The name “Security Council” has become a laughing matter in the eyes of the Syrian people, after Russia had used the veto 11 times, while the other members stood idly, and helplessly, by watching the Syrian catastrophe, as the implementation of the international law and the ratified treaties have utterly fallen apart.

The children have fallen victim to the increasing violations by the parties to the conflict in Syria, as Syrian regime forces resorted at first to arresting and torturing children, before moving to the deliberately targeting children in their places of residence, their schools, and their parks, not to mention the siege imposed by Syrian regime forces that qualify as a form of collective punishment against an entire society, including children. The Syrian regime has indirectly killed a large number of children who starved to death and died of disease by barring the passage of food and medical supplies. Also, Syrian regime forces, through its frequent and repeated use of chemical weapons, have suffocated tens of children to death, probably in front of their families, in addition to the hundreds of children who were killed and injured by the cluster remnants as they exploded or when they were playing with them.

These violations have majorly escalated after the Russian intervention started on September 30, 2015, as Russian forces used more deadly weapons that claimed the lives of thousands of children, and bombed schools and educational facilities in a heavy, focused manner. The goal was to submit the people into accepting the legitimacy of the existing Syrian regime. Also, the Syrian-Russian alliance attacks have displaced tens of thousands of children in the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib, Homs, Deir Ez-Zour, Raqqa, and Damascus suburbs.

Undoubtedly, the other parties have been responsible for committing violations against children that constituted violations to the international humanitarian law. For example, Kurdish Self-Management forces trump all other parties in terms of recruiting children in Syria by the way of arrests and abductions that aimed mostly to force children to take part in military activities. We also recorded attacks by Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) on the areas they aim to seize control of that resulted in killing children especially in the governorates of Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zour.



On the other hand, ISIS committed violations of another kind, such as trafficking and selling children, as well as rape by the way of forced marriage. Also, ISIS was responsible for killing hundreds of children in indiscriminate attacks. In addition, we recorded tens of arrests and enforced-disappearances that involved children in ISIS's areas of control. Additionally, ISIS expanded in recruiting and using children in combat operations, while we also recorded ISIS using children as human shields.

International coalition forces have killed hundreds of children in airstrikes that didn't distinguish, in most of the cases, between civilians and armed fighters. Also, international coalition's attacks, which supported the Kurdish Self-Management forces' advancement on the ground, have resulted in displacing tens of thousands of children in the governorates of Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zour.

Aside from these violations, children of Syrian have suffered from cumulative ramifications that resulted from the daily bombing and destruction, that damaged nearly 1,378 schools and kindergartens, putting more than 3.2 million Syrian children out of school. Additionally, the health sector was affected as well, as the vaccination rates have dropped, and wide parts of the infrastructure have been destroyed, resulting in the spread of hepatitis due to people resorting to drinking water from wells. Many neighborhoods have been destroyed almost completely, and the Syrian family was forced to displace, whether inside Syria or abroad, as a new form of suffering had surfaced with 60% of all refugee children denied education and horribly exploited as labors. We also recorded a number of cases of sexual violence against children, inside Syria and abroad, where numbers of child marriage cases have alarmingly increased. Furthermore, the UNHRC numbers suggest that 230,000 children at least have been born in refugee camps. Many of those children weren't able to acquire identification papers, as the huge challenges of fighting the phenomenon of deprivation of nationality are significantly rising.

Certainly, all of the aforementioned has its psychological toll the ramification of which are difficult to predict in the medium and long terms. We have been talking to a wide range of Syrian doctors in the neighboring countries since 2012. Those doctors are saying that a large percentage of children suffer from mental problems that manifest themselves in acute stress reactions, depression, and even schizophrenia in some cases. All of this reflects on the educational progress and social integration of these children, and leads to other problems such as nightmares and urinary incontinence. Most of the Syrian children can't find someone to diagnose them let alone treat them.



The UN Secretary General's report on children and armed conflict, which was published on August 24, 2017, didn't accurately reflect the catastrophic reality of Syria. SNHR released a [report](#) shedding light on this point in detail.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, says:

“The Syrian regime didn't uphold its responsibilities with respect to the UNCRC, as the regime violated those rights heavily and ceaselessly. The 192 states that ratified the Convention, on the other hand, have failed to take action to deter the Syrian regime. All of us need to come together to stop a regime that perpetrated crimes against humanity against children from escaping justice, and to contribute seriously and quickly to holding those who were responsible for this accountable, for there is no justice without accountability”

Methodology

This report sheds light on the violations by the parties to the conflict in Syria against children between March 2011 and November 20, 2017 that SNHR team was able to document. The report also outlines the most notable of these violations.

The report draws upon the ongoing monitoring of news and incidents by SNHR team through an extensive network of relations with various sources that have been built over the course of our work in the past years. When we receive information, or hear some news about a violation via the internet or media outlets, we work on following-up on this news and try to verify and collect evidences and data. In some cases, the researcher is able to visit the incident location at the soonest. However, this is a rarity in light of the incredibly high security risks, and given the frequency of daily incidents and the human and material resources. Therefore, the possibility to access evidences vary from one case to another, and, hence, the degree of its classification. Usually, what we do, at SNHR, in such cases is relying on accounts from survivors who experienced the violation firsthand, where we try to access those directly, and, to a second degree, who saw or filmed the violation.

All of the attacks included in this report and were perpetrated by the parties to the conflict in Syria have targeted civilian areas. We didn't document any military presence or weapon warehouses during or even before these attacks. Also, the attacking forces didn't alert the civilians prior to the attack as the international humanitarian law requires.



SNHR has analyzed the videos and pictures that were posted online or were sent to SNHR team by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media. Some of these videos show dead and wounded children – some of them died under the rubble, while other videos show children who starved to death or died of diseases in Eastern Ghouta.

II. Toll of Children Victims and Detainees

Extrajudicial killing

No less than 26,446 children were killed at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syria from March 2011 until November 20, 2017. distributed as follows:

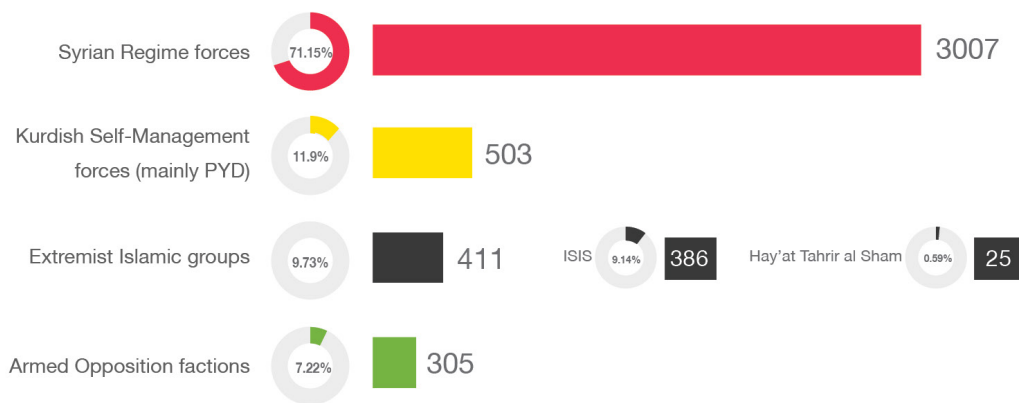


According to SNHR documentation



Arbitrary arrest and enforced-disappearance

No less than 4.226 children are still under arbitrary arrest or have been forcibly-disappeared at the hands of the main parties to the conflict in Syria from March 2011 until November 20, 2017



According to SNHR documentation

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III. Details

1- Syrian regime forces

A. Extrajudicial killing

Between March 2011 and November 20, 2017, Syrian regime forces have killed no less than 21,631 children, recorded at SNHR by name, pictures and videos, and date and place of death in indiscriminate bombardment attacks by missiles, artillery, cluster bombs, poison gases, and barrel bombs, in addition to slaughters with knives in a number of massacres that exhibited an ethnic-cleansing nature: in Homs, Banyas, Jdeidat al Fadel and al Qalamoun in Damascus suburbs, northern suburbs of Hama, and suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

Tuesday, April 25, 2017, around 23:30, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the [residential houses](#) in the middle of Talbisa city, northern suburbs of Homs governorate, which resulted in the killing of five civilians, including four siblings (children). The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, May 10, 2017, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped a number of barrel bombs on Smouma village, administratively a part of Maskana county, in eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of 14 civilians, including 10 children and two women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Tuesday, evening, June 27, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a shell at a house in northern al Harra city, northwestern suburbs of Daraa governorate, which resulted in the killing of six civilians from the same family, including four children and one woman. The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, July 19, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Ayyash village, western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 15 civilians, mostly from the same family, including 10 children and three women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Thursday, September 28, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes (Su-24) fired a number of missiles at Mazra'at al Tes'a, [Sahl al Rouj area](#), western suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of 12 civilians (six children, two fetuses, and four women), while nine others were wounded. The area was under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

Friday, November 17, 2017, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a number of shells at the residential buildings in Douma city, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, which resulted in the killing of five civilians at once, including three children and their mother. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

B. Arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

SNHR has documented that no less than 12,007 children have experienced arrest since March 2011, including 3,007 who are still under arrest at Syrian regime detention centers, as illustrated in the chart above. Syrian authorities deny detaining children despite accounts from families and survivors who confirmed to us that Syrian regime forces were the ones who carried out the arrest and arrest. Most of the recorded arrest cases qualify as enforced-disappearance cases.

Syrian regime forces arrest children for a range of reasons which sometimes is related to their involvement with the popular uprising for freedom, whether directly or via social media, or in the media and relief aspects. Also, Syrian regime forces arrest children to apply pressure on their fathers to surrender themselves. In 2017, for example, we recorded a number of incidents where the Syrian regime used children as hostages to ensure the safety of their military officers who were captured by armed opposition factions during military operations, or to spread panic and fear among the community by using children in prisoner exchange deals and pressure the local community in the areas that are not controlled by Syrian regime forces into agreeing to negotiate.



Thursday, August 17, 2017, we recorded that Syrian regime forces' Military Security arrested no less than 29 children, including infants, from Deir Ez-Zour city residents who were displaced and living in Germana area, Damascus city, in retaliation against Osoud al Sharqiya, an armed opposition faction, who shot down a warplane for the Syrian regime and arrested its pilot (Ali al Helou) in Eastern Syrian Badiya on Tuesday, August 8, 2017.

Tuesday, September 19, 2017, Syrian regime forces carried out a raid and arrest campaign in al Wa'er and al Isnhaa'at neighborhoods in Homs city. We documented the arrest of 41 individuals, including 19 children, who were taken to the Military Security branch in Homs city. Their fate is still unknown to SNHR.

We can confirm that no less than 99% of arrests by Syrian regime forces are made without an arrest warrant, and without revealing the charges against the child to their family or their whereabouts. Also, the families are barred from hiring an attorney and visits are also prohibited. We recorded several cases where a whole -close- family is arrested as a way to pressure the extended family or the child's parents.

Child Mohammad Adib Fayyad, from al Ashara city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, one-year-old. On Thursday, August 17, 2017, he was arrested along with his family by Syrian regime forces' Military Security from Jaramana city, southeastern Damascus city. He was taken to an undisclosed place. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



Child Mohammad Adib Fayyad, one-year-old, he was arrested by Syrian regime forces on August 17, 2017

Female child [Batoul Hamad al Khabour](#), from al Ashara city, suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, two-year-old. On Thursday, August 17, 2017, she was arrested along with her family by Syrian regime forces' Military Security from Jaramana city, southeastern Damascus city. She was taken to an undisclosed place. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Child (M.H.), from al Insha'at neighborhood, Homs city, nine-month-old. On Tuesday, September 19, 2017, he was arrested by Syrian regime forces' Military Security along with his mother from his place of residence in Homs city. He was taken to the Military Security branch in the city. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



Mostly, children are subjected to the same methods of torture experienced by adult men. Torture against children is concentrated at checkpoints or near military centers as well as detention centers. Rates of torture against children increase noticeably when Syrian regime forces take over new areas, as Syrian regime forces use torture against children of wanted individuals as a mean of retaliation against their families. SNHR has documented that 162 children died due to torture at the Syrian regime forces detention centers between March 2011 and November 20, 2017. SNHR estimates that no less than 4,854 are being subjected to torture, brutal beating, and whipping as a mean of retaliation after Syrian regime forces take control of new areas.

Saturday, October 14, 2017, Syrian regime forces arrested one child from al Hayet village, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, in al Hayet village. On Monday, October 16, 2017, we received information that he died due to torture at a detention center.

C. Use of prohibited weapons (cluster munitions and chemical weapons)

Chemical weapons

SNHR documented that 186 children at least suffocated to death as a result of 207 chemical attacks since it was first used on December 23, 2012.

Monday, December 12, 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces no less than eight missiles loaded with poison gases. These missiles targeted five villages in eastern suburbs of Hama governorate, which were under the control of ISIS at the time of the attack. These villages are: Eqerbat, Hamadi Omar, al Qastal, al Slaliya, and Jrouh. The bombing resulted in the killing of 35 civilians, including 16 children and six women, while no less than 100 others were injured. The symptoms exhibited include heavy breathing, red eyes, miosis, vomiting, and foaming. Most of the village residents hid in shelters and bunkers, which raised the toll of victims and injured, as gas is heavier and more concentrated in lower levels.

Tuesday, April 4, 2017, around 06:49, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes (Su-22) fired four missiles. One of the missiles was loaded with a poison gas – believed to be a nerve agent. The missile landed in al Shamali neighborhood in Khan Sheikhoun city. SNHR was able to document the death of 91 civilians who suffocated to death, including 32 children and 23 women (adult female). All of the victims suffocated to death after inhaling poison gases. We released an [extensive report](#) that documented the details of Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack



Cluster munitions

SNHR documented the killing of 209 children in attacks in which Syrian regime used cluster munitions or in explosions of cluster remnants. The number of attacks recorded from the first documented use of cluster munitions in July 2012 until November 20, 2017 is approximately 239 attacks.

Thursday, August 15, 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of RBK-500 [missiles](#) loaded with ShOAB-0.5 cluster submunitions that targeted the Garage yard in al Mayadeen city, Deir Ez-Zour suburbs. The attack resulted in the killing of 25 civilians, including nine children and three women.

D. Siege

Syrian regime forces continue to hinder the passage of food and medical supplies to various areas in Eastern Ghouta in Damascus suburbs, and northern suburbs of Homs. In light of the siege, cases of severe acute malnutrition, spread of diseases and illnesses, and the number of children victims, particularly newly-born children, have increased and elevated. SNHR has documented that 289 children have died due to food and medication shortages in various besieged areas between March 2011 and November 20, 2017.

On October 22, 2017, [female infant Sahar Defda'](#) died due to food shortage and lack of medical care in Eastern Ghouta.

E. Deprivation of Education and Child Labor

Indiscriminate and deliberate shelling by Syrian regime forces targeted no less than 1,123 schools and 24 kindergartens – half of these facilities have been rendered out of commission, which was the main reason behind the families' reluctance to send their children to schools, in addition to displacement after buildings were destroyed, and the suffocating siege and severe poverty. In addition, shops and workplaces were destroyed, while some families suffered the loss of their providers, which forced their children into labor, as many of those children assumed the role of the family's provider. Initial estimations suggest that there are 3.2 million out-of-school children in Syria.

Thursday, November 24, 2016, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces fired a [number of missiles](#) at the Martyr [Bashir Abdul Jawad School](#) in Hamouriya city, [Eastern Ghouta](#), Damascus suburbs governorate. [Seven children](#) were wounded, while the school building and its cladding materials were [heavily destroyed](#), as it was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.





Damages at the Martyr Bashir Abdul Jawad School in the aftermath of an airstrike by Syrian regime forces warplanes in Hamouriya, Damascus suburbs – November 24, 2016

Friday, December 9, 2016, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped a barrel bomb near [Abdul Qader al Najjar School](#) in al Jalloum neighborhood, Aleppo city, which resulted in a massacre. In addition, the school fence was partially destroyed, and its furniture and cladding materials were moderately damaged. The neighborhood is under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of this writing, while it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, December 28, 2016, Syrian regime forces warplanes fired [a missile](#) at a kindergarten on [the outskirts](#) of Douma city, Eastern Ghouta, Damascus suburbs governorate. The kindergarten building was [partially destroyed](#) and its furniture and [cladding materials](#) were heavily damaged. The neighborhood was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Friday, January 27, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at the [high school in Sa'lou village](#), eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The school building was destroyed almost completely and was rendered out of commission. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Saturday, April 15, 2017, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [Suliman al Jazzar](#) Intermediate School in [Kafr Laha city](#), northern suburbs of Homs governorate. The school building was [partially destroyed](#), and its cladding materials were [heavily damaged](#), as the school was [rendered out of commission](#). The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, October 29, 2017, around 11:00, Syrian regime forces artillery fired a number of shells at Naqabat al Mu'limeen Kindergarten in Kafr Batna town, Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate. The kindergarten building was moderately damaged, as the kindergarten was temporarily rendered out of commission. The town was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

F. Recruitment

Syrian regime forces aimed to recruit young age groups up to 14 years of age in their ranks. Syrian regime forces followed mainly a policy of financial solicitation and worked on exploiting the needs of the families to recruit their children.

Recently, Syrian regime forces' local militias have been heavily relying on recruiting children, younger than 18 years of age, in their ranks, in light of the severe shortage of manpower, as the age group 14-17 comprises roughly 10% of these militias.

In 2017, we documented a 40% increase in rates of children recruitments compared to their former rates last year. Our estimations suggest that Syrian regime forces recruit no less than 349 children in their local militias. These children are openly tossed onto the clashes frontlines in a different manner than past years when their duties were limited to logistics, digging, fortification, and protecting civilian objects.

Recruiting children is concentrated in poor villages and urban neighborhoods that are under the control of Syrian regime forces who work on solicit these areas with money, exploiting their poor conditions, in addition to children being recruited forcibly by Syrian regime forces after they are arrested in the areas that are within a close proximity to battlefronts, which was the case in Deir Ez-Zour city and Eastern Ghouta areas in Damascus suburbs governorate.



[Ali Younes al Hussein](#), from Abu Hekfa village, suburbs of Homs governorate, 16-year-old. He was recruited in the ranks of Syrian regime forces. On Wednesday, July 12, 2017, he was killed in the battles with ISIS in Raqqa suburbs.

G. Sexual violence

We recorded no less than 516 cases of sexual violence against children by Syrian regime forces since March 2011. Forms of sexual violence varied from molesting during raids and inspection, to forced marriage, and verbal sexual harassment (Accusing them of having sex as well as sexual slurs) and physical sexual degradation (Forcing children to unclothe and touching them) during the time of the arrest or abduction, and, finally, the most severe form of sexual violence: rape.

Nonetheless, the actual magnitude of sexual violence crimes can't be accurately conceived in light of the subject's sensitive nature, and the prominent tendency to abstain from talking about in among the Syrian society.

2- Russian forces

A. Extrajudicial killing

SNHR has documented the killing of 1,529 children in attacks carried out by forces we believe were Russian between September 30, 2015, the day on which the Russian intervention started, and November 20, 2017.

Monday morning, January 30, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at [Jam'ieyat Rif al Muhandiseen](#) in Kafr Joun village, western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of seven civilians at once (six children and one woman). The village was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Children killed in an airstrike we believe was Russian on Kafr Joun village, Aleppo – January 30, 2017



Monday, February 27, 2017, around 03:40, [fixed-wing warplanes](#) we believe were Russian fired [two missiles](#) at three [residential buildings](#) to the west of [al Noun Gas Station](#) in the northern parts of [Ariha city](#), southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in the killing of 19 civilians, including [nine children](#) and four women, while nearly 20 others were wounded. The city was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

Wednesday night, August 2, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at al Tebni town, western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 15 civilians, including seven children and six women, while nearly 19 others were wounded. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Thursday, September 14, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at Khsham town, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 12 civilians (11 children and one woman) who were mostly from the same family - IDPs from al Bou'mr village in eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, October 11, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at al Boukamal city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 13 civilians from the same family, including seven children and five women. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

B. Use of prohibited weapons (cluster munitions)

Russian forces have escalated their use of cluster munitions since their intervention started in Syria. We recorded no less than 217 cluster attacks that resulted in the killing of 32 children.



Wednesday, June 28, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired two RBK-500 missiles loaded with PTAB-1M cluster submunitions in Dablan town, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 24 civilians, including nine children and five women. Additionally, about 50 others were wounded. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



A cover of a cluster container found in Dablan town, Deir Ez-Zour suburbs in the aftermath of a Russian airstrike – June 28, 2017

Friday, September 29, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a RBK-500 missile loaded with ShOAB-0.5 submunitions in [al Taman'a town](#), southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which resulted in [the killing](#) of two women and one child. The town was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

C. Targeting schools and kindergartens

We recorded that forces we believe were Russian have targeted no less than 144 schools between September 30, 2015, the day on which the Russian intervention started, and November 20, 2017.

Thursday, March 9, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at [Darat Ezza](#) al Sharqiya School in Darat Ezza city, [western suburbs of Aleppo](#) governorate, which resulted in a massacre. Additionally, the school building was heavily destroyed as well as its fence, and its furniture and cladding materials were [heavily damaged](#). The city was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Wednesday, August 2, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at al Ekeisat Elementary School in al Ekeisat area in al Tebni town, western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The school building was heavily damaged, as the school was rendered out of commission. The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Friday, August 11, 2017, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a number of missiles at Alya bent al Mahdi School in Ma'adan city, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The school building was heavily damaged, as the school was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Wednesday, September 27, 2017, around 02:00, fixed-wing warplanes we believe were Russian fired a missile at [Batabo School](#) -known as [Bara'em al Thawra School](#)- in Batabo village, western suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The school building and its furniture were [heavily destroyed](#), as the school was [rendered out of commission](#). The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Destruction at Batabo School in the aftermath of an airstrike we believe was Russian in Batabo village, Aleppo – September 27, 2017



3- Self-Management forces / Kurdish-majority SDF

A. Extrajudicial killing

SNHR has documented the killing of no less than 127 children at the hands of the Self-Management forces.

Saturday, May 13, 2017, Kurdish-majority SDF artillery fired a number of shells at Mazra'at al Asadiya village, northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of 16 civilians who were mostly from the same family, including six children and four women. Additionally, about 10 others were wounded. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

B. Arrest and enforced-disappearance

SNHR records show that no less than 503 children are still under arbitrary arrest or forcibly-disappeared inside the detention centers of the Kurdish Self-Management forces.

These forces adopt a policy of abduction and enforced-disappearance against children for the purpose of taking them to recruitment camps. We recorded tens of cases in 2017 where children were abducted from roads, schools, and public squares. Usually, these forces deny their responsibility for these occurrences, before those children are found in recruitment camps for the newly recruited, which are similar to maximum-security mass detention camps where families are barred from visiting their children in these camps even after these forces acknowledge the existence of these children at these camps.

We recorded in 2017 that Self-Management forces are relying more and more on recruiting children – especially in light of the growing scope of military operations and the new areas these forces seized in north and east Syria.

Child [Aldar Qrnou](#), from Amouda city, northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, 17-year-old, he was arrested by Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party) on Tuesday, July 25, 2017, as he was coming back from work, in Amouda city for conscription purposes. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



C. Recruitment

Children are a notable demographic in the fabric of the Kurdish Self-Management forces who adopt a policy of mandatory conscription that applies to anyone who lives in their areas of control. These forces dedicate their legislature, judicial, and executive authorities in the service of this objective, and promote the so-called duty of self-defense that makes it imperative for any social segments that are able to bear arms to join their ranks without distinguishing between children and adults or males and females. Also, Self-Management forces enforced extremely strict punishments on violators, and gave their members the authority to conscript children who refuse to join the camps.

Our estimations suggest that Kurdish Self-Management forces recruit 2,842 children in various areas of Aleppo, Hasaka, Deir Ez-Zour, and Raqqa governorates, were children engage in direct combat operations and also work on checkpoints. Campaigns for training children on using weapons have been heavily ongoing since 2012. Therefore, Kurdish Self-Management forces top all parties in committing this violation in Syria.

[Amadar Ma'mou](#), from Ifreen city, northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 2002. In July 2017, he was recruited in the ranks of Kurdish Self-Management forces without his family's knowledge. It should be noted that Amadar suffer from ischemia.

[Mohammad Khalil al Ibrahim](#), from Tal Abyad city, northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, 16-year-old. He was recruited in the ranks of Kurdish Self-Management forces. On August 16, 2017, he was killed in Raqqa city battles with ISIS.

4- Extremist Islamic groups

ISIS

A. Extrajudicial killing

ISIS continues to carry out attacks on cities and towns in Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zour governorates, as the group has seized vast areas. Also, ISIS has bombed armed opposition factions-held areas.

Indiscriminate shelling, clashes, and executions have resulted in the killing of no less than 711 children from the date the group was founded in April 2013 until November 20, 2017. We have those children recorded by name, picture, and date and place of death.



Friday, January 20, 2017, ISIS artillery fired a number of mortar shells on al Joura neighborhood, eastern Deir Ez-Zour city, which resulted in the killing of six civilians (five children and their father). The neighborhood was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the attack.

Thursday morning, May 18, 2017, ISIS fighters snuck to Aqareb al Safiya village to the east of al Salmiya city, eastern suburbs of Hama governorate and carried out slaughters using knives and opened fire indiscriminately on the village residents. The attack resulted in the killing of 45 civilians, including 15 children and four women. Aqareb al Safiya village was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the attack.

Thursday, October 12, 2017, a bomb car driven by an ISIS suicidal bomber blew in a gathering of civilians near [an inspection point](#) (checkpoint) for the Kurdish-majority SDF in Abu Fas village, southern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, which resulted in the killing of 24 civilians, including nine children and three women. The village was under the control of the Kurdish-majority SDF at the time of the attack.

B. Arrest, enforced-disappearance, and torture

Since ISIS was founded in 2013, the group have arrested no less than 386 children in their areas of control. Most of these children are from families who oppose the group's policies, or were arrested along with their families as they were trying to fled ISIS's areas of control towards areas under the control of other parties. Most of the arrest cases we recorded qualify as enforced-disappearance, as SNHR, as well as their families, don't have any information about many of them. Also, ISIS arrested children who violated the regulations enforced by the group such as being at the market in times of prayers or having haircuts that don't comply with the ones specified by the group.

Usually, detained children are whipped during detention (beating on the chest or the back with a stick) as a punishment for violating the regulations. Even though ISIS had lost large parts of its territories, we are still unable to reveal the fate of one missing person, which makes us, as well their families, fear for their fate.

Child Abdullah Saleh Hamad, from Abu Hamam town, suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, 11-year-old. On Wednesday, April 19, 2017, he was arrested by ISIS from the village square and was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR.



C. Recruitment

ISIS was one of the groups that recruited children used them in direct and indirect military tasks, such as guarding, cooking, cleaning weapons and others. The group worked on promoting the idea of bearing arms among children as part of campaigns that aimed to train them, where ISIS opened a number of camps to train children on using weapons and other combat acts, and called them “Cubs Camps” which could be previously found in Raqqa governorate and al Bab city and currently in the group’s camps in Daraa governorate.



Pictures published by ISIS from one of the group’s training camps in al Suwayda governorate that show children among the fighters

Abdul Aziz Nash’at Abdul Ghany, from [al Bou’mar city town](#), eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, 15-year-old. In January 2017, he was recruited and enrolled in a 40-days ISIS training camp and that involved a Sharia course as well, before he was sent to engage in the ongoing clashes between ISIS and Syrian regime forces in Tadmur city suburbs in the suburbs of Homs. On April 8, 2017, he was killed in the clashes there.

[Mohammad Haydar al Hadid](#), from al Ashara city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, 15-year-old. In January 2016, he was recruited and transferred by ISIS to the Aleppo northern suburbs to take part in the clashes in Manbej city against Self-Management forces. On Friday, August 12, 2016, ISIS informed his family in al Ashara city that he was killed in Manbej city battles in Aleppo eastern suburbs.



D. Sexual violence

Cases of sexual violence that ISIS was responsible for were the group permitting selling and buying female children as slaves in licensed markets for slavery – especially Yezidi women detainees. We also recorded a number of child rapes by leader figures in ISIS, particularly through forcibly marrying female children.

E. Targeting schools and kindergartens

We documented that ISIS has targeted no less than 19 schools from the date group was founded in April 2013 until November 20, 2017.

Friday, February 24, 2017, a bomb car driven by an ISIS suicidal bomber blew near a school in Susyan village, which administratively follows al Bab city, in eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. The bombing resulted in casualties. Additionally, the school building and its cladding materials were moderately damaged. The village was under the control of Euphrates Shield forces (a number of Turkey-backed armed opposition factions) at the time of the attack.

Saturday, March 25, 2017, an ISIS suicidal bomber blew himself near the fence of al Hawi School for Elementary Education using IEDs in [Abu Hamam city](#), that belongs to al Sh'eitat Tribe, in eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The school building and its fence were [destroyed completely](#), as the school was rendered out of commission. Al Sh'eitat area was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Friday morning, October 27, 2017, a landmine planted by ISIS before withdrawing blew in a school in Ratla village, eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in casualties. Additionally, a classroom was moderately damaged. The village was under the control of the Kurdish-majority SDF at the time of the incident.



Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front (formerly al Nusra Front) and a number of armed opposition factions)

A. Extrajudicial killing

We recorded that no less than 88 children have been killed from the date al Nusra Front (currently Hay'at Tahrir al Sham) was founded in January 2012 until November 20, 2017.

B. Arrest and enforced-disappearance

SNHR documented that Hay'at Tahrir al Sham have arrested 25 children between January 2012 and November 20, 2017.

C. Recruitment

Hay'at Tahrir al Sham recruited children in a wide manner, and even added this aspect to the curriculum in some of the schools, areas, and camps that are under their control. Also, the group required that children wear military uniform in schools. The group also forced the fathers who joined it to enroll their children in these camps and schools.

5- International coalition forces

A. Extrajudicial killing

SNHR documented that no less than 723 children have been killed by international coalition forces from the date their intervention started in Syria on September 23, 2014 until of November 20, 2017.

Tuesday noon, December 6, 2016, international coalition forces fired missiles at the residential neighborhoods in the vicinity of Abu Bakr al Siddeeq Mosque in al Bza'a town, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which resulted in the killing of seven civilians from the same family (six children and one woman). The town was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Monday, April 24, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at a civilian car in al Tabaqa city, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate, as a group of civilians were using the car to leave the city. The bombing resulted in the killing of 11 civilians (seven children and four women) who were mostly from the same family. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Friday, May 12, 2017, international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [Shnayna village](#), northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, which resulted in the killing of [seven children](#) at once. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, September 12, 2017, around 03:00, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at [al Shehabat](#) village, western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, which resulted in the killing of 12 civilians who were mostly from the same family, including seven children and four women. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Monday, September 18, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Mrashda village, which is administratively a part of al Buokamal city, in eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The bombing resulted in the killing of six civilians (five children and one woman) from two families. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

B. Targeting schools and kindergartens

We recorded that international coalition forces have targeted no less than 23 schools fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired one missile the date their intervention started in Syria on September 23, 2014 until November 2017.

Friday, June 2, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a missile near a school in [al Swyada village](#), which is administratively a part of [Ma'adan county](#), in eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate. The bombing resulted in casualties. Additionally, the school fence was partially destroyed. The village was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Tuesday, June 6, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Entefada School in al Mashlab neighborhood, eastern Raqqa city. The school building was heavily damaged. as the school was rendered out of commission. The neighborhood was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.

Monday, July 17, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at al Amin School in Abu Hamam city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The school building was moderately damaged. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Friday, August 11, 2017, fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes fired a number of missiles at Fayeze Mansour School in [al Boukamal](#) city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. The school building was destroyed completely, as the school was rendered out of commission. The city was under the control of ISIS at the time of the incident.



Destruction at the school in the aftermath of an airstrike by fixed-wing international coalition forces warplanes – August 11, 2017



Fayeze Mansour school before August 11, 2017

6- Factions from the armed opposition

A. Extrajudicial killing

SNHR has documented the killing of no less than 936 children at the hands of armed opposition factions. Most of the victims were killed in indiscriminate shelling operations by armed opposition factions that targeted areas under the control of Syrian regime forces – especially mortar shelling.

Sunday morning, November 20, 2016, a number of rockets landed in al Furqan al Muhdatha School in al Furqan neighborhood, Aleppo city. The rockets were fired from a rocket launcher stationed in al Mansoura town, which was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the attack. The shelling resulted in the killing of eight children at once. Al Furqan neighborhood was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

B. Arrest and enforced-disappearance

Armed opposition factions resorted to arresting children along with their families during attacks on Syrian regime forces-held areas in order to use them in prisoner exchange deals. We recorded a limited, non-systematic cases where children were subjected to torture by fighters from armed opposition factions. Between March 2011 and November 20, 2017, we recorded that armed opposition factions have arrested no less than 305 children. Most of the arrest cases we recorded qualify as enforced-disappearance.



C. Recruitment

Tens of thousands of shops and factories were destroyed, leading to extreme poor conditions in light of the loss of the father and the provider for the family, in addition to frustration and poor psychological state, with no education future in sight. All of these were primary factors that drove hundreds of children to join armed factions. Children joining armed opposition factions became a common thing, as armed children can be found at checkpoint for factions in their areas of control.



Even though armed groups are not an international party -and therefore they are not bound by the customary protocol that determines the age of 18 as the minimum age for direct recruitments- these groups are bound by the international humanitarian law which estimate the minimum age requirement at 15 years of age. We can confirm that there are hundreds of children who are younger than 15 years of age who joined these groups, which constitutes a war crime.



D. Targeting schools and kindergartens

Attacks by factions from the armed opposition have resulted in damages to 23 schools and one kindergarten between March 2011 and November 20, 2017

Monday noon, February 20, 2017, a number of locally-made rocket shells landed on Mousa ben Nusair School in New Aleppo neighborhood, western Aleppo city. The shells were fired from an artillery stationed in the vicinity of al Bohouth al Elmiya, which is under the control of armed opposition factions. The school fence and its cladding materials were moderately damaged. The neighborhood was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

Thursday afternoon, March 23, 2017, a number of locally-made rocket shells landed on Abdul Fattah Baath School in al Hamdaniya neighborhood, western Aleppo city. The shells were fired from al Rashideen neighborhood, which is under the control of armed opposition factions. The shelling resulted in casualties. Additionally, the schoolyard was moderately damaged. The neighborhood was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

7- Other parties

A. Extrajudicial killing

SNHR's categorization includes many classifications such as victims who drown to death, victims who die in explosions by groups we couldn't identify, and the victims killed by unknown groups to SNHR.

Under this classification, SNHR recorded the killing of 701 children between March 2011 and November 20, 2017

Wednesday noon, February 8, 2017, an IED blew in the vicinity of Zayd ben Haretha Mosque in Bostan al Qaser neighborhood, eastern Aleppo city, which resulted in the killing of five children at once. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the group behind the bombing. Bostan al Qaser neighborhood was under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of the incident.

B. Targeting schools and kindergartens

We recorded that no less than 19 schools and two kindergartens were damaged by groups we couldn't identify between March 2011 and November 20, 2017



Monday, October 16, 2017, an explosion happened inside Bara'em al Amal Kindergarten in eastern Kansafra village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. The kindergarten building was heavily damaged and its furniture was burned, as the kindergarten was rendered out of commission. As of this writing, we haven't been able to determine the nature of the explosion and the group behind it. The village was under the joint control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Government forces

Government forces and pro-government militias have committed acts that constitute crimes against humanity against the children of Syria through the widespread systematic killing, and through torture and sexual violence explicitly violating Article 7 of Rome Statute. Furthermore, government forces, and pro-government militias, were responsible for acts that amount to war crimes through conscription, starvation, and besieging whole populations, including children and women, which is a blatant violation to the international humanitarian law and the relevant Security Council Resolutions.

Russian forces

Most of the bombardments carried out by Russian forces were concentrated in populated areas and facilities which resulted in the killing of tens of Syrian children. All of these indiscriminate attacks constitute war crimes.

Self-management forces (Primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)

These forces practiced acts that constitute war crimes through indiscriminate shelling which killed many children and also through conscription.

Extremist Islamic groups

These groups recruited hundreds of children who are younger than 15 years of age. Also, these groups practiced torture against children detainees inside their detention centers. Additionally, they killed many children in indiscriminate shelling operations. All of this constitute war crimes.

Armed opposition factions

Various factions recruited tens of children. Furthermore, the indiscriminate shelling by some of the opposition resulted in the killing of a number of children. All of this constitutes war crimes.



International coalition forces

Attacks by international coalition forces have resulted in losses that involved loss of lives-including children- injuries, and major damages to civilian objects. There are strong indicators suggesting that the damage was too excessive in relation to the anticipated military benefit.

Recommendations

The international community and the Security Council

- Secure protection and assistance for the forcibly displaced children, IDPs and refugees, especially girls whose special needs must be taken into consideration – particularly with respect to protecting them.
- Uphold its obligations with respect to the CRC, and take serious steps to take down the Syrian regime, expose its practices, and put an end to them as soon as possible.
- Support the accountability efforts in Syria – most notably the International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism that was established by the UN General Assembly, the Commission of Inquiry that was established by the Human Rights Council, and the active national human rights organizations.
- All possible legal, political, and financial measures should be taken against the Syrian regime and its allies as well as against all perpetrators of violations in the armed conflict to apply pressure in order to compel them to respect children’s rights.
- Respect the pledges of financial donations that have been made:
- Aids must be delivered to the besieged children and the Syrian regime, first and foremost, have to be forced to lift the siege, instead of resorting to dropping aids from the air.
- All possible efforts should be made to help and support the neighboring countries to improve education and health services in these countries that have taken the majority of the children refugees.
- Find mechanisms that aim to end the shelling on schools and protect them, and work on creating and sustaining a safe learning environment, which is the least that can be done to protect civilians
- The issue of the children of Syria is an international concern, as all states should take action to ease its ramifications through supporting schools and the educational and medical processes inside Syria and for children refugees.

The United Nations

United Nations Office for Coordination of Human Rights Affairs

- Aid efforts should be coordinated according to the most-affected areas. The pressure and blackmailing by the Syrian regime for the sake of redirecting the flow of aids to its favor should be ignored.



- Sufficient resources should be devoted to rehabilitate children while taking into consideration the special case of girls that have been directly affected by violations, and those who have fallen victim of sexual exploit.

The International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism, and the Commission of Inquiry

- Investigate the incidents that were included in this report, and shed more light on the suffering of the children of Syria.

The Neighboring countries

- Refugees coming out of Syria should be able to seek asylum and their rights should be respected, including non-refoulement. Additionally, The states of the European Union and other countries should ease the load on the neighboring countries by taking in more Syrian refugees. And the donor states to improve their support for the UNHCR and the local community organizations in states of refuge.

The UNHCR

- Create a stable, safe environment for children refugees and focus more on reintegrating them within their communities through long-term psychological support.
- Enhance the investment in education and health.

The Syrian regime and the parties to the conflict

- Uphold its obligations with respect to the CRC, the two Covenants (ICCPR & ICESCR), and Geneva Agreements.
- The Syrian-Russian alliance and the Iranian militias and their affiliates should stop deliberately shelling schools and kindergartens, as well as residential areas, where children and their families live, and killing and disfiguring children.
- International Coalition forces should investigate the incidents that patricianly resulting in the death of children. Also, international coalition forces should apply pressure on SDF in order to compel them to cease recruiting children.
- Release all detained children – especially who were detained in the context of the armed conflict- and respect the international laws on detaining children, particularly girls.

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