



Regime Airstrikes Kill Civilians in ISIS stronghold of Raqqa

On November 19, 2014, bombings by Syrian regime warplanes killed nine in the ISIS-stronghold of Raqqa. The raids wounded an additional 25, of which some were critically injured.

Human rights violations in Syria are not just carried out by the regime, but also by various other parties. However, the Syrian regime remains the main perpetrator. It commits massacre after massacre against Syrian civilians. Amongst its victims, there are many women and children who constitute the most vulnerable groups in any conflict.

Since the beginning of the peaceful protests in March 2011, the Syrian regime has employed indiscriminate shelling of civilians to crush the protests. The daily targeting of both civilians and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has taken on the form of state policy. Despite claims by the Syrian regime that it is fighting armed groups, the number of civilian casualties indicates that the regime is targeting civilians. Under international law, the killing of noncombatants is one of the most grievous crimes.

On Thursday 19 November, 2014, at 02:30 PM, Syrian regime warplanes targeted the ISIS stronghold of Raqqa city with two airstrikes using four fuel-air explosive missiles. The first strike hit a residential neighborhood near Ibn Khaldoun School whilst the second one hit near “Jawad Anzour” park in the middle of the city. According to DCHRS field monitors, the two areas are only 50 meters apart.

When DCHRS monitors arrived at the sites, they noted that body parts scattered over a large area. Many victims were caught underneath the rubble, while the medical and civil defense teams tended to the wounded. DCHRS activists estimated that the strikes killed and wounded a total of 24 people, including women and children. The wounded were transferred to nearby field hospitals, which face a severe shortage of blood, medical equipment, and medication.

Furthermore, DCHRS activists noted that a local ISIS building was located about 1,000 meters away from the blast sites. ISIS fighters were nowhere to be seen at the time of the explosions.

By the end of Thursday 19 November, 2014, DCHRS was able to document the following nine people who were killed in the aforementioned strikes on Raqqa:

1- Kenan Suliman.



2- Nour Ad-Din Al-hussein.

3- Ayman Mohammad Al-Khadr.

4- Ayham Suliman

5- Sabah Nyrabi.

6- Yasser Sultan.

7- Mohammad Ali Abbadi.

8- Child Yazan Jawyish.

9- Unidentified victim, fruit vendor.

Out of those wounded, DCHRS was able to identify some but not all individuals. Currently, DCHRS activists face serious difficulties in carrying out their work as they are pursued by ISIS. The following people were wounded in the attacks:

1- Ghufran Ali Al-Abed.

2- Fatima Al-Badr.

3- Khouda Al-Aloula.

4- Mariam Izra.

5- Bushra Al-Allan.

6- Mohammad Fadl Sultan.

7- Abdulkarim As-Sab.

8- Mohammad Ahmad Al-Allan.

9- Helal Al-Khalil At-Taha.

10- Ahmad Al-Abbas.

11- Infant male child called Khaled, his full name has not yet been confirmed.

12- Victim called Abu-Aisha, his full name has not yet been confirmed.



13- Victim called Abu-Sham, his full name has not yet been confirmed.

14- Victim called Abu-Hajar, his full name has not yet been confirmed.

15- Victim called Abu-Omar, his full name has not yet been confirmed.

16- Victim called Khaled, his full name has not yet been confirmed.

DCHRS emphasizes that indiscriminate shelling is one of the most serious violations of international humanitarian law. This massacre constitutes multiple war crimes under Articles 8-2-b-I, 8-2-b-ii, 8-2-b-iv of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Moreover, the loss of life that these airstrikes caused was disproportionate. The absence of a legitimate military goal, given that the victims were civilians, also makes this massacre a war crime under Article 8-2-b-v of the Rome Statute.

Furthermore, this crime is *“part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack”* and can be classified as a crime against humanity in accordance with Article 7-1 of the Rome Statute. The Syrian regime is able to examine and survey areas to prevent unnecessary civilian deaths. However, Assad’s forces deliberately target civilians in retaliation for its military defeats. As documented by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), the Syrian regime’s air force has perpetrated 15 massacres in October alone.

ISIS also carries responsibility because it established military centers in the middle of residential areas. ISIS knowingly puts the lives of the civilians in danger with this decision.

DCHRS appeals to the United Nations and its Secretary General to take immediate action to protect Syrian civilians from the perpetual attacks. The DCHRS warns that the silence of the international community will lead to further atrocities. In the absence of external intervention, the Assad regime will continue to shed the blood of innocent civilians.

Damascus Center for Human Rights

20-11-2014



Images of the damage and destruction that the airstrikes left behind on Nov 19, 14





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Images of the victims who fell in the massacre on Nov 19, 14





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[The Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies \(DCHRS\)](#) is an independent human rights NGO that monitors the human rights situation in Syria. Established in 2005, it was initially located in the Syrian capital of Damascus. The mission of DCHRS is to promote respect for human rights in Syria.

DCHRS engages in numerous documentation projects. These projects include [daily casualty reports](#), reports on particular massacres, and the reporting and documenting of other human rights violations. DCHRS has also works to lobby and advocate for Syrian human rights, and aims to draw the world's attention to the deteriorating human rights situation in Syria.

Since the beginning of the Syrian revolution, the center has expanded its activities, working to coordinate and communicate with activists. At this time, the center began documenting the daily violations committed by Syrian regime forces, many of which can be classified as crimes against humanity or war crimes. As the conflict developed, DCHRS expanded its monitoring activities to all armed groups.

Human rights violations recorded by DCHRS have included (but are not limited to): extrajudicial killings, massacres, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, rape, and torture. DCHRS has [opened local offices in Syria](#) in order to document evidence concerning human rights violations on the ground. These reports have been submitted by DCHRS to many international and regional human rights organizations, as well as with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (established by the UN).

DCHRS recognizes and adheres to all pertinent international human rights agreements and declarations issued by the UN. DCHRS is also a member of the following international networks:

- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)
- NGO Coalition for the international Criminal Court
- International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP)
- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC)