



Force Against Civilians Escalates Once Again

Chemical massacre contributes 678 out of the 3377 victim killed in the month of August.

Violence and systematic human rights abuses by the Syrian government regime's forces continue to occur. DCHRS documented in the month of August, 2013 a total of 3377 victims killed by regime forces and their loyal militias. 73% were civilians totaling 2454 victims, with the other 932 remaining victims categorized as armed opposition forces and rebels, approximately 27% of the total victim.

DCHRS documented a total of 351 children victims, which represents 10% of the total victims. In addition the number of documented women was 232 victims, representing roughly 7%.

Indiscriminate shelling is still a major tactic used against civilians in residential areas, killing a total of 1275 victims.

The month of August witnessed one of the most horrific massacres in the human history. Over 1600 people were killed by the use of chemical weapons in al-Ghouta region in Damascus suburb province. [In a recent report prepared by DCHRS, the center documented 678 victims who were killed by chemical weapons.](#)

The province of Damascus and its suburbs recorded the highest number of casualties totaling 1450, out of which 1122 were civilians. Moreover, since the chemical attack took place in the Damascus suburb in al-Ghouta region, the number of civilian casualties who were poisoned to death was 654. Finally the center documented 13 non-Syrian citizens from other nationalities who were fighting with Syrian Armed oppositions.

The cases of extrajudicial killings and field executions that were perpetrated by regime forces resulted in the death of 166 victims. In addition the total number of victims who were tortured to death in by Syrian security authorities in both prisons and detentions centers totaled 137 victims.

The major number of victims has fallen in Damascus and its suburb mostly in Ghouta after the chemical massacre on 21 August; 1450 victims were documented including 1122 civilian victims, 654 of whom were killed by chemical weapons.

The DCHRS documented 13 non-Syrian victims who were fighting along with the armed groups against the Syrian regime.

DCHRS learned that the Syrian regime forces continue to target civilians and use direct violence against them. As a result, the number of civilians reached a record high of 73% of the total number of victims. Also since 38% of the death cases were caused by shelling, missiles, and airstrikes in addition to the 20% who were killed by the chemical attack, DCHRS indicates and stresses that such a high number of casualties in correlation to the cruel cause of deaths are obvious evidence that the Syrian regime forces



are intentionally targeting civilians, ruthlessly punishing them, and recklessly ignoring any basic right of their existence. Furthermore, the results clearly stated the violations of international human rights laws and humanitarian laws even with other causes of deaths such as torture, extrajudicial killings, and other forms of violations that are categorized under war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The use of weapons of mass destruction such as the use of Sarin gas, which is considered an internationally-banned chemical weapon, is a violation of the 1925 Geneva Convention which clearly states the prohibition of the use of any chemical weapons or any weapon of mass destruction. Thus DCHRS believes that the use of Sarin gas in addition to indiscriminate shelling, extrajudicial killings, torture, and any the other types of human rights abuses or other weapons used in the Syrian conflict is an absolute violation of international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and should be categorized as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

DCHRS demands protection for civilians according to the laws approved by the U.N in 2005. In addition since DCHRS is a member of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP), DCHRS appeals to the international community to enforce the “Responsibility to Protect”. Furthermore, DCHRS calls all the international medical and humanitarian organizations to provide support, medical assistance, and relief to ease the suffering of the Syrian people inside Syria and abroad. Finally, DCHRS demands the prosecution of the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity and to bring them to justice. DCHRS stresses the necessity to bring all the perpetrators of the chemical weapon attack to justice and to ensure their accountability in order to avoid any impunity.

Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies (DCHRS)

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For more information, please contact

Dr. Radwan Ziadeh, Executive director of the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies.

Phone (571) 205-3590

Emile radwan.ziadeh @ gmail.com

Dr. Abdul Qadir Rageh, Office field manager.

Telephone 00966556129784

Emile abdol-rajeh@hotmail.com,

DCHRS is an independent, non-governmental organization, established in 2005, located in the Syrian capital of Damascus. Its mission is to foster a spirit of support and respect for the values and standards of human rights in Syria. As such, DCHRS recognizes and adheres to all pertinent international human rights agreements and declarations issued by the UN.

- DCHRS is 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

DCHRS worked on a variety of documentation projects. Such projects included [daily casualty reports](#), massacre reports, and other human rights violations reports. Also DCHRS has been working on advocacy and lobbying in different human rights institutions in order to educate and acknowledge about the deteriorating human rights situation in Syria. DCHRS [opened local offices in Syria](#) in order to document, collect, and observe human rights violations on the ground. After the launch of the Syrian revolution, the center increased its activities through working,



communicating, and coordinating with many members and activists. Thus the center began documenting daily violations committed by the Syrian regime forces that can be classified as crimes against humanities and war crimes. Such violations included: extrajudicial killings, massacres, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, rape, torture in prisons. DCHRS submitted those reports to many international and regional human rights organizations and communicated with the Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic on Syria.

