



مركز توثيق الانتهاكات في سورية  
CENTER FOR DOCUMENTATION  
OF VIOLATIONS IN SYRIA

January 2012

## Dignity Martyrs in Darayya

Violation Documenting Center VDC





## **Dignity Revolution's Martyrs in Darayya, Rif Dimashq**

**Report by VDC**

**January 2012**

### **The City of Darayya**

Darayya, Rif Dimashq province, is located 8 km east of Damascus, close to Mezze, al-Moadamiyeh, Sahnaya, and Qadam. With an area of 27km<sup>2</sup>, Darayya is the biggest city in West Ghouta.

There are different sources attributing the origin of the name to different origins, one of which attribute the name to a Syriac origin, in which Darayya means “many houses”, deriving from “Dar”, which means “house or home”.

The majority of the population of the city works in agriculture. Major crops are grapes, olives, and wheat. Some Darayyans gained the city its reputation for furniture manufacturing and trading, while some work in livestock farming.

The population of the city is 250,000, 25% of which are university and college graduates and/or students.

Sunni Islam is the religion of the majority of Darayya's population, with 1% Christians, who have a cultural and social evident presence. Churches have contributed to aid and relief work in the city, and have rung out their bells several times during the funerals of the martyrs of the town.

Before the revolution, Darayya was known as a place for nonviolent activism, which started as early as 2002 when Darayyans demonstrated in solidarity with the town of Jennin in Palestine. In 2003, Darayyans went on silent marches against the invasion of Iraq, and against corruption and bribery. Most activists were arrested and subjected to arbitrary trials. Nonetheless, Darayya has been always considered an icon for nonviolent and peaceful activism, because it went beyond demands to raising awareness about coexistence and citizenship.



### Darayya in the Revolution

Nonviolent activists took part in the revolution since it started, to be joined later with the most of the population of the city. The first demonstration in Darayya was on Friday, 25 March 2011, and was limited to only a few protestors.

The regime used live ammunition to shoot at protesters on Good Friday, 22 April 2011. Three protesters were killed under direct fire. Al-Moataz Billah al-Shaar, Ammar Fares, and Mahmoud Walid Rafik Khoulani were the first Darayyans martyrs in the Revolution.





[Their funerals turned into the biggest demonstration in Darayya, with 40,000 people attending the funeral.](#)

The regime responded with firing at demonstrators and arbitrary arrests, while the people of Darayya kept on their peaceful demonstrations and exceptionally amazing nonviolent initiatives, such as giving away flowers and water to the soldiers.

Darayyan women contributed to the city's involvement in the revolution with protesting, aid work, and media activities.

Darayya was under the jurisdiction of the infamous Air Force Intelligence, which led massive arbitrary arrest raids, during which 2400 people were detained.

900 are still detained by the regime, most of whom were subjected to forced disappearances.

Armed rebellion in Darayya started in the last quarter of 2011; however, public presence of the FSA was on 21 January 2012.

Later on, the number of martyrs distinctively increased due to the clashes between the FSA and the Syrian regime forces, but it stayed within the same rates for months, until the Massacre of Darayya in August 2012.

During the second crackdown on the city in November 2012, more than 200,000 civilians were displaced to different areas in Rif Dimashq, especially in Sahnaya and its surrounding areas.

The first aerial bombardment of Darayya by the regime was on 13 November 2012. Some parts of the city are now under FSA control. FSA battalions are engaging in brutal clashes against regime forces to prevent another storming into the city.

Martyrs of the Revolution:

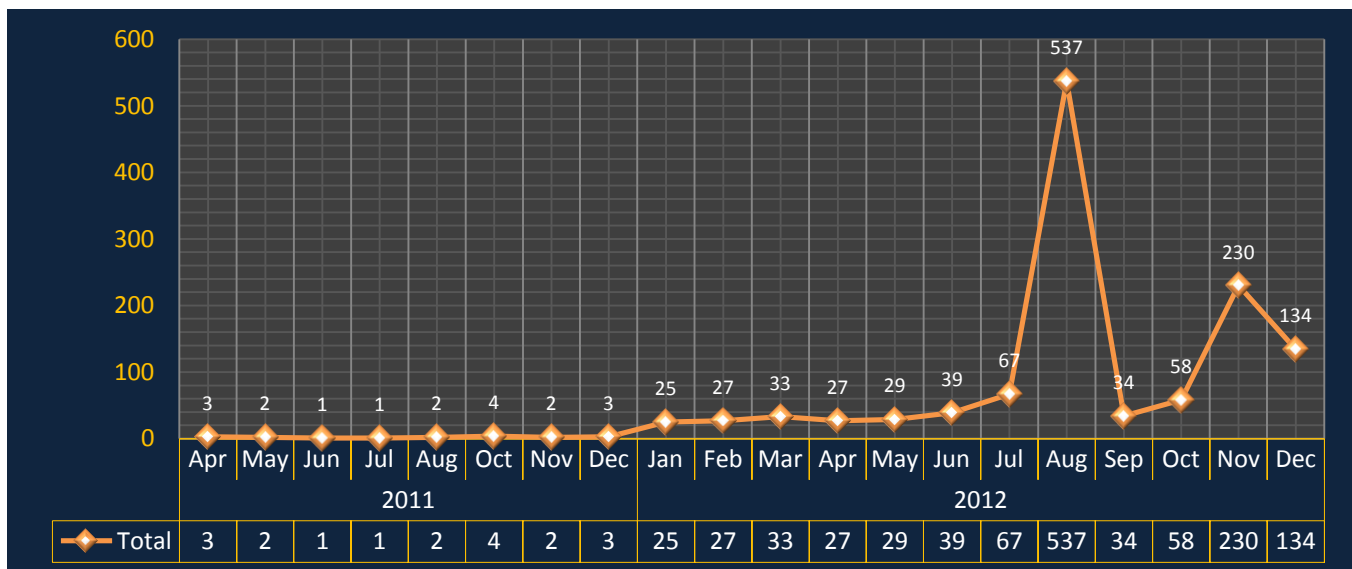
VDC documented 1258 martyrs in Darayya between March 2011 till the end of December 2012.

114 martyrs were not from Darayya but were killed in the city, 148 unidentified martyrs, of which 116 cases were documented with video and photographic evidence.

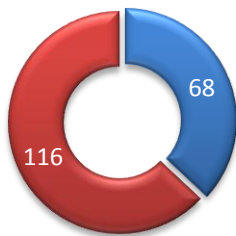
During 2011, the martyrs' rate was 3 martyrs/month.

Starting 2012, the martyrs' rate increased. It reached 35 martyrs/month between January and July 2012.

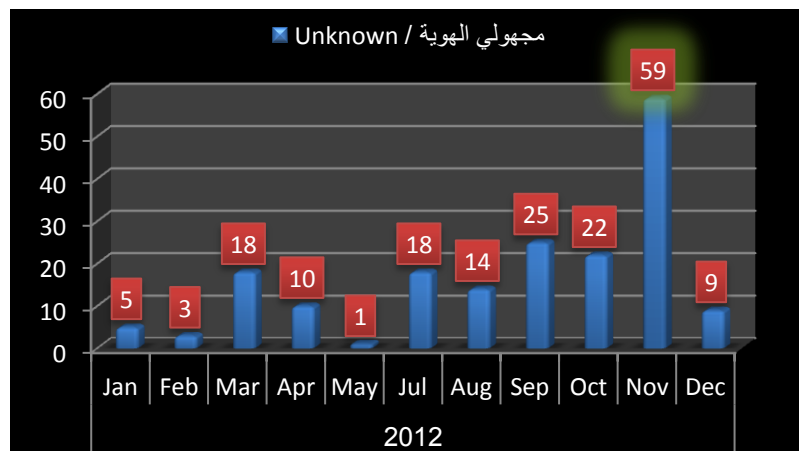
21% of the martyrs in Darayya that were documented until the end of December 2011 were killed between March 2011 and July 2012.



184 مجهول الهوية  
Unidentified 184

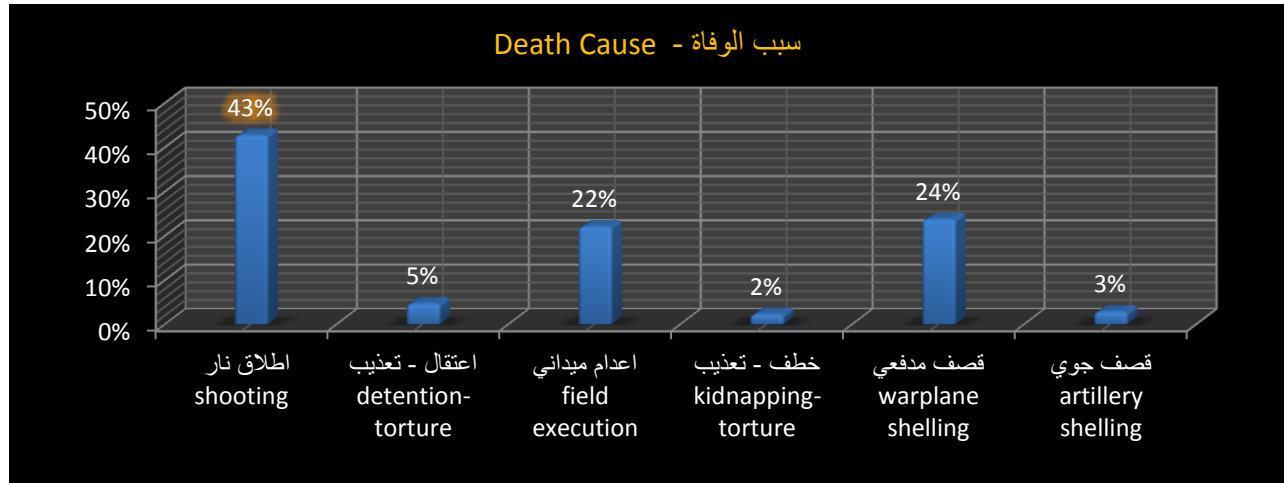


غير موثق  
موثق

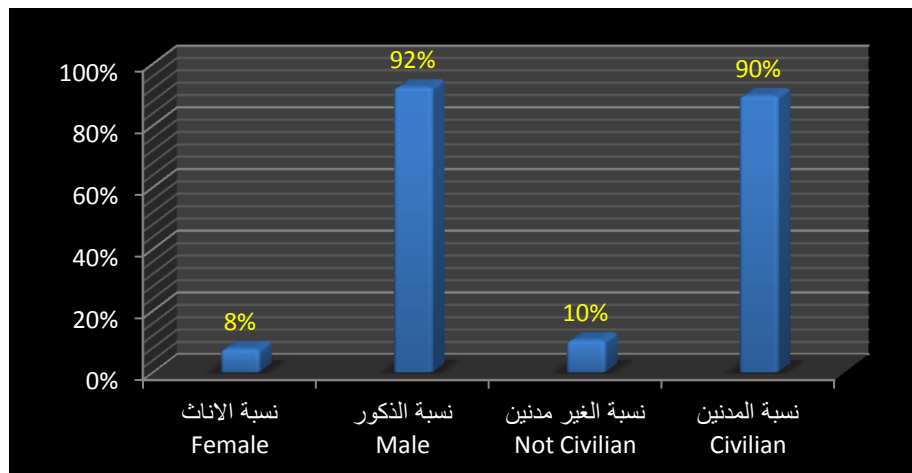




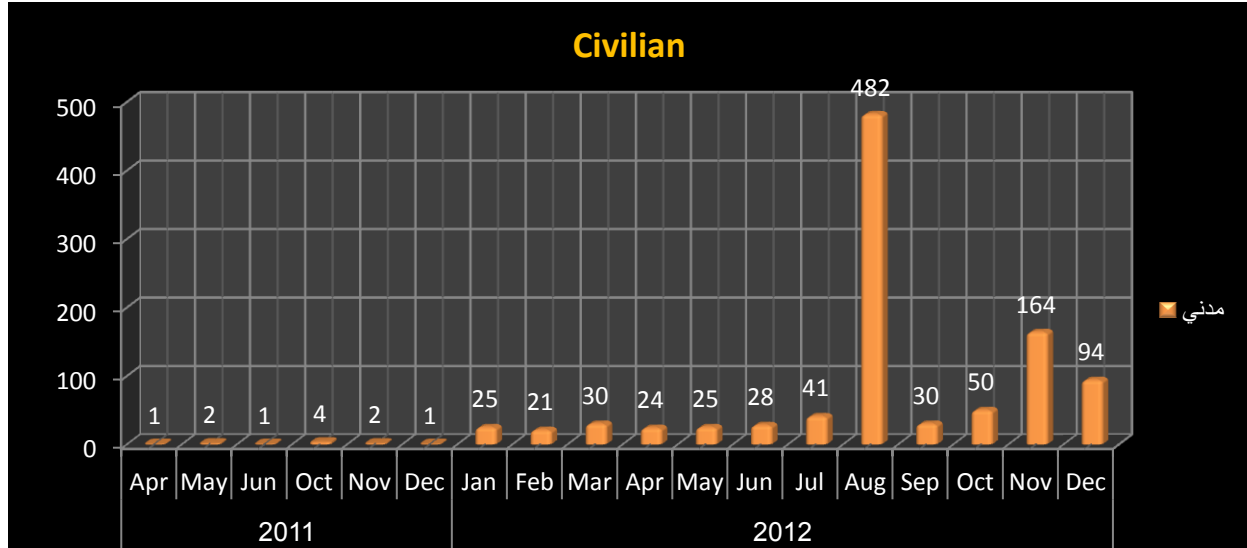
- 43% of the martyrs were killed under direct fire and sniper shots. 24% were killed with artillery shelling. 22% were killed in summary executions, which was the highest rate of summary executions in the research areas.



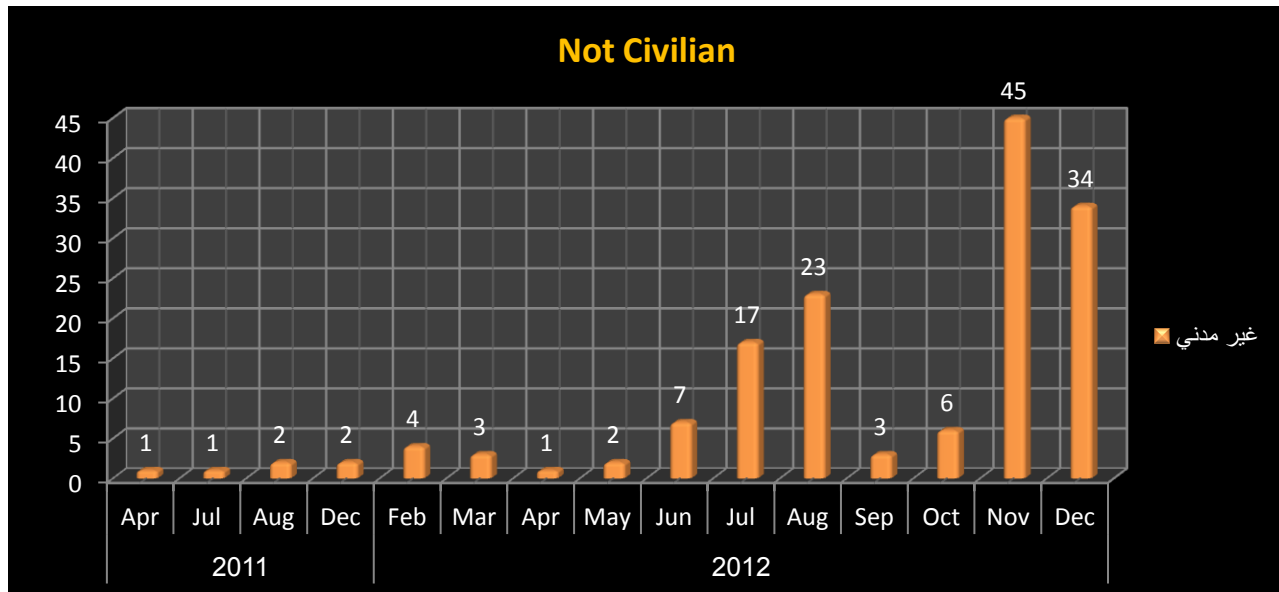
- Martyrs to population rate between March 2011 and January 2012 is 0.005.
- 90% of the martyrs were civilians, and 10% were not civilians.
- 92% of the martyrs were males, and 8% were females.
- Two FSA children martyrs were documented.



• Civilian Martyrs:

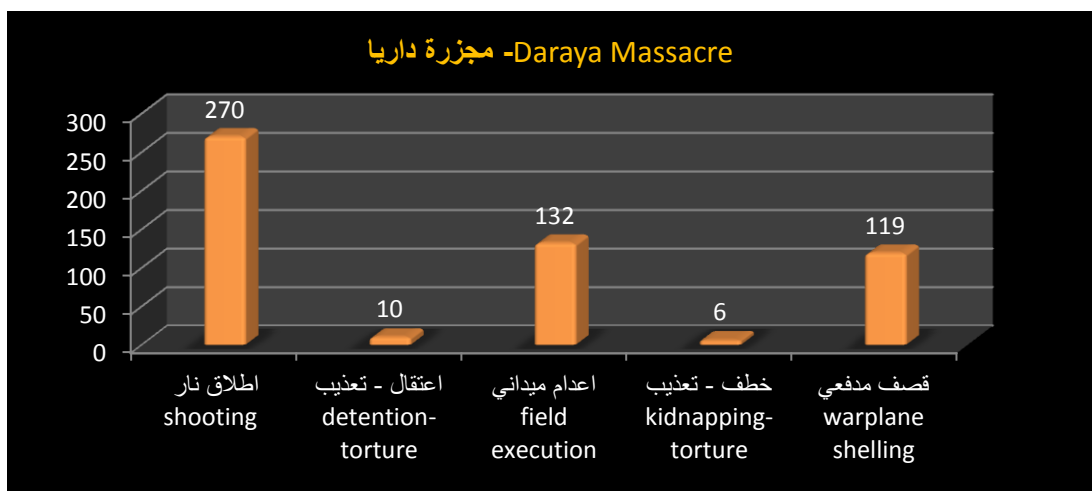


• Non-civilians Martyrs

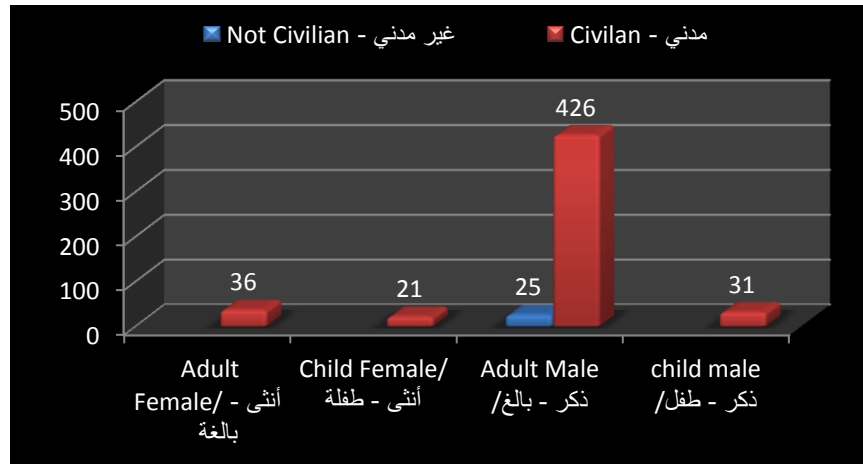


## • The Massacre of Darayya

On 20 August 2012, regime forces launched a military attack on the city, which escalated until it peaked on 25 August. The attack on the city started with artillery bombardment, after which regime forces stormed into the city, and carried out a series of summary executions. 329 martyrs of the 537 martyrs of the massacres were killed in one day. 132 martyrs were killed in their homes, including 52 children and 36 women.







***Link to Darayya's Martyrs Report (Some names and details are hidden for security measures)***

<http://cutt.us/oFkC>

***Link to Darayya's Martyrs who are from outside of Daraya but were martyred in Daraya***

<http://cutt.us/gqP4>

*We Thank activists of Daraya LCC Coordination Committee Documentation Office for their cooperation with us in the completion of the report.*

**For any comments or questions, you can contact us through our e-mail**

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