



مركز توثيق الانتهاكات في سوريا
Violations Documentation Center in Syria



Northern Syria.. The Ongoing Slaughter

Special report on recent attacks on Hama
and Idlib governorates until the end
of September 2019

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Introduction



“We do not exaggerate when we describe the situation here as catastrophic. Hundreds of families displaced by the heavy shelling have not yet had access to safe housing or even tents. People here have been sleeping rough in farms and fields and taking shelter in olive trees for what seems to be a long-term waiting. This situation is aggravated by significant shortfall in humanitarian aids. There is no hope here, and death for many is just a matter of time.”



With these brief words, the correspondent of the Violations Documentation Centre (hereinafter referred to as the VDC), located in Idlib province, describes the living and humanitarian situation in north Syria. This situation resulted from months-long military campaign, which clearly and explicitly breach the de-escalation agreement that came into force on 06 May 2017. The resolution provides for the prevention of military actions between belligerent parties, the establishment of checkpoints, and the delivery of humanitarian aids.

The Syrian government forces, backed by Russian warplanes, have escalated their violent military campaign against Idlib and Hama governorates since early February 2019. Tens of densely populated residential areas have been targeted, and systematic attacks on civilian neighbourhoods have clearly and unambiguously resulted in the death of hundreds of civilians. These attacks have also caused considerable damage to properties, especially with regard to the destruction of homes, shops, vital and commercial installations. Such indiscriminate attacks on civilians constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law and result in war crimes, whereby commanders who issued orders incur individual criminal responsibility for such attacks, as well as anyone who has committed, facilitated or assisted in the commission of such war crimes.

Several villages and cities in the governorates of Hama and Idlib have been subjected to hundreds of illegal air raids that have resulted in various horrendous massacres against civilians. According to [United Nations data](#), these attacks left hundreds of people dead and thousands injured and were the direct cause of displacement of at least 400,000 people. Witness accounts revealed that these attacks have caused civilian casualties disproportionate to the expected military advantage by failing to distinguish between combatants and civilians. Moreover, both the Syrian and Russian governments did not take reasonable precautions to minimize harm to civilians in the attacks. At least hundreds of houses and shops were completely or almost completely damaged.

According to the UN spokesperson, satellite images illustrate how entire towns and villages have been destroyed as their habitants fled them. They added that more than 550 people have been killed and 400,000 were displaced from northern Hama and southern Idlib since the beginning of hostilities in April. Many of these people were displaced several times, and about half of them live outside camps and reception centres under trees or outdoors.

"We do not exaggerate when we describe the situation here as catastrophic. Hundreds of families displaced by the heavy shelling have not yet had access to safe housing or even tents. People here have been sleeping rough in farms and fields and taking shelter in olive trees for what seems to be a long-term waiting. This situation is aggravated by significant shortfall in humanitarian aids. There is no hope here, and death for many is just a matter of time."

Summary

- The VDC in Syria presents this report, detailing recent attacks in the governorates of Hama and Idlib during the military campaign, which escalated dramatically since 01 May 2019. The report also details the situation there and the consequences of the shelling that led to a serious deterioration in all aspects of life, especially with regard to the medical situation. The VDC in Syria adopts a methodology based on the rules of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and the four Geneva Conventions, all of which constitute the legal framework for the documentation methodology of the Centre.
- In defining violations, the Centre realises definitions contained in international human rights conventions, human rights standards, the Rome Convention containing the Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Geneva Conventions, including, but not limited to, attacks against civilians, civilian infrastructure and humanitarian and relief facilities.
- The Centre documents violations committed by all actors in Syria regardless of race, religion, political allegiance or any other feature and stands equidistant from all violators and victims. The Centre also documents as much information as possible on each violation, including the perpetrator, the place and date of its occurrence, its type as well as other statistical characteristics related to victims and violations.
- The VDC asserts that the attacks referred to in this report are flagrant violations of international humanitarian law. The Centre notes that Russian and Syrian forces are fully aware that attacking civilian objects is described as war crimes.
- The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which supplements the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, require the addition of rules governing the conduct of war, such as the prohibition of attacking people and civilian installations, limiting the means and methods permitted, and taking all preventive measures to avoid targeting civilians or to stop indiscriminate strikes against military or non-military objects. Parties are also obliged not to hinder health workers from carrying out their work in a safe environment, without fear of death or injury while performing their humanitarian duty.
- This report supplements a series of reports (1 - 2) issued by the Centre since the beginning of the military campaign against the governorates of Hama and Idlib in northern Syria on 9

February 2019. In these reports, the Centre detailed attacks on civilian housing and objects in both governorates and their countryside.

- The VDC has documented more than 91 attacks¹ resulting from air strikes carried out by Russian and Syrian warplanes as well as the artillery of the Syrian government artillery between the end of April 2019 and 01 September 2019. These raids targeted vital installations and facilities in particular.
- The VDC recorded the death of at least 1444 civilians in Idlib and Hama governorates as a result of sharp escalation of military operations between early February 2019 and 01 September 2019.
- In Idlib governorate alone, the VDC correspondents recorded the death of 1139 civilians. In Hama, 305 civilians died as a result of sharp escalation of military operations in the cities and towns of both Idlib and Hama governorates
- The Centre's correspondents located in northern Syria, especially in the governorates of Idlib and Hama, recorded at least **28** attacks that targeted hospitals and medical and health centres directly and indirectly. These attacks destroyed most of the fully functioning hospitals and medical centres, which were put out of service.
- The Centre's correspondents recorded at least **22** attacks targeting educational facilities directly and indirectly, which put them out of service and led to the destruction of most of them.
- At least **14** attacks directly targeting public markets were recorded. These attacks resulted in the death of dozens of civilians and widespread destruction of shops and residential buildings.
- The Centre's correspondents documented **12** attacks targeting the civil defense centres and headquarters. These attacks resulted in the destruction of most of these centres and putting them out of service temporarily or completely.
- The Centre's correspondents recorded several attacks on mosques and places of worship. **9** direct attacks targeting places of worship led to putting most of mosques out of service partially or completely.
- The Centre's correspondent was able to document at least two air strikes that targeted power and fuel plants directly, which put them completely out of service.
- At least **4** attacks targeting bakeries were recorded. These direct and indirect attacks resulted in putting most of these bakeries out of service, partially or completely.

1 - Attack: Rather than the number of shells, a single attack here means a full day of shelling which targets one place.

Northern Syria.. The Ongoing Slaughter

Between February 2019 and until September 1st, 2019

civilians in Idlib and Hama governorates as a result of sharp escalation of military operations

1444

Civilians killed in Idlib

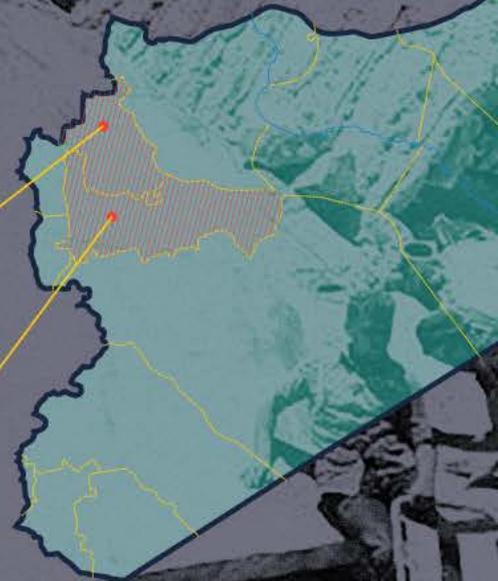
1139

Civilians killed in Hama

305

attacks* resulting from air strikes carried out by Russian and Syrian warplanes as well as the artillery of the Syrian government artillery

91



The Centre's correspondents located in northern Syria, especially in the governorates of Idlib and Hama, recorded the following attacks



12

attacks targeting the civil defense centres and headquarters



22

attacks targeting educational facilities



28

attacks that targeted hospitals and medical and health centres



4

attacks targeting bakeries



2

targeted power and fuel plants



9

direct attacks targeting places of worship



14

attacks directly targeting public markets

Methodology and Challenges

This report is based on testimonies collected by the VDC correspondents in northern Syria from residents of Idlib and Hama governorates, especially those involved in humanitarian activities, media professionals, civil defense volunteers, relief workers as well as medical staff and field hospitals. This report also sheds light on the details of the immense suffering experienced by the population in these governorates in all aspects of daily life, especially suffering associated with the escalation of military operations by the Syrian government forces supported by Russian warplanes and the systematic and repeated shelling with the aim of destroying elements of everyday life, which includes Infrastructure, hospitals and medical units, schools and educational institutions, bakeries, power and fuel plants and places of worship.

Before reading this report, it is important to note the following:

1- This report covers the period between 25 April 2019 and the end of August 2019. However, casualties continue to occur in light of the ongoing conflict in Syria, and civilians continue to account for the majority of casualties, including children and women. Shelling with various weapons continues to target civilian neighbourhoods, usually accompanied by mass displacement in areas targeted by vacuum rockets and barrel bombs in deliberate and indiscriminate attacks.

2- Statistics in this report are inconclusive. They are subject to periodic and ongoing reviews by the Centre's activists first, and data processors and field observation team inside Syria afterwards.

3- The variation in figures from one report to another - even those relevant to the same area - is due to constant reviews by field observation activists, who identify shortcomings and errors. It is also a result of identification of victims, only after which they are added to the figures.

4- War crimes are defined in Article VIII of the Rome Statute as grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, namely, acts committed against persons or property protected under the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention. This is not limited to international armed conflicts but also to situations of non-international armed conflict as well as other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable to international armed conflicts within the established scope of international law. Targeting such facilities could also constitute a crime against humanity under Article VII of the Rome Statute because it is a widespread and systematic attack directed against the civilian population who do not take an active part in the hostilities and imposes on them very poor living conditions leading to their destruction.

5- The VDC team in Syria would like to thank all the activists cooperating with the Centre and the families of the victims, as well as field observation teams and researchers inside Syria, who face daily risks while carrying out their duties to document crimes and human rights violations in the country, updating relevant data and information and communication the voice of victims and their families to the concerned authorities and organizations.

Deliberate and indiscriminate attacks on vital installations

The Syrian government forces and their loyalist groups, under Russian air cover, continue to carry out large-scale, deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against civilian objects and civilians in many Syrian cities and towns, especially in the rural areas of Hama and Idlib. These attacks have spread fear and panic among civilians and caused hundreds of casualties which medical units were unable to treat. This deficit is due to the lack of resources and to targeting medical units and hospitals directly, either by guided missiles or cluster and vacuum munitions used by Syrian government forces and Russian warplanes. The VDC in Syria has observed numerous violations against vital installations. These will be listed and described in this report.

Attacks on hospitals and medical units

According to the VDC figures, **25** hospitals and medical centres were directly targeted and out of service completely. The VDC has also recorded the fall of at least **12** civilians working among medical staff in Hama and Idlib governorates. According to VDC correspondent, more than **85%** of government and private medical centres and hospitals have been directly and indirectly targeted by Syrian government forces and Russian warplanes during the intensive shelling over the past few months.

Dr. Muhammad Kutub, Director of Advocacy at the Syrian American Medical Association (SAMS), told the VDC in Syria:

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The number of attacks targeting the health sector in the recent military campaign between 26 April 2019 and 10 September 2019 was **51**. We were able to confirm about **45** direct attacks after making contact with local cadres working with the SAMS Association in Syria, in addition to 6 more attacks according to health sector figures in Gaziantep.

As a result of targeting medical facilities, death toll has reached **42** civilians, including **4** medical workers/SAMS and **3** medical staff working for Banafsaj.

Although we shared the coordinates of hospitals and medical centres with all actors under the UN-OCHA conflict neutralization mechanism, medical facilities are usually directly targeted, and some have been damaged as a result of targeting other vital facilities in the same area. Shelling of vital facilities aims to deprive civilians of the basic services they need.

We recorded **12** cases of medical staff subject to enforced disappearance during 2018 in north-western Syria, and we documented **3** incidents in 2019. We believe that the number is higher. While some of these acts have been committed for ransom to be held, a significant number of them were due to disagreements with armed opposition groups in north-western Syria.



1- Targeting Qal’at al-Madiq hospital in Hama governorate on 29 April 2019

Russian warplanes targeted the maternity hospital in the town of Qala’at al-Madiq in Hama countryside with explosive rockets on 29 April 2019, leading to widespread destruction of the hospital and medical equipment, disruption and further discontinuation of service.

2- Targeting an ambulatory centre in the town of Latamna in Hama governorate on 29 April 2019

Russian warplanes targeted an ambulatory centre in the town of Latamna in Hama countryside on 29 April 2019, completely destroying the hospital and medical equipment (Photo 1).



Ambulance destroyed at the ambulatory centre as a result of the aerial bombardment in Latamna
Source: Health Department of Hama

Mr. Abdul Razzaq Khalil, from the Health Department of Idlib, told the VDC in Syria:



“The number of hospitals and health centres targeted in the governorates of Idlib and Hama has reached 36 medical facilities, 22 hospitals and 14 health centres. Several attacks have also been recorded in which medical facilities have been directly targeted. This was the case when Russian warplanes targeted the Nabd Al-Hayat Hospital in Hass town of Idlib governorate on 05 May 2019 with vacuum missiles.”



3- Targeting Al-Hubeit Health Centre in Idlib governorate on 30 April 2019.

Syrian government forces, stationed in the Hama countryside camps, shelled the health centre in al-Hubeit town in Idlib governorate with several rockets and artillery fire on 30 April 2019. The shelling has caused a complete destruction of the hospital, putting it out of service. It also caused widespread destruction of surrounding residential buildings. (Photo 2)



Photo 2: Extent of damage to the health centre in the town of Al-Hubeit town as a result of being targeted by government forces fire. | Source: Macro Media Centre (MMC)

4- Targeting the surgical unit in Kafrnabouda town in Idlib governorate on 01 May 2019

Syrian government forces targeted the surgical unit in Kafr Nabouda town of Idlib governorate with artillery fire on 01 May 2019, causing partial damage to medical equipment and external construction of the health unit. As a result, the unit has been put out of service.

5- Targeting the medical unit in the town of Qastoun in Hama governorate on 01 May 2019

Syrian government forces targeted the medical unit in the town of Qastoun in Hama governorate on 01 May 2019, with heavy artillery fire. This led to widespread destruction of the unit and the surrounding dwellings.

6- Targeting the Medical Centre in Qal'at Al-Madiq in Hama governorate on 02 May 2019.

Syrian government forces targeted Qal'at Al-Madiq Medical Centre in the city of Qal'at Al-Madiq in Hama governorate with artillery fire on 02 May 2019. The shelling led to partial destruction of the building, damage to medical and service equipment and temporary discontinuation of services.

7- Targeting Rakaya Medical Centre in Idlib Governorate on 03 May 2019.

Syrian government artillery carried out intensive shelling on the perimeter of Rakaya Medical Centre in the town of Sijneh, south of Idlib governorate, on 03 May 2019. The shelling caused extensive destruction of the building and damaged its ambulance departments. As a result, the medical centre has been put out of service.

8- Targeting of Nabd Al-Hayat Hospital in the town of Hass in Idlib Governorate on 05 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out airstrikes, directly targeting the Nabd Al-Hayat Hospital in the town of Hass in Idlib governorate on 05 May 2019. This resulted in civilian casualties, widespread damage to the hospital and discontinuation of services. (Photo 3)



Photo 3: Nabd Al-Hayat Hospital having been destroyed by Russian warplanes in Idlib countryside on 5 May 2019 | Source: Macro Media Centre (MMC)

Activist Waseem Al-Araj from the town of Hass in Idlib governorate told the VDC in Syria:



“The population of Hass town in Idlib governorate is approximately 27,000 people, including internally displaced persons from other areas. Approximately 80 percent of the town’s population has been displaced as a result of the recent attacks and the intensity of rocket shelling. The shelling has reached all vital installations and facilities in the town. On 5 May 2019 Russian warplanes carried out successive airstrikes on Nabd Al-Hayat Hospital in the town of Hass, supported by the Syrian Organization for Relief and Development. The attack destroyed the hospital completely, which put it out of service.”



9- Targeting Kafr Nabl Surgical Hospital in the city of Kafr Nabl in Idlib governorate on 5 May 2019.

Syrian government forces targeted the surgical unit in Kafr Nabouda town of Idlib governorate with artillery fire on 01 May 2019, causing partial damage to medical equipment and external construction of the health unit. As a result, the unit has been put out of service.

10- Targeting Termla Paediatric Hospital in the town of Termla in Idlib governorate on 5 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out an airstrike targeting the vicinity of the Paediatric Hospital in the town of Termla in rural Idlib on 5 May 2019. The shelling destroyed the building of the hospital and damaged medical equipment, leaving the hospital out of service.



Photo 4: Evacuating an injured inmate as a result of the targeting of Kafr Nabl Surgical Hospital
Source: Syrian Civil Defense.

Activist Mohammed Alloush from Kafr Nabl told the VDC in Syria:



“On Sunday, 5 May 2019, Russian warplanes targeted Kafr Nabl Surgical Hospital with four airstrikes, which resulted in the destruction of the hospital, leaving it out of service.”



11- Targeting Kansfra Surgical Hospital in Idlib governorate on 7 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out an airstrike targeting Kansfra Surgical Hospital the town of Kansfra in Idlib on 7 May 2019. The shelling destroyed the upper floor of the hospital, which includes an intensive care unit, a pharmacy and an administrative services hall. Furthermore, the shelling caused partial destruction of the basement and damage to medical equipment, leaving the hospital out of service.

12- Targeting Al-Ghab Medical Centre in the village of Hawija in Hama governorate on 7 May 2019.

Using barrel bombs, Syrian government helicopters bombed al-Ghab Medical Centre in al-Hawija village in al-Ghab area of Hama governorate on 7 May 2019. The shelling caused extensive destruction of the centre and surrounding facilities, leaving the centre out of service. (Photo 5)



Photo 5: Extent of damage to Al-Ghab Medical Centre caused by the bombardment of Syrian helicopters on 7 May 2019 | Source: Health Department of Hama.

13- Targeting Maar Hroumah Medical Centre in the city of Kafr Nabl in Idlib governorate on 7 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out airstrikes on the Kfar Nabl Surgical Hospital in the south of Idlib governorate on 7 May 2019. The shelling led to widespread damage to the building, the complete destruction of the intensive care unit, leaving the centre out of service.

14- Targeting KafrZeta Medical Centre in Hama governorate on 8 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out airstrikes on the perimeter of KafrZeta Medical Centre in the

city of KafrZeta in Hama governorate on 8 May 2019. The shelling destroyed the building of the hospital and damaged medical equipment, leaving the hospital out of service.

15- Targeting Nabd Al-Hayat Hospital in the town of Hass in Idlib governorate on 10 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out an airstrike on Nabd Al-Hayat Hospital in the town of Hass in Idlib Governorate with three successive missile attacks on 10 May 2019. The shelling completely destroyed the hospital, leaving it out of service. The hospital served more than 5,000 users. (Photo 6)



Photo 6: Extent of damage to the hospital's building as a result of being targeted by vacuum air-missiles. Source: Macro Media Centre (MMC)

16- Targeting Cham4 Hospital in the city of Kafr Nabl in Idlib governorate on 10 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out an airstrike on May 10, 2019, targeting Cham4 Hospital in the city of Kafr Nabl in Idlib governorate on 10 May 2019. Large parts of the hospital were destroyed, leaving it out of service.

17- Targeting Al-Ghab Medical Centre in Hama governorate on 11 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out an airstrike on 11 May 2019, targeting the Al-Ghab Medical Centre in Hama governorate. Large parts of the hospital were destroyed, leaving it out of service.

18- Targeting Hawash Paediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology Hospital 112 in Hama Governorate on 11 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out successive airstrikes on 11 May 2019, targeting the hospital in Al-Hawash village of Sahl al-Ghab in the western countryside of Hama. Large parts of the hospital were severely damaged, leaving it out of service.

19- Targeting Termla Hospital in Idlib governorate on 20 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out an air attack on 20 May 2019, targeting Termla Paediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology Hospital in the countryside of Hama. Large parts of the hospital were destroyed, leaving it out of service.

20- Targeting Al-Aqra'a Hospital in Idlib governorate on 28 May 2019.

In the morning of Tuesday, 28 May 2019, Syrian government forces targeted the Dar al-Hikma Hospital (al-Aqra ') in the city of Kafr Nabl with vacuum air-missiles. The shelling destroyed large parts of the hospital, burned generators, and a number of vehicles parked in front of the entrance, leaving the hospital completely out of service.

Independent civil activist Mohammed Alloush told the VDC in Syria:

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On Tuesday, May 25, 2019, at 09:45, Syrian government forces stationed at Camp Bredig targeted Dar Al-Hikma Hospital with high-explosive missiles. The bombardment caused massive destruction and hospital services were discontinued!” (Photo 7)

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Photo 7: Extent of damage to the hospital's building as a result of being targeted by missiles on May 25, 2019. | Source: Idlib Health Department

21- Targeting Khan Sheikhoun Surgical Unit in Idlib governorate on 29 May 2019.

Several artillery shells fell in the vicinity of Khan Sheikhoun Surgical Unit on 29 May 2019. The unit is located in the city of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib governorate. The shelling led to extensive destruction of the building and damage to medical equipment, leaving the unit out of service.

22- Targeting Al-Khatib Hospital in Idlib governorate on 4 June 2019

Syrian government forces shelled Al-Khatib Hospital in the city of Kafr Nabl in Idlib governorate on 4 June 2019. The shelling led to extensive destruction of the building and damage to medical equipment, leaving the unit out of service.

23- Targeting the medical unit in in Idlib governorate on 14 June 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out successive attacks on 14 June 2019, targeting the medical unit in the town of Hass in Arihah city of Idlib governorate. The attacks led to widespread destruction of the building of the medical unit and surrounding buildings, leaving the unit out of service.

24- Targeting Hayesh Medical Unit in Idlib governorate on 15 June 2019.

Russian warplanes attacked the perimeter of the Hayish Medical Unit, located in the city of Ma'aret al-Nu'man in Idlib governorate on 15 June 2019. The bombardment partially destroyed the building and caused temporary discontinuation of services.

25- Targeting an ambulance car in Idlib governorate on 20 June 2019

Syrian Air Force warplanes targeted an ambulance car belonging to Banafsj Organisation/ Maarat al-Numan sector on Thursday morning, 20 June 2019. The airstrike resulted in killing three people, including two paramedics, and wounding three others in the ambulance while transporting individuals who were injured in an aerial bombardment of the town of Hayesh, which killed three people, as a result of an earlier attack by Syrian government aircrafts. (Photo 8)



Photo 8: Ambulance car which has been targeted in June 2019.
Source: Idlib Health Department

26- Targeting Jisr Al-Shughour Surgical Hospital in Idlib governorate on 10 July 2019.

Syrian Air Force warplanes targeted Jisr al-Shughour Surgical Hospital in the centre of Jisr Al-Shughour city in Idlib governorate on Wednesday, 10 July 2019. The shelling killed six people, mostly children and women, and wounded dozens, several of them critically. The shelling caused extensive destruction of the building of the hospital, surrounding buildings, interior fittings and rescue mechanisms. Consequently, the hospital was put out of service. (Photo 9)



Photo 9: the extent of destruction of Jisr al-Shughour Surgical Hospital in Idlib governorate on 10 July 2019.
Source: Idlib Health Department

27- Targeting the health centre in the city of Saraqeb in Idlib governorate on 10 July 2019.

Syrian warplanes launched air strikes in the centre of the city of Saraqeb with explosive missiles on 10 July 2019. The attack resulted in severe damage to the health centre, leading to temporary evacuation of the centre and discontinuation of services.

28- Targeting Al-Rahma Private Hospital in the town of Telmens in Idlib governorate on 21 August 2019.

Russian warplanes targeted the Al-Rahma Private Hospital in the town of Telmens in the eastern countryside of Ma'rat al-Nu'man with four airstrikes on 21 August 2019. The shelling completely destroyed the hospital and put it out of service. With the exception of one civilian who happened to be in the premises at the time of the airstrike, no casualties were recorded among the hospital staff or its users. This is because the hospital was evacuated at an earlier time. (Photo 10)



Photo 10: Extent of damage in Al-Rahma Private Hospital as a result of being targeted on 21 August 2019. | Source: Idlib Health Department

Attacks on schools and educational institutions

The massive destruction was not limited to hospitals and medical centres, but also to other facilities such as schools and educational institutions. According to the VDC correspondents in northern Syria, most schools and educational facilities operating in these areas have been directly or indirectly targeted by Syrian government forces and bombed by Russian warplanes. The VDC recorded the death of at least 3 civilians in the education sector as a result of the targeting of educational facilities by both Syrian government forces and Russian warplanes.

Mustafa Haj Ali, from the Education Department in Idlib governorate, told the VDC in Syria:

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“The majority of schools and educational centres are still on half-term holiday. School hours were supposed to start at the beginning of September 2019, but were delayed until early October, as a result of the fierce attacks on educational facilities in Idlib and Hama governorates. This is in addition to the use of more than 50 schools shelters by people displaced from other areas. We have set up specialized committees to evacuate internally displaced persons to private shelters. More than 100 educational facilities have been directly or indirectly targeted, and dozens of others located in hot spots have been put out of service.”

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1- Targeting Al-Qadisiya School in the town of Al-Hubeit on 3 May 2019.

Dozens of artillery shells fell in the town of Al-Hubeit in Idlib governorate on 3 May 2019. These shells were fired from camps belonging to Syrian government forces stationed in Hama countryside. Warplanes also targeted residential areas in the town, resulting in widespread destruction of infrastructure, including Al-Qadisiyah School and the health centre, leaving them out of service.

2- Targeting Khaled Al-Mousa School in Al-Hubeit town on 3 May 2019.

The Artillery of Syrian government forces fired dozens of rockets at Al-Hubeit town in Idlib governorate from Syrian government forces' camps in Hama countryside on 3 May 2019. The shelling reached houses and residential neighbourhoods in the town, caused extensive damage to the surrounding buildings and Khaled al-Mousa school, leaving the latter out of service.

3- Targeting Khalid Bakkour School in Al-Hubeit town on 3 May 2019.

Syrian Air Force warplanes carried out an airstrike against Khaled Bakkour School in the town of Al-Hubeit in Idlib governorate on 3 May 2019. The shelling caused extensive damage to



صورة تظهر لحظة القصف الذي طال مدرسة خالد بكور والأبنية المحيطة بتاريخ 03 أيار / مايو 2019.
المصدر : الدفاع المدني في سوريا

the school and the surrounding civilian houses and their suspension. As a result, the school was put out of service. (Photo 11)

4- Targeting the girls' secondary school in the village of Kafr Sijana on 4 May 2019.

Syrian Air Forces carried out successive airstrikes with vacuum air-missiles on the town of Kafr Sijana in Idlib governorate on 4 May 2019. One raid targeted the girls' secondary school and the Nursing Institute in the town. The shelling partially destroyed the school and the institute, leaving them out of service.

5- Targeting the Southern Bireh School in the city of Khan Sheikhoun on 15 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out an airstrike with vacuum bombs on the residential neighbourhoods in the city of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib governorate at 11:00 on 15 May 2019. The raid also targeted the Southern Bireh School, causing severe damage to its building and leaving the school out of service.

6- Targeting Al-Hamza School in the city of Khan Sheikhoun on 15 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out successive airstrikes with vacuum air-missiles on the neighbourhoods of the city of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib governorate at 19:00 on 15 May 2019. One of the attacks directly targeted Al-Hamzah School, which resulted in significant damage to the internal building and the external courtyard, leaving the school completely out of service.

7- The head of the Local Council in Khan Sheikhoun Abdul Majeed Sormani said:

“

“incessant and heavy shelling destroyed a number of vital facilities in Khan Sheikhoun. This includes including: Khan Sheikhoun Power Company, Al Rawda Bakery, the Public Market, the Town Hall, the post office building, five schools, one kindergarten and four mosques. The majority of the city residents, who have taken refuge in the outskirts of Khan Sheikhoun, have fled in the hope of returning home soon. A number of families have also moved to the displacement camps in northern Syria.” (Photo 12)

”



Photo 12: Targeting the neighbourhoods of the city of Khan Sheikhoun on 15 May 2019
Source: Syrian Civil Defense.

8- Targeting Ajyal Al Mustaqbal School in the town of Kafr Sijnah on 15 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out successive airstrikes with vacuum air-missiles on Kafr Sijnah School in Idlib governorate on 15 May 2019. The shelling caused extensive damage to the school, leaving it out of service. (Photo 13)



Photo 13: Targeting the town of Kafr Sijnah on 15 May 2019
Source: Syrian Civil Defense.

9- Targeting Sarjeh Primary School in the town of Sarjeh on 9 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out airstrikes on Sarjeh Primary School in the town of Sarjeh in Idlib countryside with vacuum air-missiles on 9 May 2019. The shelling partially destroyed the school building and led to temporary discontinuation of services.

10- Targeting Al Anshita School in the city of Khan Sheikhoun on 9 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out airstrikes on Al Anshita School in the city of Khan Sheikhoun with vacuum air-missiles on 9 May 2019. The shelling resulted in the injury of two civilians, widespread destruction of the school's building, and temporary suspension followed by discontinuation of services.

11- Targeting Shannan School in the town of Shannan on 09 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out airstrikes on the town of Shannan in Idlib countryside on 09 May 2019. One of the raids targeted Shannan School with vacuum air-missiles. The shelling partially destroyed the school building, leaving it temporarily out of service.

12- Targeting Abdul Rahman Al-Nasser School in the city of Jisr Al-Shughour on 14 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out several and consecutive airstrikes on the city of Jisr al-Shughour on 14 May 2019. One raid targeted Abdulrahman Al-Nasser School and surrounding residential buildings. The shelling resulted in the injury of one civilian, widespread destruction of the school's building, temporary suspension followed by discontinuation of services.

13- Targeting Kafr Sijnah Al-Muhdatha School on 15 May 2019.

Russian warplanes targeted Kafr Sijnah Al-Muhdatha school in Idlib governorate with vacuum air-missiles on 15 May 2019. The bombardment partially destroyed the school building, leaving it temporarily out of service.

14- Targeting Hamza Al Khateeb school in the town of Kafr Sijnah on 16 May 2019

Russian warplanes targeted Hamza Al Khateeb school in the town of Kafr Sijnah in Idlib governorate with vacuum air-missiles on 16 May 2019. The bombardment partially destroyed the school building, leaving it temporarily out of service.

15- Targeting Ajyal Al-Ghad School in the town of Khan Sheikhoun city on 16 May 2019

Syrian warplanes carried out successive airstrikes with vacuum air-missiles on the neighbourhoods of Khan Sheikhoun city in Idlib governorate on 16 May 2019. One raid was directly targeted at Ajyal Al-Ghad School, resulting in the destruction of the school, leaving it completely out of service.

16- Targeting Farahidi school in Khan Sheikhoun city on 21 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out successive airstrikes with vacuum air-missiles and machine guns on the neighbourhoods of Khan Sheikhoun city in Idlib governorate on 21 May 2019. One raid was directly targeted at Farahidi school, resulting in the destruction of the school, leaving it completely out of service.

17- Targeting Ismael Latah High School in the town of Al-Bara town on 22 May 2019

Syrian warplanes targeted Ismael Latah High School in the town of Al-Bara in Idlib governorate with vacuum air-missiles on 22 May 2019. The bombardment partially destroyed the school building, leaving it temporarily out of service.

18- Targeting Ruqaya Bint Malik School in Jisr Al-Shughour city on 22 May 2019.

Syrian government forces shelled the northern side of Jisr Al-Shughur with long-range missiles on 22 May 2019. One of the rockets exploded at Ruqaya Bint Malik School and the surrounding civilian houses, wounding 14 civilians, including a child and two women. The shelling also resulted in widespread destruction of the school and surrounding residential buildings, leaving the school completely out of service.

19- Targeting Maysaloun School in the town of Kafr Sijnah on 22 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out several successive airstrikes on the town of Kafr Sijnah on 22 May 2019, one of which targeted Maysaloun School. The shelling resulted in the injury of two civilians and widespread destruction of the school's building, leaving it out of service.

20- Targeting Ibn Al-Qayyem School in Hayesh on 15 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out successive airstrikes with machineguns and vacuum air-missiles on the town of Hayesh in the southern countryside of Idlib on 15 May 2019. The shelling resulted in the death of one civilian, the injury of two and widespread destruction of the school's building, leaving it out of service.

21- Targeting Al-Awda Primary School in the town of Hayesh on 10 June 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out successive air strikes with machine guns and vacuum missiles on the town of Hayesh in the southern countryside of Idlib on 10 June 2019. One raid targeted Al-Awda Primary School in the town. The bombardment partially destroyed the school's building and caused discontinuation of services.

22- Targeting Al-Nuqair Primary School in the town of Al-Nuqair on 20 July 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out successive airstrikes with machine guns and vacuum air-

missiles on the town of Al-Nuqair in Idlib governorate on 20 July 2019. One raid targeted Al-Nuqair Primary School in the town. The bombardment partially destroyed the school's building and caused discontinuation of services.

Targeting mosques and places of worship

The shelling that was carried out by both Syrian government forces and Russian warplanes have not spared places of worship, particularly mosques. Places of worship had their share of the daily attacks in Hama and Idlib governorates, where a number of mosques were bombed and others were completely and deliberately destroyed. The VDC in Syria has recorded the damage to 9 mosques as a result of direct and indirect attacks by both Syrian government forces and loyalist groups, as well as the shelling of Russian warplanes. These mosques include:

1- Targeting Al-Rahman Mosque in the city of Khan Sheikhoun on 7 June 2019.

Syrian warplanes launched successive airstrikes with vacuum air-missiles on Al-Rahman Mosque on the city of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib countryside 7 June 2019. The shelling damaged the roof of the mosque and large parts of its walls, putting it temporarily out of service. (Photo 14)



Photo 14: extent of damage in Al-Rahman Mosque as a result of being targeted 7 June 2019
Source: Syrian Civil Defense.

2- Targeting Al-Rahman Mosque in the village of Arinba on 8 May 2019.

Russian warplanes launched successive airstrikes with vacuum air-missiles on Al-Rahman Mosque in the village of Arinba in Idlib countryside on 8 May 2019. The shelling damaged large parts of the mosque, putting it temporarily out of service.

3- Targeting Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq Mosque in the village of Al-Nuqair on 10 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes targeted Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq Mosque in the village of Al-Nuqair in Idlib

governorate with vacuum air-missiles on 10 May 2019. The shelling damaged large parts of the mosque, putting it temporarily out of service.

4- Targeting the Grand Mosque of Marzita in the village of Marzita on 29 April 2019

Russian warplanes launched successive airstrikes with rocket-propelled grenades on the centre of the village of Marzita on 29 April 2019. One raid targeted the Grand Mosque of Marzita in the town in the southern countryside of Idlib. The shelling completely destroyed the mosque and put it out of service. (Photo 15)



Photo 15: Extent of damage in Grand Mosque of Marzita as a result of being shelled by Russian warplanes on 29 April 2019 | Source: Thiqa Agency

5- Targeting Ma'arratelseen Mosque on 11 May 2019.

Russian Sukhoi-24 warplanes carried out successive airstrikes with vacuum air-missiles on the town's mosque in Idlib countryside on 11 May 2019. The shelling killed three people, a woman and her two children, and completely destroyed the mosque. (Photo 16)



Photo 16: Extent of damage to Ma'arratelseen Mosque on 11 May 2019 Source: Macro Media Centre (MMC)

6- Targeting Ibdita Mosque on 11 May 2019.

Russian Sukhoi-24 warplanes carried out successive airstrikes with vacuum air-missiles on the mosque of the town of Ibdita in Idlib countryside on 11 May 2019. The shelling resulted in the injury of one person and widespread destruction of the mosque and surrounding civilian dwellings, leaving the mosque out of service.

7- Targeting Al-Salam Mosque in the village of Abdeen on 6 May 2019.

Syrian helicopters carried out several successive airstrikes with missiles and explosive shells on Al-Salam Mosque in the village of Abdeen in Idlib countryside on 6 May 2019. The shelling led to widespread destruction of the mosque and surrounding civilian dwellings, leaving the mosque out of service.

8- Targeting Al-Makateb Mosque in the city of Saraqeb on 22 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out several successive airstrikes with missiles and explosive shells on the city centre of Saraqeb and surrounding residential areas on 22 May 2019. The bombardment also [affected Al-Makateb Mosque](#) in the city centre. In addition, it resulted in the death of three civilians (including a child), injured dozens and caused widespread destruction of the mosque and surrounding residential areas, leaving the mosque temporarily out of service. (Photo 17)

9- Targeting Al Hassan and Hussein Mosque in the village of Horta on 8 July 2019

Russian Sukhoi-24 warplanes carried out successive airstrikes with vacuum air-missiles on the village's mosque in Idlib countryside on 8 July 2019. The shelling killed three people, a woman and her two children, and completely destroyed the mosque. (Photo 18)



Photo 17: Extent of damage to the inner sanctum of Al-Makateb Mosque Saraqeb on 22 May 2019.



Photo 18: Extent of damage to Al Hassan and Hussein Mosque as a result of being shelled on 8 July 2019 | Source: Syrian Civil Defense

Targeting public markets

Most popular markets in areas under the control of the Syrian armed opposition in the governorates of Hama and Idlib have been subject to direct airstrikes and attacks by Syrian government forces and shelling by Russian warplanes, resulting in the death and injury of dozens of civilians. 13 markets were targeted during the recent military campaign, according to the VDC correspondents in northern Syria.

Mr. M. A, a civil defense volunteer, told the VDC in Syria:

“

“Backed by Russian warplanes, Syrian government forces targeted vital installations and facilities in the governorates of Idlib and Hama directly and intensively, using various types of munitions, missiles and explosive shells with enormous destructive capacity. The aim is simply to destroy all civilian service facilities to force civilians to conclude settlement or displacement agreements that result in moving to other areas.”

”

1- Targeting Tal Touqan public market in the town of Ras Al-Ain on 7 May 2019.

Russian warplanes launched airstrikes targeting the public market in the town of Ras al-Ain in the eastern countryside of Idlib with vacuum air- missiles on 7 May 2019. The shelling killed three civilians, injured eight and caused large-scale destruction of shops and houses. (Photo 19)



Photo 19: A wounded person being treated from injuries caused by the attack on the public market in the town of Ras Al-Ain on 7 May 2019 | Source: Syrian Civil Defense

2- Targeting the public market in the town of Kafr Halab on 13 May 2019.

Russian warplanes launched successive airstrikes on the public market in the town of Kafr Halab in Idlib governorate on 13 May 2019. The shelling killed 12 people, injured dozens and caused widespread destruction of public buildings and properties.

3- Targeting the fish market in the city of Jisr Al-Shughour on 14 May 2019.

Russian Sukhoi-24 warplanes carried out airstrikes on the fish market in the centre of Jisr

al-Shughur with two successive missiles on 14 May 2019. The shelling killed eight civilians, injured dozens and caused massive fires in shops and civilian dwellings.

Activist Duraid Hammoud of the VDC reported the following concerning the massacre of the fish market:

“

On 14 May 2019, half an hour before Iftar (when the market is very crowded), warplanes carried out double airstrikes (two rockets, 50 meters apart) on the centre of Jisr al-Shughour. One missile exploded in Abdul Rahman Naser School and the other targeted the fish market. The shelling resulted in the injury of 8 people and the death of 8 (6 were killed immediately and 2 died later in hospital). It also caused damage to some classrooms at Abdul Rahman Naser School, destroyed some shops in the fish market and burned some vehicles. (Video [1](#) – [2](#))

”

4- Targeting the public market in the city of Ma’aret al-Nu’man in Idlib governorate on 21 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes launched intensive airstrikes targeting the public market in the city of Ma’aret al-Nu’man in the governorate of Idlib on 21 May 2019. The shelling resulted in the killing of 3 civilians, the injury of 7 and large-scale destruction of shops. (Photo 20)



Photo 20: Extent of destruction of shops resulting from shelling by Syrian government forces on 21 May 2019 | Source: Idlib Health Department.

Mr. Khaled Mousa, a member of a relief team operating in the city, told VDC in Syria:

“

“Syrian warplanes targeted the public market in the city of Maarat al-Nu’man in the middle of the night. Shops were closed, which limited losses. The shelling resulted in the death of three civilians and the injury of dozens. Surrounding shops and residential buildings were severely damaged. This is the second massacre committed by the regime’s warplanes within a few hours of the massacre of the city of Kafr Nabl last Sunday, which killed ten people.”

”

5- Targeting Al-Hal Market in the city of Khan Sheikhoun on 23 May 2019.

Syrian helicopters shelled Al-Hal Market in Khan Sheikhoun with barrel bombs on 23 May 2019. The shelling led to huge fires in shops and partial destruction of the surrounding residential buildings, without causing any deaths.

6- Targeting the street of the public market in the city of Arihah on 27 May 2019.

Syrian MiG-23 warplanes carried out airstrikes on the side street of the public market in the city of Arihah in Idlib governorate on 27 May 2019. The shelling resulted in extensive damage to residential buildings, the death of 4 people and the injury of others.

Muhannad, an activist from the city of Arihah, told the VDC:

“

“On 27 May 2019, a MiG-23 warplane launched airstrikes on the perimeter of the public market in Jabal al-Arba’een in Idlib with two vacuum air-missiles in conjunction with a similar bombing targeting the centre of Arihah. The shelling killed **12** people, **6** women, **6** children and **1** young man, and wounded dozens. Two buildings were also completely destroyed and dozens of surrounding houses were damaged.

”

7- Targeting the public market in the town of Khan al-Sabl on 28 May 2019.

Russian warplanes bombed the centre of the popular market in the town of Khan al-Sabel in Idlib governorate on 28 May 2019. The shelling resulted in the death of 2 people, including a child, and the injury of 5 others. It also caused severe damage to surrounding shops and residential buildings.

8- Targeting the local market in the town of Kafr Halab on 28 May 2019.

Russian warplanes targeted the local market in the town of Kafr Halab in Idlib countryside with vacuum air-missiles on 28 May 2019. The shelling killed 8 civilians, injured dozens, and caused large-scale destruction of houses.

Muhannad, an activist from the city of Arihah, told the VDC:

“

“Russian warplanes carried out airstrikes on the area of the public market with two vacuum air-missiles at 5 pm on 28 May 2019, two hours before Iftar when the town’s residents gathered in the public market of the town of Kafr Halab. The raid resulted in the death of **13** civilians and the injury of **5**. It also destroyed more than **5** houses and **3** shops in the town’s market.

”

9- Targeting the public market in the town of Hayesh on 20 June 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out intensive airstrikes on the public market in the town of Hayesh in Idlib governorate 20 June 2019. The shelling caused widespread destruction of shops and properties, the death of 5 civilians, including a child, and the injury of 8 others. (Photo 21)



Photo 21: Shelling the public market in the town of Hayesh town on 20 June 2019
Source: Syrian Civil Defense

10- Targeting the market street in the city of Arihah on 28 July 2019.

Syrian Air Force warplanes bombarded the main market and residential buildings in the city of Arihah in Idlib countryside on 28 July 2019. The shelling resulted in the death of 5 civilians, seriously injuring dozens and widespread destruction of shops and residential buildings.

11- Targeting the public market in the city of Maarat al-Nu'man on 22 July 2019.

Russian warplanes bombed the public market in the city of Ma'aret al-Nu'man in Idlib countryside on 22 July 2019. The shelling resulted in the death of 13 civilians, the injury of dozens of others and widespread destruction of shops and residential buildings surrounding the area.

12- Targeting the public market in Saraqeb on 22 April 2019.

Syrian government forces shelled the public market in Saraqeb, east of Idlib, with vacuum missiles on 22 April 2019. The shelling killed one civilian, injured two others, including a child, and damaged shops.

13- Targeting the public market in the town of Kfarouma on 24 June 2019.

The public market in the town was heavily bombed by Russian warplanes on 24 June 2019. The shelling killed 22 people, mostly children and women, injured dozens and dozens of shops were completely burnt out

Wasim Al-Araj, an activist from the town of Kfarouma, told the VDC:

“

The town of Kfarouma is located in the western countryside of Maarat al-Numan. According to the latest census, the population of the town was **21,000**, in addition to **3,000** displaced civilians. The total number was **24,000**. The town was heavily bombarded by both Assad's and Russian warplanes during the crackdown on the southern countryside of Idlib. This led to displacing approximately 70% of the town's population. On 24 June 2019, the popular market in the town was targeted by Russian warplanes, killing and injuring dozens as well as damaging the surrounding shops.

”

Targeting water plants and fuel stations

Several attacks on water plants and fuel stations were recorded. These stations supplied a number of villages and towns in Idlib and Hama governorates. The VDC recorded two attacks that targeted both water plants and fuel stations, resulting in widespread damage and discontinuation of services.

1- Targeting Saraqeb water and power plant on 19 June 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out 4 successive airstrikes on Saraqeb's water plant on 19 June 2019. The shelling destroyed the plant's equipment's, leaving it out of service. It also caused injuries to many, including one woman.

2- Targeting Hazarin Gas Station in the city of Kafr Nabl in Idlib governorate on 30 May 2019.

Russian warplanes carried out three consecutive airstrikes the Hazarin Gas Station in the city of Kafr Nabl on 30 May 2019. The shelling destroyed the station's equipment's, leaving it out of service.

Targeting civil defense centre

Syrian government forces, backed by Russian warplanes, directly targeted civil defense headquarters and centres. VDC correspondents in northern Syria reported that airstrikes and artillery shelling with rocket launchers completely destroyed 12 centres, leaving them out of service.

1- Targeting the civil defense centre in Kafrnabouda in Hama governorate on 1 May 2019.

Syrian government forces stationed in camps in Hama countryside targeted the town of Kafrnabouda with more than 16 rockets fired by a launcher on 1 May 2019. The shelling completely destroyed the civil defense centre, causing damage to cars and vehicles as well as injuries to one of the centre's team.

2- Targeting the civil defense centre in Al-Mansoura in Hama governorate on 3 May 2019.

Syrian government forces stationed in camps in Hama countryside targeted the town of Mansoura in Hama governorate with artillery shells on 3 May 2019. The shelling resulted in partial destruction of the civil defense centre in the town, extensive damage to vehicles and cars, leaving the centre out of service.

3- Targeting the civil defense centre in the town of Sfohen in Idlib governorate on 4 May 2019.

Syrian helicopters targeted the civil defense centre in the town of Sfohen in Idlib governorate with barrel bombs on 4 May 2019. The shelling caused extensive damage to the building,

medical equipment, rescue vehicle and the solar system including panels and power generators.

4- Targeting the civil defense centre in the town of Maaret Harma in Idlib governorate on 4 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes targeted the civil defense centre in the town of Maaret Harma in Idlib countryside on 4 May 2019. The attack destroyed a rescue vehicle and an ambulance and caused extensive damage to the building of the centre.

5- Targeting the civil defense centre in the town of Balyoun in Idlib governorate on 4 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out an airstrike with cluster bombs targeting the civil defense centre in the town of Balyoun in Idlib countryside on 4 May 2019. The shelling injured the director of the centre, Tarek Alloush, and caused damage to the ambulance.

6- Targeting the civil defense centre in the town of Al-Hubeit in Idlib governorate on 2 May 2019.

Russian warplanes bombed a civil defense headquarters in the town of Al-Hubeit in Idlib countryside with vacuum air-missiles 2 May 2019. The bombardment completely destroyed the headquarters and damaged the rescue equipment and vehicles, leaving the centre completely out of service.

7- Targeting the civil defense centre in the town of Al QarQour in Hama governorate on 4 May 2019.

Syrian government forces stationed in camps in Hama countryside targeted the civil defense centre in the town of Al QarQour in Hama governorate on 4 May 2019 with artillery shells. The shelling resulted in partial destruction of the centre damage to cars and vehicles, leaving it out of service.

8- Targeting the civil defense centre in the city of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib governorate on 10 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out an airstrike on the civil defense centre in the city of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib governorate on 10 May 2019. The shelling caused extensive destruction of the centre's building and equipment. The centre has already been targeted by Russian warplanes on 16 February 2019. However, the attack resulted in limited damage only

9- Targeting the civil defense centre in the city of Kafr Nabl in Idlib governorate on 13 May 2019.

Russian Sukhoi-24 warplanes carried out several successive [airstrikes](#) on the civil defense centre in the city of Kafr Nabl with vacuum air-missiles on 13 May 2019. The shelling completely destroyed the centre and all vehicles, including rescue and ambulance cars. (Photo 22)

10- Targeting the civil defense centre in Qastoun in Hama governorate on 12 May 2019.

Syrian government forces stationed in camps in Hama countryside targeted the civil defense centre in Qastoun in Hama governorate on 12 May 2019, with artillery shells. The shelling resulted in partial destruction of the centre and extensive damage to cars and vehicles, leaving the centre out of service.



Photo 22: Extent of damage in the civil defense centre in the city of Kafr Nabl with on 13 May 2019
Source: Idlib Health Department

11- Targeting the civil defense centre in Latamneh in Hama governorate on 23 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out an airstrike with barrel bombs on the civil defense centre in Latamneh in Hama countryside on 23 May 2019. The shelling completely destroyed a fire engine belonging to the centre and caused extensive damage to the its building and equipment, leaving it out of service.

12- Targeting the civil defense centre in Mork in Hama governorate on 09 July 2019.

Syrian warplanes targeted the civil defense centre in Mork with successive airstrikes. The attack caused extensive damage to the vehicles and the building of the centre, leaving the latter out of service.

Attacks on bakeries

Most bakeries in Hama and Idlib governorates were directly attacked by both Syrian and Russian forces, which put them completely out of service. The VDC correspondents in the northern Syria noted that 4 bakeries were targeted and completely put out of service.

1- Targeting of Ableen Bakery in the town of Ableen in Idlib governorate on 2 May 2019.

Syrian helicopters dropped four barrel bombs near the kindergarten the bakery in the town of Ableen, south of the city of Arihah in Idlib governorate on 2 May 2019. The shelling resulted in the injury of a woman and her child, extensive destruction of the buildings of the bakery and the kindergarten, as well as surrounding residential prosperities. (Photo 23)



Photo 23: Members of the civil defense trying to evacuate houses as a result of shelling in the town of Ablin. | Source: Syrian Civil Defense

2- Targeting Al-Hamra Bakery in the city of Khan Sheikhoun on 29 May 2019.

Syrian warplanes carried out airstrikes on Al-Hamra Bakery in the city of Khan Sheikhoun in the southern countryside of Idlib governorate on 29 May 2019. The shelling led to the destruction of large parts of the bakery's building and its equipment, leaving it out of service.

3- Targeting Ahsam Bakery in the town of Ahsam in Idlib governorate on 01 June 2019.

Warplanes carried out intensive airstrikes on the centre of the town of Ahsam in Jabal Al-Zawiya in Idlib governorate on 01 June 2019. The shelling targeted the town's bakery and the neighbouring residential buildings, which set the bakery on fire and caused damage to significant parts of the building, putting the bakery out of service.

4- Targeting Khan Sheikhoun Bakery in the city of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib governorate on 23 July 2019

Syrian warplanes targeted a bakery in the city of Khan Sheikhoun with high-explosive rockets on 23 July 2019. The shelling resulted in the injury of a bakery worker and extensive damage to parts of the bakery and its equipment, leaving it completely out of service. (Photo 24)

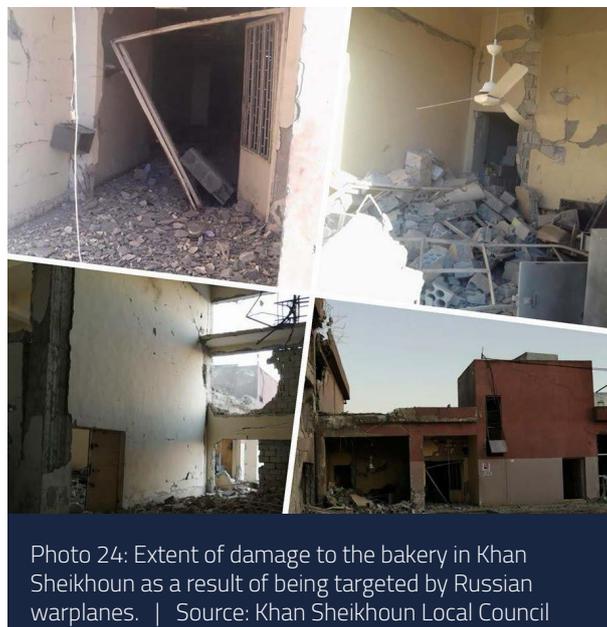


Photo 24: Extent of damage to the bakery in Khan Sheikhoun as a result of being targeted by Russian warplanes. | Source: Khan Sheikhoun Local Council

Conclusion and Legal Opinion

According to the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross reports, there are several factors that qualify the Syrian conflict as an international armed conflict. These include the U.S. missile attacks on the Shirat airbase in Homs in central Syria, and the unannounced Turkish military intervention since August 2016. Targeting medical facilities, schools, and places of worship is therefore a clear violation of the provisions of international humanitarian law and the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which Syria has ratified, and may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

War crimes are defined in Article VIII of the Rome Statute as grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, namely, acts committed against persons or property protected under the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention. This is not limited to international armed conflicts but also to situations of non-international armed conflict as well as other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable to international armed conflicts within the established scope of international law.

Targeting such facilities could also constitute a crime against humanity under Article VII of the Rome Statute because it is a widespread and systematic attack directed against the civilian population who do not take an active part in the hostilities and imposes on them very poor living conditions leading to their destruction.

The VDC asserts that Russian and Syrian government forces violate the principles of international humanitarian law. They target civilians directly and deliberately. They also targeted aid workers, infrastructure and civilian objects, and systematic and systematic attacks on civilian neighbourhoods were recorded unambiguously, killing hundreds of civilians and causing heavy property damage.

The VDC in Syria condemns the manner in which civilians are punished and used as a tool to win battles. The Centre notes here that targeting civilians and civilian objects is a war crime under international humanitarian law. The Centre calls for the protection of civilians and treating them as neutrals in accordance with the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the First and Second Geneva Protocols of 1977, and the customary rules of international humanitarian law.

The VDC calls on the United Nations and the international community to shoulder their responsibilities in protecting civilians by all available means at their disposal, and to pressure the Russian and Syrian governments to force them to treat civilians as neutrals in the conflict.

Indiscriminate attacks on civilians constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law, in accordance with customary international humanitarian law. They therefore constitute war crimes where commanders who have issued orders bear individual criminal responsibility for such attacks, as well as anyone who has committed, facilitated or assisted in the commission of such crimes.

The VDC calls on the United Nations and the international community to shoulder their responsibilities in protecting civilians by all available means at their disposal, and to pressure the Russian and Syrian governments to force them to treat civilians as neutrals in the conflict.



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