SOHR booklet

Comprising 22 reports with infographics, summarises all key developments in Syria in 2021

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As years come to pass quickly, millions of Syrians suffer the scourge of a protracted war which has affected all aspects of life over a decade now, as the warring powers have neither had mercy nor compassion for the ordinary, suffering civilians; instead, they have continued to target, with deadly and destructive force, houses, schools, hospitals and public infrastructures. Meanwhile, the interventions of international and regional powers have worsened the situation further and piled more misery on the people of Syria. Alas, the has-been peaceful revolution, whose aim was to regain dignity, achieve democracy and restore the nation’s resources looted by a corrupt and despotic ruling class, has turned, with the help of unempathetic, self-serving powers and autocratic regimes, into arguably one of the deadliest and bloodiest conflicts in the 21st century; a conflict that has brutally killed, maimed, impoverished and displaced millions of Syrians. Furthermore, this conflict has drained and crippled the nation’s entire economy, resulting in disastrous living conditions for all Syrians, and in particular for those displaced and in makeshift refugee camps.

The Syrian Revolution has cost the people of Syria dearly, while several powers have exploited their peaceful protests and dreams of dignity, equality, freedom, and getting rid of a tyrant regime. By now the story is known to all: those powers have cared only about serving their narrow interests, expanding and strengthening their presence in Syria. This mere fact has dashed the dreams of Syrians, led to demographic changes in several regions and threatened the future and unity of Syria as a functioning country.

Another year passed and yet the statistics do not read well. More people have lost their lives, forcibly displaced, become poorer and lost hope in getting back to normal anytime soon. They have heard promises and hopes of political settlement, seen international indifference and inaction. Sadly, more Syrians have been killed by those actively ignited violence and engaged in Syria’s “civil war.” All those with Syrian blood on their hands, and those who aided and abetted the killing, torture, displacement of Syrians should be held accountable for their heinous deeds sooner or later and despite the current inaction by the international community.
With most warring parties in Syria enjoying political, military, diplomatic and operational support by foreign powers and entities, the catastrophic situation in Syria is unlikely to see tangible improvement.

Turkey seeks to accomplish project of demographic change by expanding further into Syria, while Iran similarly exerts desperate efforts to change the demography in areas where its forces and loyal militias are stationed across Syria by offering financial incentives, exploiting extreme poverty and continuous usage of religion and sectarianism. Iran is using Syria in its wider game of score-settling and proxy wars with its foes in the Middle East.

Russia, on the other hand, continues to utilise Syria’s resources under the cover of “preventing the fall of the regime and state,” amid diligent efforts to have the lion’s share in the “reconstruction” of Syria, for which major powers are competing.

Moreover, the International Coalition has cited the “protection of oil fields and fighting Takfiri groups, ISIS in particular” as an excuse to stay in northern region of Syria.

While the Syrians have fallen victims to geopolitics.

Believing in merits of human rights and encompassing humanitarian principles, and as a Syrian human rights organisation, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), has done its utmost to monitor and document all violations committed against the Syrian people since the beginning of 2021 and tracked all developments on the ground.

In 2021, SOHR published 8,255 news articles, nearly 480 reports and more than 145 exclusive interviews with politicians, human rights activists, artists and military commanders. Meanwhile, local and international press and media agencies cited SOHR articles on more than 9,769 occasions. Also, SOHR’s director, Mr. Rami Abdulrahman, participated in 520 interviews on numerous international TV channels and radio stations.
SOHR has compiled its 2021 booklet, comprising 22 reports with infographics, to summarise all key developments in Syria in 2021 with the aim of highlighting the plight of Syrian people through presenting all violations and crimes committed against them.

**Syrian Observatory for Human Rights 2021 Developments**

*480 Reports 8225 News articles*

*520 Interviews by SOHR director on various TV channels and radio stations*

*145 Exclusive interviews with politicians, human rights activists, artists, experts and military commanders*

*Local and international press and media agencies citing SOHR articles on more than 9,769 occasions*
## Contents

### Chapter 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yearly death toll</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian women</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapped people</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detainees and deaths under torture</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old ordnance</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish Jandarma</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkish drone attacks</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Olive Branch&quot; areas</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Euphrates Shield&quot; areas</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Peace Spring&quot; areas</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;De-escalation zone&quot;</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISIS</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Hawl camp</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDF-controlled areas</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Coalition</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition drone attacks</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israeli attacks</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime-controlled areas</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Rukban camp</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights documented the death of 3,882 people in 2021. A breakdown of these fatalities, according to the perpetrator and method of death categories, is as follows:

Civilians: 1,558 people, including 383 children under the age of 18, and 193 women over the age of 18, and they are as follows:

- 300 civilians, including 28 women and 138 children, were killed in explosions of IEDs and landmines.
- 288 civilians, including 15 children and 18 women, were killed in separate assassinations across Syria.
- 249 civilians, including 44 women and 20 children, were killed in “honour killings”, family infightings, factional rivalries and indiscriminate gunfire.
- 234 civilians, including 74 children and 46 women, were killed in shelling and gunfire by regime forces.
- 76 civilians, including seven children and 18 women, were killed by ISIS.
- 72 civilians, including nine children and 13 women, were killed in unknown circumstances.
- 79 children died of poor health conditions.
- 57 civilians, including a woman, died under torture in regime prison.
• 47 civilians, eight women and four children, were killed in explosions of booby-trapped vehicles.

• 36 civilians, including a woman and eight children, were killed by the Turkish border guard forces “Jandarma”.

• 30 civilians, including four children and two women, were killed by Syria Democratic Forces (SDF).

• 31 civilians, including 12 children and four women, were killed in Turkish bombardment.

• 24 civilians, including two children and two women, were killed by rebel and Islamist factions.

• 14 civilians, including seven children and three women, were killed in Russian rocket attacks and airstrikes.

• Nine civilians, including one child and two women, were killed by jihadist groups and organisations.

• Six civilians were killed by International Coalition Forces.

• Six civilians, including one woman and three children, were killed in Israeli attacks.

Regime forces: 607

ISIS members: 503

Syrian fighters of Islamist and rebel factions and other movements and organisations: 377
Syrian members of the Popular Committees, National Defense Forces (NDF) and regime-backed militiamen: 305

Jihadists: 158

Members of Syria Democratic Forces (SDF) and affiliated military formations: 159

Loyalists to Iranian and regime forces of non-Syrian citizens mostly of the Shiite sect: 109

Loyalists to Iranian and regime forces of Syrian citizens mostly of the Shiite sect: 53

Turkish soldiers: 30

Hezbollah: 11

SDF-backed non-Syrian fighters: 9

Regime army defectors: 2

Russian soldiers: 2

Others: 17

SOHR activists have confirmed that five militiamen of the Lebanese Hezbollah and Iranian-backed militias were killed in attacks with surface-to-surface missiles fired from Israel, which targeted a weapon and ammunition shipment belonging to the Lebanese Hezbollah and Iranian-backed militias. However, the nationalities of the fatalities remained unknown.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, call on the international community once again to work hard to stop the bloodshed in Syria.
The people of Syria have been facing tyranny and oppression in their noble endeavour and cause to obtain justice, democracy, freedom and equality.

The Syrian Observatory renew its commitment to continue monitoring and documenting all the developments on the ground in Syria including, the massacres, violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against the Syrian people, as well as publishing all relevant statistics and causalities of such heinous acts, and hope to help all the ongoing efforts of bringing the perpetrators to special international courts, so that they do not escape justice for the crimes they committed against the people of Syria.

HD Infographic: Human fatalities across Syria in 2021

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 31.
Like many other countries, Syria has signed international accords regarding the improvement of women’s situation and rehabilitation of their rightful place in society. The Syrian regime “pretended” to comply with some terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which addressed the importance of achieving gender equality and preserving the rights of women.

Article 23 of the Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic, issued on February 15, 2012, makes it clear that “the state shall provide women with all opportunities enabling them to effectively and fully contribute to the political, economic, social and cultural life, and the state shall work on removing the restrictions that prevent their development and participation in building society”. However, Syrian women have suffered from disastrous conditions during the war which worsened their situation, especially since many women have lost fathers, brothers and husbands and each one found herself forced to bear responsibility of an entire family alone.

Syrian women have been forced to work and gain their living, with monthly salaries of government employees not exceeding 20 USD.

According to UN statistics, over one million women have lost their husbands, while the percentage of female breadwinners has exceeded 11%, as many women have moved into fields which had been prohibited, while others have been thrown into drug business, prostitution and human trafficking.
On the other hand, the Syrian women have forced to work and have been exposed to sexual harassment and exploitation by employers, while warlords who wreaked havoc in Syria under the pretext of “jihad” have taken many minor female captives.

Horrific practices in Syria, including kidnappings, sexual abuse, exploitation, imposing strict measures on their freedom and depriving them from basic rights, are clear violations to all international peace treaties, while regional and international actors seems to be indifferent to all of this. Such violations have been practiced more extensively in areas under the control of “Takfiri” groups (jihadist and extremist militant groups) and rebel factions which deprived girls from educations and kept them imprisoned in their own houses or tents.

Victims of arbitrary arrests

Syrian women have been affected the most by this protracted war, as SOHR statistics confirms that 155,002 women have been arrested by regime security services since the beginning of the Syrian Revolution in March 2011.

According to SOHR statistics, 41,312 women have been detained in regime prisons, while 20,315 others have been forcibly disappeared. These shocking statistics clearly show alarming violations to human rights and international accords, whose terms have been signed on by the Syrian regime itself. Even before the Syrian Revolution, women had suffered from repression, exclusion, torture, discrimination and other violations that have affected the situation of women in the social and political life.

The testimonies documented by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) have showed the horror Syrian women endured in prisons, as they have been subjected to unbearable, harrowing mental and psychological torture, including sexual abuse, humiliation, hunger, thirst, hard labour and lack of healthcare.
Testimonies of some female prisoners also confirm that some of these prisoners had been arrested for no specific reasons or charges, while others were arrested for having pictures of anti-regime protests or video footage condemning the opposition and rebel factions.

Victims of the war

Since the beginning of 2021, SOHR activists have documented the death of 182 women over the age of 18 throughout Syria. According to the perpetrator and cause/method of death categories, the fatalities are distributed as follows:

- Landmines and IED explosions: 28
- Gunfire by unknown gunmen: 15
- “Honour killings”, family and factional rivalries and indiscriminate gunfire: 44
- Regime forces: 45
- ISIS: 16
- Unknown circumstances: 12
- Under torture in regime prisons: 1
- Car and motorcycle bomb attacks: 8
- Turkish Jandarma: 1
- SDF: 2
- Turkish bombardment: 2
Rebel and Islamist factions: 2
Russian airstrikes: 3
Jihadist groups and organizations: 2
Israeli strikes: 1

In 2021, the sufferings of Syrian women have escalated further, while the deteriorating living conditions have worsened their sufferings which manifested themselves in the bitter reality of Syrian women across the entire Syrian geography.

Rape and torture

Key factors have contributed to the worsening of Syrian women’s conditions and robbed many of their dignity. Some of these factors can be summarized as follows:

- Expansion of the Syrian conflict.
- Invasions by international and regional powers, including Turkey, Iran and Russia.
- Active and numerous extremist organizations.
- Policy of revenge adopted by the Syrian regime and opposition factions.
- Social and political exclusion.
- Proliferation of arms.
Accordingly, many Syrian women were victims of indiscriminate killing, rape, “honour killings”, torture, arbitrary arrests and exploitation, with many being deprived of their basic rights.

Despite this bitter reality, many women have confirmed that they dare not ask for their rights, fearing prosecution, arrest and acts of revenge. Accordingly, women have found themselves forced to bow to society’s “morals and values”, obsolete traditions in “discriminating” laws. In addition, the war helped to further ingrain masculism and patriarchal ideology in the segments of Syrian society.

Violated rights

With the lack of freedom of public expression and disregard to international accords in light of repression by Syrian regime and opposition factions, the United Nations had described the situation of human rights in Syria as “the worst”. Torture, rape and sexual harassment continued in Syria, especially since Syrian law has had no terms identifying the act of sexual harassment or punishing molesters. Moreover, there is no family law or any other laws explicitly prohibiting and criminalising violence against women. Experts have stated that there is a gap in Syrian laws regarding the rights of women, as well as adherence to international charters or the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), although local legislations and laws have to abide by international charters and accords in this regard.

Self-realization and regaining position in Syrian society

Despite exclusion, lack of gender equality and keeping women away from decision-making bodies, Syrian women have persevered and to dealt with challenges and gained some power, so they attempted to give vital contribution in the fields of humanitarian assistance and peace-making, renounce violence and confront ethnic hatred, which has been incited by several warring powers, exploiting poverty and dire living conditions. Accordingly, many Syrian women managed to take part in humanitarian activities and peace projects by UN organizations, be in charge of refugee camps and equal partners in several forums in Geneva, Moscow, Riyadh and Cairo.
Syrian women have sought to adapt with their dire situation in light of the barbaric bombardment and displacement, which run counter to the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant charters.

As a result of the ongoing struggle and under very dangerous and complex situation, the Syrian women movement called in 2016 for minimum quotas for women in institutions and decision-making bodies, which successfully resulted in 30% women’s participation in the Constitutional Committee established under Security Council resolution No. 2254. Furthermore, Syrian women have given high-level briefings to the Security Council, highlighting the role of women in the Syrian context. It is worth noting that this was the first time for Syrian women representing civil society to brief the Security Council.

Believing in the promotion of humanitarian principles, the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the effective coordination with human rights organizations around the world, we, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), call for holding accountable all criminals, perpetrators of violations and all those who aided and abated heinous crimes against Syrian people.

We count on the international community’s active involvement to save the people of Syria from killing, starvation, sufferings and ongoing violations. We also count on the free and independent media all over the world to highlight the plight of the helpless Syrian people.

Also, SOHR appeals to all international actors to exert maximum pressure on the warring powers in Syria, which have been draining the Syrian people’s resources, to stop military actions and turn to a political settlement which could potentially put an end to this protracted war.
**HD Infographic: Bitter reality of Syrian women in 2021**

- **44** civilian woman
  - "Honour killings", family and factional rivalries and indiscriminate gunfire

- **15** civilian woman
  - Gunfire by unknown gunmen

- **28** civilian woman
  - Landmines and IED explosions

- **12** civilian woman
  - Unknown circumstances

- **16** civilian woman
  - ISIS

- **45** civilian woman
  - Regime forces

- **1** civilian woman
  - Turkish Jandarma

- **8** civilian woman
  - Car and motorcycle bomb attacks

- **1** civilian woman
  - Under torture in regime prisons

- **2** civilian woman
  - Rebel and Islamist factions

- **2** civilian woman
  - Turkish bombardment

- **2** civilian woman
  - SDF

- **1** civilian woman
  - Israeli strikes

- **2** civilian woman
  - Jihadist groups and organizations

- **3** civilian woman
  - Russian airstrikes

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 20.
Syrian children in 2021 | Lost generation, disempowered and robbed of identity

Nearly 260 Syrian children killed in 2021, and SOHR renews its appeal to protect children and exclude them from any military activities

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR)

The United Nations, since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was issued, has been calling for promoting its most prominent principles of freedom, justice and peace for all mankind, children, women and men. Most countries have joined that declaration, but a few have continued to adhere to its principles. The declaration stipulates the importance of extending particular care to children based on the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924.

The United Nations states that any child, by reason of their physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.

According to article 54 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child is proclaimed to all rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. However, Syrian children have been deprived of these rights since the outbreak of the Syrian revolution in 2011.

The innocent Syrian children who do not understand the meaning of wars and conflicts should have been happily and peacefully living and playing, while schools should have been their first destination, but their tragic conditions of war, destruction, and displacement have spoiled their childhood happiness and replaced it with sorrow, despair and horror. The Convention on the Rights of the Child in article 1 define a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years.
Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict demands in article 7 parties shall cooperate in the implementation of the present Protocol, including in the prevention of any activity contrary thereto and in the rehabilitation and social reintegration of persons who are victims of acts contrary thereto, including through technical cooperation and financial assistance. Such assistance and cooperation will be undertaken in consultation with the States Parties concerned and the relevant international organisations.

Neither Al-Assad regime forces nor the other military groups, regardless of the areas of control, have adhered to these articles. On the contrary, that ignored its application.

Syrian children are young by nature, too young to live in tragedies and tears. However, the difficult Syrian conditions have turned children into adults with a responsibility that exceeds their mental capacity and age, and brought them into the front lines in the face of dangers and miseries.

One third of Syrian children bear the greater part of that ongoing tragedy. Many reports have been focusing on the seriousness of the negative effects of the war in Syria on children at all levels.

SOHR has documented the death of 359 children under age of eighteen since early 2021. The deaths are categorised as follows:

- 137 killed in mine and bomb explosions.
- 14 killed by unknown gunmen.
- 73 killed by regime forces shooting and raids.
- 19 killed in different conditions and by different methods including tribal and family clashes and indiscriminate shooting.
- Seven killed by ISIS.
- Nine killed in unknown conditions.
• 61 killed due to deteriorated health conditions.
• Four killed in booby-trapped vehicles.
• Eight killed by Turkish Border Guards (Jandarma).
• Four killed by SDF.
• Ten killed in Turkish attack.
• Seven killed in Russian attack.
• One child killed by Jihadists.
• Three killed in Israeli attacks.

The large number of deaths indicates the horrific magnitude of the tragedy and the damage inflicted on the Syria children and their future. Children were deprived of their right to life, their innocence was distorted, and they were left suffering the woes of war, bombing, and orphanage without a father, mother or a breadwinner amid a gloomy present and an ambiguous future due to poverty, war and conflicts that deprived them of receiving different shape of care or secured living and put one third of Syrian children in critical conditions. Meanwhile, we do not see immediate intervention especially from those who claim to defend children’s rights and those who trade in their tragedies and tears.
Syrian children live among the dangers of landmines, shelling and raids, and their hands tremble because of the coldness in a harsh winter in plastic-ceiling makeshift camps waiting for a better life, after being let down by this uncaring world that only condemns and remains in different and unwilling to find or impose a solution on regime authority, opposition, and factions which opted for the force of arms and the policy of violence and murder, while international and regional interests seemingly don not understand the innocence of children.
The sufferings of Syrian children went beyond the fear of death when they hear the sounds of bombs, lose their identity, live in starvation that weakened bodies and made it more vulnerable and receptive to all diseases. They were deprived of education, carrying school bags and wearing their uniforms. Their sufferings reached terrifying levels where children join war, armed conflicts and are recruited and trained to carry weapons and serve under banners of hypocrite factions and organisations which claims protecting the land and honour. Such practices have been observed for years and SOHR has exposed them to the whole world and warned against using children in conflicts that they have nothing to do with it.

The war created a marginalised generation that knows nothing about life except for weapons, bombing, revenge and battlefields. Many sides on the mad battlefields also sought to rob their homeland and portrayed it in a gloomy, vague and tasteless place where they can only smell blood and death, and seethe tears of orphans and the bereaved.

It is painful for a child to be born in an environment tainted by the fire of war, hatred, division, ideological enmity and division. The Syrian children’s miseries begin early because their families could not provide them with secure and stable life and the simplest living essentials like a home that shelters them from the summer heat and the winter coldness or food.

The most painful thing for a child is to grow up in an environment without a home address, title or value where they cannot live their childhood or learn, in a displaced or deported family because of the war, continuing life with internal psychological struggle, and questioning the tragedies and reasons behind the displacement of their family. Today’s victims will be destructive weapons in face of those causing the ongoing conflicts and chaos that wiped out the best days of lives, snatched smiles, and assassinated their dreams to live like other children in the world.
The deteriorating economic situation piles more misery and suffering on children due to ongoing conflicts and the continuous sanctions. Children find themselves forced to join the labour market at a nearly age and experience exploitation and coercion.

On the other hand, children unconsciously engage in armed conflicts via recruitment into militancy, with delay of care providers to support, rescue them, and facilitate their enrolment in schools.

A Lebanese researcher described the children produced by the Syrian war as a “lost generation.” This generation that was born during the war and lived the hard conditions of asylum and displacement, lacks the simplest basic essentials of a decent life. It is worth noting that children and their families who live in areas of conflicts, are more exposed to recruitment and exploitation and suffer deprivation, displacement and starvation.

No one can ignore the tragedy of the children in Al-Hawl camp that hosts the families of ISIS members. Those children are also victims of war, and are “time bombs” ready to explode anytime as they are saturated with terrorist takfiri ideology. Those families require immediate intervention to extricate them out of a hellish environment and then to work on rehabilitating and repatriate them to their original countries, because the difficult conditions in Syrian now would not ensure fair trials for their families in accordance with international human rights laws, away from revenge and violence.

SOHR cannot stress enough the importance of protecting children harmed by armed conflicts and providing them with appropriate care that is guaranteed by international conventions.

SOHR warns against the exploitation of children in conflicts as fuel for war and depriving them of their right of safe living and education that are universal rights. SOHR also holds all conflicting parties responsible for the dreadful situation of children and women, the most vulnerable part of society.
SOHR would like to remind the world once again that the rights of Syrian children are violated by all parties which deliberately bomb schools and deprive children of their right to education, and ignore and condone the sexual and economic abuse of children by their employers who exploit the difficult conditions of children that forced them to work to support their families who are unable to provide even food.

SOHR calls on the international community to take concrete actions to improve and protect the welfare of children in Syria, and pledges to continue documenting all violations committed against children and exposing the perpetrators, no matter their identities or affiliations.

HD Infographic: Syrian children in 2021: disempowered and robbed of identity

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 21.
Kidnapping in 2021 | Nearly 650 people kidnapped across Syria, 270 documented by names

SOHR appeals to the international community to interfere immediately to set all kidnapped people free or disclose their fate

Appeals to disclose the fate of people kidnapped by all conflicting powers and identified and unidentified groups operating in Syria are still met with inaction by the United Nations and human rights organizations concerned with Syria’s situation.

SOHR, as a human rights organization, has continued monitoring and documenting all kidnap cases throughout Syria, as the number of kidnapped Syrian people in 2021 exceeded 640.

Of the total number of those kidnapped in 2021, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has documented 271 people by names: 225 men, 22 women over the age of eighteen, and 24 children under the age of eighteen. SOHR was also able to verify the remaining 369 kidnappings, but the victims’ families preferred to keep their identities secret, fearing prosecution.

2021’s kidnap cases can be summarized regionally as follows:

Regime-held areas: 164 people were kidnapped:

- Al-Quneitra and Al-Suwaidaa: 76 people were kidnapped in the two provinces. They were as follows: five men were kidnapped by regime-backed militiamen, 50 men and three children kidnapped by armed militias and 18 people, including a woman, were kidnapped by unknown gunmen.

Damascus and Rif Dimashq: 49 people were kidnapped: Eight civilians kidnapped by regime forces, nine men by Iranian-backed
• militias and 32 people, including five children and six women, kidnapped by unknown individuals.

• Daraa: Eight people were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen, despite the Russian-sponsored reconciliation deals in the past months, which aimed to settle the security status of former opposition fighters.

• Syrian coast line: Six people, including two children, were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen.

• Aleppo: A man was kidnapped by regime forces.

• Homs: 14 people, including two children and four women, were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen.

• Hama: A man was kidnapped by unidentified gunmen.

• Syrian desert: Nine people, including two children, were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen.

SDF-controlled areas

• This region witnessed the kidnapping of 37 people, which are as follows: 31 people, including two women and eight children, were kidnapped by SDF-backed members and six men were kidnapped by unknown gunmen.

“De-escalation zone”

• Five people were kidnapped: a man was kidnapped by Hayyaat Tahrir Al-Sham and four others were kidnapped by unknown gunmen.
“Euphrates Shield” areas

- 22 people: two civilians were kidnapped by rebel factions and 20 civilians, including a woman and two children, were kidnapped by unknown gunmen.

“Olive Branch” areas

- 43 people were kidnapped: 24 civilians, including six women, were kidnapped by rebel factions and 19 civilians, including two women, were kidnapped by unknown gunmen.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), appeal to the international community and human rights organizations operating in Syria to intervene immediately and intensify their efforts to put an end to the violations committed against Syrians. We also urgently call for the release of kidnapped civilians held by all powers in Syria, and we and their families have the right to know their fate and whereabouts immediately.
### HD Infographic: Kidnapped people in 2021

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 14.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Number of Kidnapped people</th>
<th>Perpetrators</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Quneitra and Al-Suwaydaa</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>SDF-held areas</td>
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<td>4 Unknown gunmen 02</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Euphrates Shield&quot; areas</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Syrian opposition</td>
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<td>&quot;Olive Branch&quot; areas</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6 18 Armed factions 01</td>
<td>Syrian opposition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>17 Unknown gunmen 02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Damascus and Rif Dimashq</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8 Regime forces 01</td>
<td>Syrian regime</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9 Iranian-backed militias 02</td>
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<td>5 Unknown gunmen 03</td>
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271 people documented by names

225 Men

22 Women

24 Children

SOHR was also able to verify the remaining 369

kidnappings, but the victims’ families preferred to keep their identities secret, fearing prosecution

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights

21
Regime prisons and security centres in 2021 | 55 people die under torture and nearly 3,000 arrested arbitrarily

SOHR stresses the need for holding accountable all those aided and abetted the killing and torturing of Syrian civilians in regime prisons

Since the beginning of the “Syrian Revolution”, Syria has witnessed unprecedented increase in the security clamp-down campaigns and arbitrary arrests which coincided with gross violations to human rights amid total lack of accountability by judiciary systems and international courts. Meanwhile, the atrocities committed during the Syrian conflict and the state of terror and panic of the security services’ repression have stifled the voices of detainees and their families and prevented their plight from being highlighted.

However, all international and regional powers continue their inaction regarding such heinous crimes and violations and seem satisfied with only issuing condemnations, press releases, and achieving their narrow interests at a time when all these powers have unfortunately abandoned their responsibility and obligations to promote and uphold humanitarian principles and international rules of law.

Moreover, several counties have politicised the concept of dealing with human rights to meet their own interests, violating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1966, of both of which stress that “every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life”. These articles have been set to preserve the dignity of everyone arrested arbitrarily without a warrant just for his/her believes, opposing ideology or policy of holders of power, or supporting and helping opponents.

Ironically enough, all counties around the world seem to allow arbitrary arrests under the pretext of “opposing and criticising authorities, kings and presidents”, while some powers have legitimised the arrest of opponents, including politicians and human rights and media activists.
Such practices blatantly violate basic human rights, including freedom of speech and opinion.

For more than a decade of the Syrian conflict, too many Syrians, men, women and children, have suffered from painful memories of their detention, starting from the method of arrest to the inhumane circumstances of detention. In prisons, detainees’ communication and connection with their families and almost all people are cut off, if they are lucky enough not to have perished. Prisoners are also deprived of much needed medical care, food and appropriate clothing. Furthermore, prisoners are crammed in small places, at orders by the authorities which retaliate against them for their opposing stances.

As a human rights organisation, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has continued monitoring and tracking the issue of arrests in regime-controlled areas, where we have been able to document the arrest of 2,982 people in 2021. Most of these people were arrested for “passing the date of joining the mandatory service in the ranks of regime army or communicating with foreign bodies.” Many of these detainees were released after their relatives had paid money/levies, while nearly 514 remained imprisoned.

Here is a descending distribution by region of arrests by regime forces and security services in 2021:

- South Syria region (mostly arrested in Daraa): 667
- Aleppo: 489
- Rif Dimashq: 429
- Damascus: 394
- Deir Ezzor, Al-Hasaka and Al-Raqqah: 328
- Syrian Coastline: 286
SOHR has also documented the death of 55 people, including a woman due to brutal torture in regime prisons and security centres since early 2021. As more fatalities are recorded and updated regularly, the number of civilians dying under torture in regime prisons since the beginning of the Syrian revolution has risen to 47,517, all documented by names: 47,114 men and young men, 339 children under the age of eighteen, and 64 women over the age of eighteen.

Reliable sources have informed the Syrian Observatory that the number of people killed, executed and/or died in regime prisons exceeded 105,000 people. Over 83% of the total death toll were killed and/or died in these prisons between May 2013 and October 2015, the period when the Iranian were supervising regime’s prisons. SOHR sources have also confirmed that more than 30,000 detainees were killed in the notorious prison of Saydnaya alone, while the second largest percentage of killing occurred in the Air-Force Intelligence detention facilities or prisons.

For nearly two years, the sanctions imposed on Al-Assad’s regime under the US “Caesar Act” have failed so far to put an end to the crimes committed by the regime against Syrian civilians, especially those who have been arrested arbitrarily and forcibly disappeared and whose fate remains unknown.

The Syrian Observatory has documented many testimonies by eyewitnesses, including politicians and human rights activists, in which they described the brutal torture they endured in regime prisons. One example, among many, is the human rights activist Rashed Al-Satouf, who had been arrested in April 17, 1987, told SOHR “I was arrested for ‘belonging to the Communist Labour Party’, as I was ambushed during a meeting by the Party at Al-Hejaz coffee shop in Damascus. I was driven by force to a police car which took me to Palestine Intelligence Branch.
As soon as I arrived at the notorious security branch, I was tortured brutally in an attempt by the branch guards to force me to tip off and reveal the place of my companions of the Party and the houses they secretly frequent. The guards and investigators, headed by the chief of the branch Brigadier General Mazhar Fares, used disgusting ways while torturing me.”

Al-Satouf added, “I was tortured the ‘German chair’ -a method of torture in which a detainee is bent backward (head towards foot sole) with the use of a metal chair, which causes awful pain- which was the most painful methods of torture I have ever experienced. I was also beaten with sticks and whips, given electric shocks. In addition, the guards pressed and squeezed my feet and reproductive organs, as they did to my companions, too. It was a real Guantanamo, ‘Al-Assad’s Guantanamo’. Every time I remember these horrors, I got disturbed and depressed, but I have never regretted my political stance. Freedom has never been worthless.”

Responding to a question by SOHR about the identities of the prisoners who were with him in the prison, Mr. Rashed said “there were prisoners of the Muslim Brotherhood, the National Command Organisation (the Iraqi Al-Baath), the Democratic Al-Baath Organisation (the 23rd February Movement), the political bureau “politburo” (Riyad Al-Turk Group), Palestinian prisoners, mostly belonging to Fath Movement (Abu Ammar), some members of Nasserist parties, some Lebanese members of political organisations opposing Syrian presence in Lebanon and other individuals.”

Rashed Al-Satouf had been tried by the State Security Exclusive Court, where he was sentenced to 15 years in prison. He was imprisoned for 14 years and eight months during which he suffered inhumane treatment.

“I was held in Palestine Branch and the military branch, where I was interrogated for several months. I also spent nearly five years in Palmyra prison. In these prisons, I felt like I was in hell. Of course, my family had no idea about my fate and conditions during this period. The degree of inhumane treatment varies from prison to another, and there is no prison run by the Syrian regime that observes the minimum standards of human rights of the detainees. The worst Syrian prison ever is Palmyra prison, which looks like Nazi prisons,” added Al-Satouf.
In an interview with the Syrian Observatory, another human rights activist nicknamed “Maria Raghib” shared her experience in Adra Central Prison for women in Adra city in Rif Dimashq. The description of the regime prison by the woman, who was arrested just after the onset of the “Syrian Revolution” has not differ a lot from Al-Satouf’s. Mrs. Raghib also described the that prison as a “Nazi prison,” where women receive inhumane treatment, raped, tortured and deformed.

The activist, who had been prevented from eating for a whole week and lost her left eye due to her stance and free speech and expression, has confirmed that she has never regretted her fighting for her cause and emphasised her readiness to continue her struggle for freedom and dignity. She also stressed on the importance of providing psychological and social support to all free and independent female detainees, especially since they suffer from considerable physical and mental disorders, while most of people despise women who had been imprisoned, disregarding the reasons behind their detention, even if they were detained for their political stances and beliefs.

Maria Raghib said, “I was tortured by boiling water being poured on my body, which deformed parts of my face. The guards also used electric wires to force the detainees to admit acts they had never done, including joining terrorist organisations or rebel factions. We waited for death in light of the absence of fair trials; we were prevented from communicating with our families. The torture we endured in prison was killing us slowly. Starvation, humiliation, a Nazi prison and monsters hired to abuse us, it was a real nightmare. The prison lacked basic human rights. Many women have been killed in regime prison, but we will never let the criminals get away unpunished. We will never forgive those who tortured us and orphaned our children. Even with having only one eye, we will struggle to regain our humanity and dignity.”

The human rights activist said that she was fearful when she was re-summoned by regime forces in Damascus; so she decided to flee to Idlib to avoid a similar experience in regime prisons. Maria confirms that she has lost contact with her family for six years, amid unconfirmed reports of their escape to Turkey.
Similarly, speaking to SOHR, the human rights activist Marawan Hamza said, “I was arrested on five occasions for participating in peaceful protests in 2011. I was also arrested for several times for my posts on Facebook. However, the most horrifying violation in the regime’s prisons was the presence of children under the age of 14, who were arrested for participating in peaceful protests. The situation of the detainees is catastrophic and needs urgent intervention. Prisons lacks minimum standards of international human rights laws which are blatantly and unashamedly violated in Syria.”

The bitter experiences of political prisoners detained by autocratic regimes which seek to stifle voices should motivate all human rights organisations and countries to take an urgent and effective action.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), warn against the repercussions of violating and non-complying with international accords signed by Syria, as well as the ongoing indifference by the warring powers in Syria to the issue of detainees and forcibly disappeared. We also appeal to the international community to seriously intensify its efforts to disclose the fate of the detainees and forcibly disappeared people, and identify and hold the perpetrators accountable.

SOHR attaches the highest importance to this issue of detainees and always strives to highlight their and their families’ plight and sufferings. SOHR also warns against using “terrorism” as an excuse to arrest politicians and human rights activists, using laws of counter-terrorism to justify arbitrary arrests.

We also call for the inspection of prisons in the entire Syrian geography, especially in regime-held areas, so that the real issue and conditions of detainees are unveiled. Furthermore, the fate of the missing and detainees who have been killed must be disclosed.
The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 24.

HD Infographic: Violations in regime prisons in 2021

- **55** people, including a woman, died under torture
- **2982** arrests
  - Aleppo: 489
  - Hama: 192
  - the Syrian coastline: 286
  - Rif Dimashq: 429
  - South Syria (mostly in Daraa): 667
  - Damascus: 394
  - Homs: 197
  - Deir Ezzor, Al-Raqqah and Al-Hasakah: 328
SOHR renews its appeal to all relevant international bodies to urgently address the problem of explosive remnants of war across Syria.

The Syrian war ordnance such as landmines, IEDs and unexploded devices continue to pose a serious danger to the lives of innocent Syrians across the entire Syrian geography. These explosive remnants of war (ERW), which have been planted by military formations in most Syrian regions for over ten years or so, have tragically claimed the lives of so many innocent Syrians.

SOHR has monitored Syria's explosive remnants of war (ERW) issue and documented casualties it claimed across Syria in 2021, which are as follows:

- 241 killed, including 114 children and 19 females.
- 128 wounded, some of whom sustained severe injuries, including 60 children and 27 females.

The total number of fatalities, according to SOHR statistics, include 49 persons of whom 13 females and seven children, all killed while searching for and collecting the expensive wild truffle that grows in areas that witness heavy rainfall.

The single largest “truffle” fatalities occurred on March 7, when two landmines exploded in Wadi Al-Azeeb area, east of Hama, killing 18 people, of whom 10 were women, and injuring six others.

SOHR statistics show that the largest number of ERW casualties was recorded in the first quarter of 2021, where more than 100 civilians, of whom 20 females and 34 children, were killed, while 35 persons sustained various wounds and injuries.
SOHR calls on all the relevant international organisations to work on the immediate neutralising and removal of unexploded war ordnance in Syrian. Explosive remnants of war (ERW) are a serious problem that need to be addressed urgently. SOHR would like to see, as a first step, the immediate involvement of international organisation in raising the awareness of local Syrians of the dangers of ERW.

**Explosions of old ordnance kill and injure 369 Syrian civilians in 2021**

- **Injured people:**
  - Men: 41
  - Children: 60
  - Women: 27

- **Fatalities:**
  - Men: 108
  - Children: 114
  - Women: 19

**HD Infographic: Deaths by explosion of old ordnance in 2021**

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 26.
Turkish Jandarma pushbacks and violations in 2021 | A woman and eight children among 35 civilians killed along Syria-Turkey border

SOHR calls for referring file of premeditated murders by Turkish Jandarma to international courts

As Turkey’s government keeps closing border crossings to Syrians while allowing military vehicles and soldiers to enter Syria through the same crossings, worsening an already disastrous situation in Syria, Turkish Border Guards (Jandamra) continue their atrocities against Syrian civilians seeking a safe refuge from the devastating military battles.

In 2021, SOHR activists have documented the death of 35 civilians, including a woman and eight children, by the Turkish Jandarma (Border Guards), while attempting to cross into Turkish territory. Of the total death toll, 24 civilians, including a woman and five children, were killed in Idlib, while nine civilians, including three children, were killed in Al-Hasakah, a civilian killed in Al-Raqqah and another in Aleppo.

The monthly death toll is distributed in descending order as follows:

- August: 8 fatalities
- September: 5 fatalities
- April: 5 fatalities
- March: 3 fatalities
- November: 3 fatalities
- January: 2 fatalities
- February: 2 fatalities
May: 2 fatalities

June: 2 fatalities

December: 2 fatalities

July: 1 fatality

October: 1 fatality

Further details of the circumstances of the deaths of Syrian civilians at the hands of Turkish Jandarma in Syria in 2021 can be summarised as follows:

- **January 14:** A young man was shot dead by Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, while he was trying to enter Turkish territory from Harem area on the Syria border with the Iskenderun region in Idlib countryside.

- **January 27:** A young man was shot dead by Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, as he was attempting to enter Turkish territory near the Syria-Turkey border, from Al-Hamboushia area in the western countryside of Jisr Al-Shughour.

- **February 4:** A child was shot dead by Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, as he tried to enter Turkish territory from Hilt area in Harem district at the Syria border with Iskenderun region in Idlib countryside.

- **February 12:** A child was shot dead by the Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, while he was working with his grandfather in a farmland in Salhab village in Jisr Al-Shughour countryside in north-western Idlib, nearly 500 metres away from the border wall.
• March 4: A child was shot dead by the Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, while he was in front of his house in Al-Madlousah village in Salqin countryside in north-western Idlib on the border with Iskenderun Region.

• March 9: A young man was shot dead by the Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, while he was attempting to cross into the Turkish territory in Darkoush city on the border with Iskenderun region in the north-western countryside of Idlib.

• March 10: A child was shot dead by Turkish Border Guards, as he tried to cross into Turkey with his family from the area of Arrada in Abu Rasin countryside in Al-Hasakah countryside.

• March 19: A young man from Al-Bab area was killed, after being shot by the Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma” while he was attempting to cross into Turkey in the northern countryside of Aleppo.

• April 20: A young man from the village of Bzapour in Jabal Al-Zawiyah was killed, after being shot by Turkish Border Guards as he tried to cross into Turkey from Idlib countryside.

• On the same day, April 22: A young man from the city of Al-Raqqah died of his injuries, after he was arrested by the Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”. The young man went missing on April 17 while attempting to cross the Syria-Turkey border in Tel Abyad area, north of Al-Raqqah. According to the report of the forensic doctor at Tal Abyad Hospital, the young man was brutally beaten and hit on the head with a sharp tool which caused his death.

• April 22: A woman was shot dead by Turkish Border Guards near the border strip in Idlib countryside. According to the sources, the woman was working for a daily wage on agricultural land near the border wall, when she was shot by the Turkish Jandarma. It is worth noting that the victim lived with her family in Al-Karama gathering camps near the town of Qah, north of Idlib.
• April 24: A young man from Jisr Al-Shughour countryside shot dead by Turkish Border Guards, as he was attempting to cross into Turkish territory from the northern countryside of Idlib.

• April 29: An old man from Al-Zouf village in Jisr Al-Shughur on the Syria border with Iskenderun region was killed, after being shot by the Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, while he was working in his land in the village.

• May 7: A civilian was killed in Al-Hafriyah village, north of Darkush, after being shot by the Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, while he was fishing on the bank of Al-Asi River.

• May 31: A Syrian young man died after being beaten up brutally by the Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, near the Syria border with Iskenderun region, while he was attempting to cross into Turkey through crossings used for smuggling in western Salqeen. After he was beaten, the young man was left near Al-Alany crossing in western Salqeen, and he was taken later to the hospital before he died.

• June 7: A young man from Al-Zarzour village in Jesr Al-Shughur in the western countryside of Idlib was killed, while he was trying to sneak into Turkey from west Idlib countryside near the Syria border with Iskenderun region.

• June 25: A young man from Deir Hafer town was killed, after being shot by the Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, while he was attempting to cross into Turkey from Harem city in the north-western countryside of Idlib.

• July 18: A child was shot dead by the Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, while he was attempting to cross into Turkey from Idlib countryside.
• August 4: A young man from Maarrat Harma village in Idlib countryside was killed, after being shot by Turkish Janderma while he was attempting to cross into Turkey from the northern countryside of Idlib.

• August 19: A civilian from the border village of Al-Zouf in the western countryside of Idlib was killed, after being shot by Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, while he was attempting to cross into the Turkish territory.

• On the same day, August 22: A child from Al-Jabin village in the northern countryside of Hama was killed in gunfire by Turkish Jandarma with live bullets on Al-Ali camp in Atama town in Idlib countryside.

• August 22: A civilian from Markada town in Al-Hasakah countryside was shot dead by the Turkish Border Guards (Jardarma) in Turkish territory, just after crossing the border strip from Otayshan village.

• August 30: A civilian from Al-Qamishly city was killed, after being tortured brutally by Turkish Jandarma and dumped on the Turkey-Syria border between Al-Qamisly and Al-Qahtanyah cities. The young man was found on August 29 in a critical health condition. The man was taken to a hospital in Al-Qamishly city and died of his injuries in the following day.

• August 31, A displaced young man from Om Sahlij village in Ma’arat Al-Noa’man city was shot dead by the Turkish Border Guards (Jandaram), while he was attempting to cross with other four persons into Turkish territory from north Idlib countryside.

• September 18: Two men: one from Buqrus and the other from Al-Shamiteya in Deir Ezzor province, were shot dead by the Turkish Border Guards, while attempting to sneak into Turkish territory from north-east Syria.
• September 23: A young man from “Al-Na’eem” tribe in Al-Hasakah province died of the injury he had on September 20, when he was shot by the Turkish Jandarma, while he was attempting to cross into Turkey from Ras Al-Ain countryside (Sri Kaniye).

• September 24: A young man from Namer town in Daraa province died of the injury he had when he was shot by the Turkish Jandarma, while he was attempting to cross into Turkey from north Idlib countryside. The man had been taken to Al-Rayhaneya hospital in Iskenderun region “Hatai” where he died of his injuries.

• September 29: Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma” threw the body of a child on the Syria-Turkey border strip, opposite Arada village in Abu Raseen (Zarkan) district in Al-Hasakah countryside. The child had died under torture at the hands of the Turkish Jandarma which arrested him while he was attempting to cross into the Turkish territory, as there were marks of brutal torture on the child’s body.

• October 10: A child from Qanat Al-Suwees neighbourhood in Al-Qamishli city died of the wounds he had after having been beaten brutally by the Turkish Jandarma nearly a month earlier, as he was attempting to cross into Turkey from Al-Aziziyyah village in Ras Al-Ain city (Sere Kaniye) in northern Al-Hasakah. According to SOHR sources, the child died of his sever injuries in the intensive care unit in a Turkish hospital.

• November 13: Two young men from Abu Al-Zuhour village in the eastern countryside of Idlib were shot dead by the Turkish Border Guards (Jandarma), as they were attempting to cross into Iskenderun region near Harem city in the northern countryside of Idlib, on the Syria-Turkey border.

• November 28: A civilian died of the fractures in the neck, arm and leg he sustained after being severely beaten up by the Turkish Jandarma, while he was trying to sneak into Turkey with the help of smugglers, in Al-Arada village in the north of Abu Rassin district in Al-Hasakah province.
December 7: A civilian from Kafr Daryan town in northern Idlib was shot dead by Turkish Jandarma, while he was attempting to cross into Turkey in north Idlib countryside.

December 20: A boy from Maara Al-Nu’man was tortured to death by Turkish Border Guards “Jandarma”, while attempting to enter Turkish territory from Harem area on the Syria border with Iskenderun region in Idlib countryside.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), renew our appeal to the United Nations, UN Security Council and international community to exert maximum pressure on the Turkish government to stop its violent and illegal pushbacks against Syrian civilians fleeing from military operations in their areas. We also warn against attempts to sneak into Turkey through unsafe routes in light of the escalating violent pushbacks by Turkish Jandarma along the Syria-Turkey border.

SOHR also calls for referring Turkey’s pushbacks, which amount to premeditated murders, to international courts, so that all those responsible and those who aided and abated the killing of Syrian people can face justice.
35 civilians killed by Turkish Jandarma in 2021

A woman and eight children among

Chart displays distribution of fatalities

HD Infographic: Deaths by Turkish Jandarma in 2021
Turkish drone attacks in 2021 | Strikes hit areas controlled by SDF and Kurdish forces on 20 occasions, killing and wounding 40 people

Since the beginning of 2021, Turkish forces have escalated their drone attacks on areas under the control of Syria Democratic Forces and affiliated military formations in north-east Syria region and Kurdish-held areas in northern Aleppo, using Turkish-made drones, “Bayraktar”. These attacks have caused a state of terror and panic among the residents of the targeted areas, especially with media reports on imminent military operations by Turkish forces in those areas.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has documented at least 20 attacks by “Bayraktar” drones in north-east Syria and Aleppo countryside in 2021, where five airstrikes targeted the Kurdish-held areas and 15 targeted SDF-held areas.

According to SOHR statistics, Turkish drone attacks left at least 40 civilians and military personnel dead and wounded:

- 21 people: 12 military personnel and nine civilians, were killed in SDF-held areas.
- 19 people, including three children and ten fighters, were injured in the two regions.

Further details of these attacks can be summarised as follows:

- January 22: A Turkish drone struck a house in Mamit village in the south of Ain Al-Arab city (Kobani) in the east of Aleppo, which injured a man.

April 4: A Turkish drone attacked a mechanised digger in a quarry extracting building materials in DirkaBravi village overlooking Tigris river in Al-Malikiyyah countryside in the eastern countryside
• of Al-Qamishli, near the Syria-Turkey border. The strikes burned the mechanised digger down.

• April 16: A Turkish drone targeted a house in Albalor village in Ain Al-Arab countryside (Kobani). According to SOHR sources, the PKK leader “Abdullah Ocalan” had stayed at the targeted house when he came from Turkey to Syria more than 40 years ago. The strike caused material damage only.

• July 11: A Turkish drone attacked a civilian house in Tel Rifaat city in northern Aleppo, injuring three children.

• July 16: A Turkish drone targeted the outskirts of Tel Rifaat city in the northern countryside of Aleppo where Kurdish forces were deployed. No casualties were reported.

• July 30: A Turkish drone targeted two civilian cars in Qomji village on the road between the cities of Ain Al-Arab (Kobani) and Aleppo in the southern countryside of Ain Al-Arab. The attack caused material damage.

• August 14: A Turkish drone struck the surrounding areas of Tel Rifaat city. No casualties were reported.

• August 19: A Turkish drone targeted the headquarters of the Department of Military Affairs of the SDF-backed Tel Tamr Military Council. The attack left nine military personnel, including a female commander, dead and over ten others injured.

• On the same day, August 19: A Turkish drone attacked a military vehicle near Ali Faru junction on the road between Al-Qamishli and Amuda in the western countryside of Al-Qamishli. The attack resulted in the death of a commander of the Kurdish units, believed to be Iranian.
- August 21: A Turkish drone fired at least one missile on a car in Sofyan farm in the south of Ain Al-Arab city (Kobani) in the eastern countryside of Aleppo. The attack caused material damage only.

- August 22: A Turkish drone attacked a vehicle of the Autonomous Administration in front of an orphanage in Himo village in Al-Qamishli city in Al-Hasakah countryside, which caused material damage. According to SOHR sources, the vehicle was owned by a political Kurdish official in the Autonomous Administration.

- August 25: A Turkish drone targeted a position in the Kurdish-held village of Baylouniyah in the northern countryside of Aleppo. No further details were reported about the number of casualties and material damage caused by the attack.

- August 26: A Turkish drone targeted a van carrying correspondents of a local Kurdish TV channel on the road to Tel Tamr in Al-Hasakah countryside, which caused material damage only. According to SOHR sources, a group of correspondents and journalists working for Sterk TV were heading to conflict zones, before they returned when they were targeted by the drone.

- September 12: A Turkish drone struck a position in Al-Hamam village controlled by the SDF-backed Mabij Military Council in north-east Manbij city in the north-eastern countryside of Aleppo. No further details were reported about the number of casualties and material damage caused by the attack.

- October 14: A Turkish drone hit the SDF-controlled village of Al-Hattash in the north of Al-Raqqah. The strikes hit the vicinity of a makeshift camp in the region. At that time, SDF accused Turkish forces of attacking the camp.
• October 20: A Turkish drone targeted a car in Ain Al-Arab city (Kobani) in east Aleppo countryside. According to SOHR activists, the drone struck a car of civilian cadres in the New Neighbourhood in Ain Al-Arab city, killing five people, including two officials. Before the attack, SOHR sources had reported that Turkey intended to launch a military operation in Syria, with Russia’s green light.

• October 23: Three civilians were killed and four injured due to strikes by a Turkish drone which targeted a military car of SDF-backed military formations near Siran hall in Ain Al-Arab (Kobani) in the eastern Aleppo countryside.

• October 28: A Turkish drone targeted farmland in the eastern part of Tel Rifaat city in north Aleppo countryside, before it was forced to withdraw from the area’s airspace due to an attack by Kurdish anti-aircraft. The drone attack caused material damage only.

• November 9: A Turkish drone attacked a car in Al-Helaleya neighbourhood in Al-Qamishly city in areas controlled by the Autonomous Administration, which left three persons of “Kilu” family dead. According to SOHR sources, the targeted man was a member of SDF leadership’s advisory council, who was not in the car at the time of the attack which killed his grandfather, his brother and one of his relatives.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), call upon the United Nations, UN Security Council and international community to exert pressure on the Turkish government to stop attacking civilians in Syria, especially using drones, under the pretext of “neutralizing terrorists and protecting national security”.

We also demand all conflicting powers in Syria comply with international law and stop involving Syrian civilians in military conflicts, as they have already been grappling with chronic crises and disastrous humanitarian situation during Syria’s protracted war which has been raging for over a decade.
HD Infographic: Attacks by Turkish drones on SDF-controlled areas in 2021

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 22.
“Olive Branch” areas in 2021 | Nearly 1,200 human rights violations...over 50 explosions and factional infightings...nearly 130 fatalities in acts of violence...ongoing demographic change

SOHR calls on the international community to intervene immediately and protect civilians from systematic violations by Turkish-backed factions

Since Turkish forces and their proxy factions captured several areas in north-western Aleppo, namely Afrin canton, after a military operation known as “Olive Branch”, humanitarian crises have been emerging and worsening gradually, with violations, attacks and explosions occur almost daily. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked prominent developments and gross violations in these areas in 2021, which can be summarised in the following main points:

Acts of violence leaves scores of fatalities

In 2021, SOHR has documented the death of 129 people in areas under the control of Turkish forces and factions operating under the banner of “Olive Branch” operation room in the north-western countryside of Aleppo. A breakdown of fatalities is as follows:

- 66 civilians, including 13 children and 15 women:
  - 26 civilians, including four children and eight women, were killed in bombardment by artillery shells fired from areas controlled by Kurdish and regime forces.
  - 24 civilians, including seven children and five women, were killed in explosions.
  - Six civilians, including a woman, died under torture in prisons run by Turkish-backed factions.
  - Four civilians, including two children and a woman, were murdered.
• Three men were killed in unknown circumstances.
• Two men were killed by the factions.
• A young man killed himself because of pressure exerted on him by factions which had threatened to hurt his family.

-61 Turkish-backed militiamen:
• 22 militiamen, including three commanders, were killed in explosions.
• 13 militiamen were killed in factional and family fights.
• 11 militiamen were killed in Russian airstrikes.
• 10 militiamen were assassinated by unknown gunmen.
• Four militiamen were killed in bombardment by artillery shells fired from areas controlled by Kurdish and regime forces.
• A militiaman died under torture in Al-Hamza prison.

-Two members of ISIS cells were killed in a security operation by Turkish-backed factions.

Tens of explosions and factional rivalries in light of increasing security chaos

“Olive Branch” areas in Aleppo countryside witnessed 25 explosions in 2021, all caused by detonating IEDs, landmines and booby-trapped vehicles, which killed 46 people: 24 civilians, including seven children,
five women, and 22 Turkish-backed militiamen. The explosions also injured nearly 73 people.

The monthly death toll of these explosion is distributed in descending order as follows:

- January: 14
- September: 14
- February: 6
- May: 6
- June: 6
- August: 5
- April: 4
- March: 2
- July: 2
- October: 1
- December: 1

No explosions were documented in November 2021.

Also, in 2021, 26 tribal and family fights and factional rivalries occurred in “Olive Branch” areas, which left 13 Turkish-backed militiamen dead and 31 other people, including civilians, injured. Here is a descending monthly distribution of these fights:
November: 5  
April: 3  
September: 3  
October: 3  
January: 2  
March: 2  
June: 2  
July: 2  
August: 2  
February: 1  
May: 1

No fights or rivalries were documented in December 2021.

1,191 human rights violations and ongoing sabotage of Syria’s civilisational heritage

As Turkish-backed factions have been stepping up their daily violations against the people of Afrin canton who have chosen to stay in their areas over displacement, SOHR has documented the arrest and kidnap of over 726 civilians, including 185 women and four children, in 2021. Nearly 477 people were released after paying money/levies in Turkish lira and US dollar, while the rest remained in the factions’ custody.

The monthly distribution of the arrests and kidnappings, all documented by SOHR, in a descending order is as follows:
November: 122
August: 118
October: 83
January: 77
March: 64
February: 56
May: 44
June: 41
September: 36
December: 35
April: 28
July: 22

Besides, SOHR has documented over 465 other violations which are distributed as follows:

- 168 incidents of seizure of houses and shops by members and commanders of Turkish-backed factions in Afrin city and affiliated districts. The seized houses belonged to people who have forced to displace from Afrin canton due to the “Olive Branch” operation.
• 113 incidents of seizure of farmlands belonging to displaced people from Afrin city and affiliated districts.

• 78 incidents of selling displaced people’s houses which had been seized earlier by Turkish-backed factions by force. The houses were sold at low prices and in US dollar in particular.

• 106 incidents of imposition of levies on civilians by the factions and local councils in return for allowing them to cultivate their land and harvest crops. The requested levies were shares of the harvest and profits or sums of money paid in US dollar and Turkish lira.

Moreover, the factions sabotaged civilian properties, where they felled tens of thousands of fruit-bearing trees and sold them as fire logs. On the other hand, Turkish-backed factions continued excavation work and digging in archaeological hills, searching for buried artifacts and antiques. In 2021, SOHR sources reported that Turkish-backed factions continued digging and excavation work on “Qah Waqah” hill on the road to Raju town in Afrin countryside. It is worth noting that the hill was excavated and artifacts were found and looted in mid 2019. However, the Turkish-backed factions returned to excavate the archaeological hill again, searching for remaining artifacts thought to be buried there.

In Afrin city, however, “Deir Sawan” hill in Sharran district, registered by the Syrian Antiquities Directorate in 1981 under Resolution No. 244 | A, was dug and excavated by the Ankara-backed factions. According to recently captured photos of the site, digging and systematic destruction of that hill could be obviously seen at Al-Akrobol peak until the slope, where heavy diggers and earth-moving machineries continued digging, searching for antiquities in full view of Turkish forces.

Meanwhile, the hill in the south of Jendires district was excavated and destroyed by Turkish forces stationed over the hill, after turning it into a military based since they captured Afrin canton. Satellite photos showed the continuous digging and sabotage of the that hill by heavy machines
for the purpose of expanding the base and treasure looting, as well as destroying the warehouses of the German-Syrian mission, as they completely levelled the whole area after stealing the tools used by the archaeological missions that were searching for monuments.

Since the factions of the Turkey-backed National Army captured Afrin canton in March 2018, the looting of several archaeological sites has occurred throughout Afrin.

**Systematic demographic change**

As SOHR has been all along warning against demographic change in Afrin city and surrounding districts, the systematic practices and efforts by Turkish forces and their proxy factions in 2021 reflected their intention to change the demography of the canton. In mid-April, the Kuwaiti-backed “Sham Al-Khair Charity” constructed a housing association called “Kuwait Al-Rahma” in a village in Shirawa district in Afrin countryside, under direct supervision by the “Civil Council” in Afrin. The construction of housing continued in a complex that included nearly 300 houses, a mosque, a clinic, a school and a Koranic institute with the aim of housing displaced people from various Syrian areas.

Similarly, in May, the Syrian Observatory reported that a charitable association called “Basma” was working on building a residential village in Shadir village in Sherawa countryside (Jabal Laylon) in Afrin countryside. The association aimed to construct 12 residential blocks of 144 apartments, in the first phase, for settling families affiliated to pro-Turkey factions, especially “Turkmen” factions.

The village was built with support by the Kuwaiti-backed association of the “White Hands”, and it included three-story-style blocks with each floor containing four apartments, in addition to building a mosque and a health centre. The project also provided supplies of drinking water, electricity, road and sewage networks.
In the first third of 2021, the Turkish forces and their proxy factions started the establishment of seven model villages for settling displaced people from other Syrian provinces. The new villages were built by Turkish organisations, like the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) and other Gulf countries. These villages are located in southern Shadirrah village, Sheikh Mohammed Mountain northern Kafr Safrah-Jindires, Ligah area between the two villages of Karmatlaq and Jiqla Tahtani, Shie/Shiekh Al-Hadid near the hospital, and another mountainous site near the village of Hag Hasna-Jindires, and another site near the village of “Khalta”-Shirawa).

Similarly, on August 30, the local council in Afrin city opened a new village dubbed “Kuwait Al-Rahma” with the aim for housing displaced people from various areas across Syria. This development comes as a part of the Turkish government’s efforts to accomplish its demographic change project in Afrin canton through allowing and supporting civil organisations and bodies to structure residential units in the towns and villages whose indigenous residents were displaced, after their houses had been destroyed by the “Olive Branch” Operation which took place in the villages and towns of Afrin.

The recently-established village, “Kuwait Al-Rahma”, was located between Qibar and Al-Khalidiyyah villages in Shirawa district in Afrin countryside, while the land where the residential units were established belonged to Yazidi civilians. The village, which was established by a Kuwaiti-Palestinian association known as “Sham Al-Khair” with the participation of some Turkish organisations operating in north Syria region, also accommodated nearly 380 residential units, a mosque, a school, a clinic, a Koranic institute and a shopping mall.
Also, on October 6, the “White Hands Charity”, with co-operation with the Palestinian organisation “Live with Dignity”, opened “Basma” village near Dayrah village in Shirawa district in Afrin countryside. The new village was funded by several associations and charities, including the Kuwaiti Sheikh Abdullah Al Nouri Charity Society, the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs of Kuwait, the International Islamic Charity Organisation, the Qatari charity society of “Rohamaa Baynahom”, the Kuwaiti Zakat House, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, the Charity Committee of Al-Eslah Society, the Kuwaiti Al-Najat Charity and the Kuwaiti Campaign for Sham Victory and Support. The new village includes eight residential blocks with 96 45-square-meter apartments, and other services and facilities, including a mosque, a school, a medical centre and headquarters of the village’s administration.

It seems that violations in “Olive Branch” areas will not stop as long as Turkish forces and their proxies keep breaching all international laws and charters, while no party or international or regional player is exhibiting any willingness to put an end to these “grave” violations, despite SOHR repeated warnings about the dreadful humanitarian situation in the region.
The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 27.
“Euphrates Shield” and surroundings areas in 2021 | 90 kidnappings and arbitrary arrests, 76 factional infightings and explosions, 380 people killed and wounded in violence

SOHR renews its appeals to the international community to protect civilians in “Euphrates Shield” areas from chaos, insecurity and violations of Turkish-backed factions

Since Turkish forces and their proxy factions captured several areas in Aleppo after a military operation known as “Euphrates Shield”, humanitarian crises have been emerging and worsening gradually, with violations, attacks and explosions occur almost daily. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked 2021’s prominent developments in these areas, which could be summarised in the following main points:

Acts of violence leaves scores of fatalities

In 2021, SOHR has documented the death of 127 people in “Euphrates Shield” and surroundings which are under the control of the Turkish-factions and their proxies in the northern, eastern and north-eastern countryside of Aleppo. According to the perpetrator and cause/method of death categories, the fatalities are distributed as follows:

-Civilians: 53 persons, including nine children and eight women, were killed in and by:
  - Explosions: 21 civilians, including six children and three women.
  - Bombardment and strikes by Russian and regime forces: Nine civilians, including one child and two women.
  - Armed attacks: Ten civilians, including a little girl and two women.
• Unknown circumstances: Seven civilians, including a little girl and one woman.

• Turkish-backed factions: Four civilians.

• Kurdish forces: two men.

-Militiamen of the “National Army”: 48 militiamen, including eight commanders were killed in and by:

• Armed attacks: 15

• Kurdish forces and affiliated military formations operating in that region: 12

• Explosions: 11

• ISIS: 5

• Factional fights: 5

-16 gunmen were killed in family and factional fights.

-Five Turkish soldiers were killed in attacks by Kurdish forces.

-Five ISIS members: four were killed in a security operation by the factions, while one killed in a strike by a Coalition drone.

SOHR also documented the injury of over 251 people, including 113 civilians in these explosions, rivalries and attacks.
Explosions and factional rivalries

“Euphrates Shield” areas and their surroundings experienced 47 explosions in 2021. According to SOHR activists, these explosions were caused by detonating IEDs and explosion of landmines and booby-trapped vehicles. These explosions left 32 people dead: 21 civilians, including six children and three women, and 11 Turkish-backed factions, while nearly 114 others sustained various injuries.

The monthly distribution of the explosions, all documented by SOHR, is as follows:

- January: 7
- September: 7
- February: 6
- May: 6
- June: 6
- August: 5
- April: 4
- March: 2
- July: 2
- October: 1
- December: 1

While no explosions were documented in November.

Also, in 2021, SOHR documented 29 factional and family fights which left 21 people dead: five Turkish-backed militiamen and 16 gunmen. These fights also left 55 people, including civilians, wounded.
The monthly breakdown of family and factional rivalries is distributed in descending order as follows:

- May: 5
- February: 4
- June: 4
- July: 3
- September: 3
- November: 3
- August: 2
- October: 2
- December: 2
- January: 1

While no explosions were documented in March and April.

Popular protests and violations

Beside explosions and rivalries that have hindered normal life in the “Euphrates Shield” areas, public anger and resentment have grown greatly among the people of the areas. SOHR activists have monitored in
2021 more than 89 kidnappings and forcible/arbitrary arrests under different pretexts, 61 of those were released after their families had paid ransoms to the kidnappers and Ankara-backed factions, while other 28 persons are still kidnapped or under arrest.

Popular protests:

In July, people in Al-Bab city launched “Al-Bab is Thirsty” campaign after most of the wells which supply water to the region ran dry. Additionally, the disruption of water supply from Al-Raee city continues due to the decline of aid and the increase in the running costs of water supplies. Pumping water from Al-Raee city costs around 100,000 US dollars per month due to the fuel price increases that have worsened the water crises, and increased the costs of pumping and transportation water, while summer was looming with growing temperatures that could have caused a possible disaster in light of the people’s growing demand for water, monopoly of water tanks’ owners and incapability of local municipalities to find a solution.

Al-Bab city hosts over 250,000 people, most of them displaced families with an estimated number of 60,000 families from the provinces of Damascus, Reef Dimashq, Homs, Hama and other areas in eastern Syria.

In August, large protests took place in several areas. In Azaz city, protests broke out in front of a private Turkish company that provides electricity to the city against the frequent blackouts, where the electricity was interrupted daily for five or six hours since the beginning of the summer.

The protesters raised placards that read “persistence in reclaiming your right, guarantees its restoration in the end” and they accused the Turkish company of stealing people’s money instead of providing service. The protesters also chanted phrases that described the electricity company as “thieves”, and demanded it leave the city and hold the local council accountable.
Also, in Al-Bab city, the residents staged a demonstration in front of the Turkish energy company, protesting the frequent blackouts in the city and the company’s failure to secure the needed amount of electricity.

The demonstrators blocked the roads leading to the company and chanted slogans against the company’s director: “Curse your Soul, director. You are a thief”. Meanwhile, the director escaped, leaving the employees facing the protestors.

By end of August, a private Turkish electricity company decided to stop feeding electricity service in Jarabulus city in the northeast countryside of Aleppo. The populations considered the company’s new decision as a message to force them to accept its unfair decisions in some areas under its control.

In November, female teachers in Mare’ Girls High School started a strike in response to the violations and interference of the Turkish-backed Al-Hamza Division in taking civil decisions, including decisions related to the educational process. This strike came after Al-Hamza Division stormed a school in Hazawan town in the eastern countryside of Al-Bab city in north-eastern Aleppo in an attempt to break the strike started earlier by teachers in the schools in areas under the control of Turkish forces and their proxy factions in rural Aleppo, as the teachers demanded the improvement of the educational process and salary increase.

Also, the region witnessed public uproar and people took into the streets in Qabasin, Al-Raee and Al-Bab areas in Aleppo countryside, to protest the depictions of Prophet Muhammed that appeared in curriculum books in some schools in these areas. The depictions portrayed a man in a wedding suit with a bridegroom with no hair cover, and below the photos some words about the prophet life were written. Reliable sources informed SOHR that the National Army and military police forces started raids and inspection campaigns to find the sources of the books and confiscated some copies from the education ministry directorates and some school before distributing them to the remaining students in the areas under their control.
The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) renews its appeals to the international community to protect civilians in the “Euphrates Shield” areas amid the prevalent chaos, and insecurity which manifest itself in daily robberies, murders, kidnappings and arrests in plain sight of the Turkish forces and with participation of the Ankara-backed factions.

HD Infographic: Security chaos and Turkish-backed factions’ violations in “Euphrates Shield” area in 2021

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 24.
“Peace Spring” areas in 2021 | Nearly 180 kidnappings and arbitrary arrests, 52 infighting and explosions, more than 300 casualties

SOHR renews its appeals to the international community to protect civilians in Peace Spring areas from the systematic practices of Ankara-backed factions

Human rights violations have been worsening in areas under the control of Turkish forces and their proxy factions in Al-Hasakah and Al-Raqqah, known as “Peace Spring” areas since they were captured in October 2019. The forces’ aim is to accomplish specific economic and political objectives through exploiting the region’s bounties, resources and people.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked all developments and violations committed in “Peace Spring” areas in 2021.

Violence and human losses

SOHR has documented death of 98 persons with different methods in areas under control of Turkish forces and operation room of Peace Spring factions in 2021.

The death toll is distributed as follows:

30 civilians:

- 16 persons, including eight children and four women, killed in explosions.
- Five persons killed in factional infighting and by factions’ members.
- Three persons killed by Turkish Border Guard Forces (Jandamra).
Three men killed in unknown circumstances.

Three men killed by unknown gunmen.

59 members of Ankara-backed factions including leaders

- 21 members killed in factional infighting.
- 17 members killed in explosions.
- 14 members killed by SDF.
- Four members killed in airstrikes by International Coalition drones.
- Three members killed by unknown gunmen.

Six Turkish soldiers:

- Five killed in explosions.
- One killed by mistake while playing with his weapon.

Three with unknown identities killed in explosion of booby-trapped vehicles while driving them in different dates.

130 casualties in 22 explosions mostly in Ras Al-Ain city

In 2021, 22 explosions took place via detonating of IEDs, landmines and booby-trapped vehicles, killing 47 persons and wounding 81 others in “Peace Spring” areas.

The monthly distribution of the explosions and casualties, all documented by SOHR, is as follows:
January: Three explosions, including two in Ras AL-Ain city and one in Tal Abyad, killed nine persons and wounded other 18.

February: Four explosions, including three in Ras Al-Ain city and one in Tal Tamer killed, eight persons and wounded other 13.

March: Five explosions in Ras Al-Ain city and its countryside killed 15 persons and wounded other 21.

April: Three explosions, including two in Tal Tamr and one in Ras Al-Ain countryside, killed five persons and wounded other eight.

May: Two explosions in Silouk neighbourhood in Al-Raqqa countryside killed two persons and wounded other five.

August: Three explosions in Ras Al-Ain killed seven persons and wounded 12 others.

September: Two explosions in Ras Al-Ain killed one person and wounded four others.

October, November and December have not seen any explosions.

30 cases of factional infighting and clashes killed and wounded 150 persons and caused widespread panic and fear

In 2021, SOHR activists have documented thirty cases of factional infighting and clashes among Turkey-backed factions over power and distribution of properties and looted objects or for personal reasons. The infightings killed 21 persons and wounded other 127.

The monthly distribution of infighting cases, all documented by SOHR, is as follows:
January: Two in Ras AL-Ain city wounded five persons.

February: Five including four in Ras Al-Ain and its countryside and one case in Tal Abyad city, killed two persons and wounding 16 others.

March: Two in Ras AL-Ain city wounded nine persons.

April: Four in Ras Al-Ain city killed four security men and wounded 19 others.

May: One in Ras Al-Ain wounded one adult and one child.

June: Three in Ras Al-Ain killed five security men and wounded 11 others.

July: Two in Ras Al-Ain killed three security men and wounded 14 others.

August: Two in Ras AL-Ain killed one person and wounded 12 others.

September: Four in Ras Al-Ain and its countryside killed five security men and wounded 17 others.

October: One in Ras AL-Ain city with no reported casualties.

November: Four, of which two in Ras Al-Ain and two in Tal Abyad, killed two persons and wounded 22 others.

More than 255 human rights violations in presence of Turkish forces

In 2021, residents in “Peace Spring” areas in Al-Hasaka and Al-Raqqa countryside suffered and endured the tyranny of the Turkish government-backed factions amid the silence of the Turkish forces. Daily violations have been monitored and documented by SOHR and are as follows:
• 178 kidnappings and arbitrary arrests of Syrian people in Al-Hasakah and Al-Raqqah countryside, including 24 women on pretexts and accusations of mainly working and spying for the SDF. Many of the kidnapped and arrested were released after their families paid levies and ransom money to the factions controlling the “Peace Spring” areas, headed by Al-Hamzah faction, while 53 others are still under arrest to date.

• 56 robberies and looting houses of civilians by Ankara-backed factions.

Miscellaneous violations in “Peace Spring” areas, most prominent of which documented by SOHR are:

• Acts of cultural vandalism and sabotaging Syrian civilisation heritage continue in “Peace Spring” areas. Those acts are akin to those taking place in Aleppo and other Syrian provinces. SOHR documented that Turkish forces and its factions dug Sahlan antiquities hill and other archaeological sites in two villages of Mashrifah and Al-Hasson in east Tal Abyad rural area in Al-Raqqah countryside, and Tal Aswad village and other sites in Al-Goganyah village in south countryside of Tal Abyad, Tal Akhdar in west countryside in the same region. According to SOHR sources, the Turkish forces found treasures and artifacts in Sahlan antiquities hill and moved them to unknown locations.

On April 25, SOHR sources reported the opening of the headquarters of a Caucasian charity “Qafqasi” in the city of Ras Al-Ain “Sere Kaniye”.
• According to SOHR sources, the headquarters of the charity “Qafqasi” were opened in houses belonging to displaced people from the city of Ras Al-Ain, who were forced to flee due to the military operation “Peace Spring”, after the Turkish forces and their factions captured it. This development comes in light of the policy of Turkish forces and their proxy factions of demographic change in areas under their control within “Peace Spring” and “Olive Branch” areas.

• Popular protests escalated over the miserable conditions in the areas of “Spring Peace” especially services. On May 5, employees in the hospital of Ras Al-Ain (Sere Kaniye) started a general strike, protesting salary delay by Turkish officials in charge of the hospital. On May 17, tens of residents demonstrated in Ras Al-Ain city (Sere Kaniye) in Al-Hasakah countryside, in “Peace Spring” areas, over electricity, drinking water and other basic services.

• Members of Al-Hamzah faction dug tombs in Ras Al-Ain city (Sere Kaniye) and especially targeted the Yazidis ones because valuable gold and silver objects were buried in the tombs. Also, Turkish-backed factions especially Al-Hamzah and Al-Sultan Murad search and dug archaeological sites in Tal Halaf, and other districts in old Ras Al-Ain like Al-Abrah and Al-Kharba.

• The torture of a young man by members of Souqour Al-Sunnah faction under control of Ahrar Al-Sham movement in Silouk town in Al-Raqqa countryside provoked public anger. On September 9, SOHR obtained a video tape of two members of that faction torturing a young man from Al-Raqqa province heinously after stripping him of his clothes because he criticised the faction on social media.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights therefore renews its call to the international community not to abandon its responsibility and obligations and find a lasting solution to the tragedy of the region’s civilians that are plagued with systematic abuse and violations committed by lawless factions, including thefts, murders, looting, arrests and kidnappings.
HD Infographic: Violations in “Peace Spring” area in 2021

- 178 Syrian civilians kidnapped and arrested arbitrarily by the factions
- 56 Cases of looting and seizure of civilian houses by the factions
- 30 Factional fights and rivalries
- 22 Explosions
  - 30 Civilians
  - 6 Turkish soldiers
  - 59 Militiamen
  - 3 Unidentified
- 98 people killed in acts of violence

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 27.
SOHR appeals to the international community to intervene immediately and force Russia and Turkey to keep civilians away from their narrow mutual interests

The “de-escalation zone”, stretching from the north-eastern mountains of Latakia to the north-western suburbs of Aleppo city running through both Hama and Idlib, has been under an “alleged” and in-name-only ceasefire agreed upon after a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Receb Tayyip Erdogan on March 5, 2020. However, that region has experienced noticeable escalation of military operations by Russian and regime forces and their loyal militias, including daily bombardment with tens of rockets and artillery shells and Russian airstrikes, which all have caused significant human losses and material damage. Meanwhile, Turkey, the “de-escalation” guarantor, seems satisfied with its “timid” bombardment on regime positions, which has not restrained this alarming military escalation, mainly concentrated in the southern countryside of Idlib, as well as affecting east Idlib countryside, towns and villages of Sahl Al-Ghab in the north-western countryside of Hama, Latakia mountains and western Aleppo countryside.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked all developments and violations against Syrian people in the “de-escalation zone” in 2021, including the military escalation by Russian and regime forces, incidents and attack, deteriorating security instability and disastrous humanitarian situation. These key developments can be summarised in the following main points:
Russian aerial operations: hundreds of airstrikes kill and injures tens of civilians

Since the Russian-Turkish agreement was reached in March 2020, the “de-escalation zone”, also known as “Putin-Erdogan” area, has experienced a complete cessation of aerial operations by regime jets and helicopters, but instead, Russian aircraft remained active in the area. SOHR has documented over 562 airstrikes by Russian fighter jets on the “de-escalation zone” in 2021. These airstrikes resulted in the death of 18 people: 14 civilians, including six women and three women, as well as four jihadists, including one Turkistani jihadist and another Chechen. The Russian airstrikes also left over 117 people, mostly civilians injured.

The total death toll included five civilians: a man, his wife, two of his children and a nephew, who were killed in the only massacre by Russian jets in 2021. The five civilians were killed on November 11 when their house was hit during Russian airstrikes on the outskirts of Bruma and Al-Habbat junction in the northern countryside of Idlib.

The Russian airstrikes in 2021 targeted 62 positions, and they are distributed regionally as follows:

Idlib

- 48 positions: Sheikh Bahr, Harbanoush, Qorganya, the perimeter of the central prison, the surrounding areas of MarratMisrin, the surrounding areas in Sarmada, HurshBasinqouli, Al-Rouj station, Sheikh Youssef, Muhambel, Ain Shaib, Saan, Al-Ruwayha, Sarja, Mantaf, Maarzaf, Bayanin, Sfuhen, Jozif, Al-Bara, Mar‘ayan, Kansafrah, Baylon, Al-Fterah, Maarbalit, Majdalya, Hursh Al-Hamamah, Urm Al-Jouz, Ihsim, Al-Kendah, Sheikh Sandyan, Bruma, Bsami, Al-Aliyah, Al-Ghassaniyyah, the surrounding areas of Zarzour, Deir Sonbol, Mashoun, Shaan, Iblin, Al-Fu‘ah, Jisr Al-Sughour, the surrounding areas of Al-Kfir, Qah camps, the surrounding areas of Idlib city, Taltita, Shadirni and Al-Ya‘qoubiyyah.
Latakia

- Five positions: Kabana, Al-Khudr, Kafridin, Al-Bernas and Barzah in northern countryside of Latakia.

Hama

- Six positions: Al-Sarmaniyah, Duwayr Al-Akrad, Al-Ziyyarah, Zayzoun power plant, Kherbet Al-Naqous and Hemaymat in the north-western countryside of Hama.

Aleppo

- Three positions: Arhab, the surrounding areas of DaratIzza and Sheikh Suleiman in the western countryside of Aleppo.

Here is a monthly distribution of the Russian airstrikes on the "de-escalation zone" in 2021:

- January: Nine airstrikes left no fatalities.
- February: 20 airstrikes left no fatalities.
- March: 18 airstrikes. A civilian was killed in airstrikes on March 21.
- April: 15 airstrikes left no fatalities.
- May: 15 airstrikes left no fatalities.
- June: 18 airstrikes. A pregnant woman was killed in airstrikes on Mantaf village in Idlib countryside on June 12.
- July: 80 airstrikes left no fatalities.
- August: 95 airstrikes left no fatalities.
-September: 204 airstrikes left four people dead as follows:

- A child was killed in Al-Bara in Idlib countryside on September 3.
- A Turkistani child was killed in a camp near Zarzour town in western Idlib on September 15.
- Two jihadists: a Syrian and a Turkistani, were killed in Idlib province on September 24.

-October: 45 airstrikes. A member of Hayyaat Tahrir Al-Sham was killed in HurshBasinqoul in Idlib countryside on October 7.

-November: 40 airstrikes left eight civilians dead as follows:

- Five civilians: a man, his wife, two of his children and his nephew, were killed in a massacre by Russian jets on November 11, as their house was hit during airstrikes on the outskirts of Bruma and Al-Habbat junction in the northern countryside of Idlib.
- Two olive pickers were killed on the outskirts of Taltita, which is inhabited mostly by the Druze sect, in north-western Idlib on November 22.
- A woman was killed nearby Shenan village in Idlib countryside on November 25, while picking olive.

November’s airstrikes also left over 20 people injured.

-December: Three airstrikes. Three people: a man, a little girl and a Chechen jihaidst were killed nearby Al-Ya’qoubiyyah village in western Idlib on December 11.
Ground military operations leave 375 fatalities

With the frequent airstrikes by Russian jets, regime forces continued their ground bombardment on the “de-escalation zone” in 2021. According to SOHR statistics, nearly 14,000 rockets, artillery and Russian-made laser (Krasnopol) shells were fired by regime forces and their proxy militias on the “de-escalation zone”, targeting 76 positions in areas under the control of Hayyaat Tahrir Al-Sham, opposition factions and jihadist groups in Aleppo, Idlib, Hama and Latakia countryside.

SOHR documented the death of 150 civilians, including 60 children and 30 women, in regime ground bombardment on these areas in 2021.

SOHR also documented the death of 84 regime soldiers and 141 members of opposition factions and jihadist groups, including Uzbek and Turkistani members, in clashes, bombardment and exchange of fire between both sides.

In 2021, regime forces committed nine massacres in the “de-escalation zone”, five of which occurred in July, killing 66 civilians, including 27 children and 12 civilians, out of the total civilian death toll.

Further details of the circumstances of massacres committed by regime forces can be summarised as follows:

- March 21: Regime forces fired guided missiles on Al-Atarib hospital in the western countryside of Aleppo, killing eight civilians including a child, a woman and a medic.

- April 8: Seven civilians, including three children and two women, were killed in rocket attack with a guided missile which targeted a car in Al-Najiyah area in Jisr Al-Shughour countryside in western Idlib.

- July 3: Five civilians: a man, his wife and their three children were killed in bombardment on Iblin town in Jabal Al-Zawiyah.
July 15: Six civilians, including a child, were killed in bombardment on Masbah area nearby Al-Fu’ah in the north-eastern countryside of Idlib.

July 17: Seven civilians, including a woman and four children, were killed in rocket attack with a guided missile on Sarjeh village in southern Idlib.

On the same day, July 17: Eight civilians: four children and four women, were killed in bombardment on Ihsim in the south of Idlib.

July 22: Regime forces shelled positions in Iblin in Jabal Al-Zawiyah, killing seven civilians of the same family: four children, their mother, uncle and grandfather.

August 19: Five civilians: a woman, three of her children and another child, were killed in bombardment on Balshoun village in southern Idlib.

October 20: 13 civilians, including a woman and three children, were killed in bombardment on Ariha city in southern Idlib. It is worth noting that this massacre left the largest number of fatalities ever since the ceasefire agreement came into force in March 2020.
The areas that came under regime bombardment in 2021 are distributed regionally as follows:

**Idlib**


**Hama**

- 13 areas: Al-Sarmaniyah, Tel Wasit, Al-Ziyyarah, Al-Qarqur, Al-Hemaydiyyah, Al-Diqmaq, Qulaydin, Kherbet Al-Naqous, Hemaymat, Al-Mansourah, Qastun, Zayzoun, Al-Ankawi and other areas in Sahl Al-Ghab.

**Aleppo**

- Eight areas: The surrounding areas of DaratIzza, Tadil, KafrTa’al, KafrAmmah, Tqad, Atareb, KafrNuran and Katyan in the western countryside of Aleppo.

**Latakia**

- Eight areas: Kabana, Al-Khudr hills, Al-Tuffahiyyah, Al-Zaiytouniyyah, the surrounding areas of Al-Yamadiyyah and three villages in Jabal Al-Turkman.

While the monthly death toll of bombardment and clashes in the “de-escalation zone” is distributed as follows:

- January: 40 people:
  - Four civilians, including a woman.
- Ten regime soldiers and loyalists.
- 26 fighters of rebel and Islamist factions and jihadist groups.

-February: 30 people:
  - Four civilians, including a child and a woman.
  - 13 regime soldiers and loyalists.
  - 13 HTS fighters and jihadists, including three members of Turkistan Islamic Party.

-March: 25 people:
  - Nine civilians, including two children and a woman.
  - Seven regime soldiers.
  - Nine fighters of opposition factions.

-April: 24 people:
  - Eight civilians, including three children and two women.
  - Eight regime soldiers.
  - Eight fighters of opposition factions, including three Uzbek jihadists.

-May: 20 people:
  - Four civilians: a child and three women.
  - Eight regime soldiers.
  - Eight fighters of opposition factions.
- Ten regime soldiers and loyalists.
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- Seven regime soldiers.
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-April: 24 people:
- Eight civilians, including three children and two women.
- Eight regime soldiers.
- Eight fighters of opposition factions, including three Uzbek jihadists.

-May: 20 people:
- Four civilians: a child and three women.
- Eight regime soldiers.
- Eight fighters of opposition factions.
November: 30 people:

- Three civilians, including a woman and a child.
- 11 regime soldiers.
- 16 fighters of opposition factions and HTS, including two Turkistanis.

December: Seven people:

- Two civilians: a child and a man.
- Five HTS fighters.

Deteriorating humanitarian situation

The humanitarian situation in makeshift refugee camps along the Syria border with Iskenderun region in north and north-west Idlib deteriorates considerably everyday, amid insignificant support by relevant organisations and “shameful” indifference by the international community to the sufferings of hundreds of thousands of Syrian people who have been forced to displace from their areas, fleeing devastating military battles by Russian and regime forces to a small geographical area.

Moreover, residents in the “Putin-Erdogan” area are struggling with dire living conditions and unstable situation due to the bombardment which targets services and infrastructure. In addition, targeting refugee camps continued as a part of policy by regime forces and their Russian ally to drain the region’s resources and exert pressure on the displaced people to return to regime-controlled areas. Such practices are added to a long list of war crimes committed by Russian and regime forces against innocent Syrian civilians.
Furthermore, the region’s residents suffer from prohibitively high prices and HTS monopoly and domination on almost all affairs in the region, especially after adopting the use of the Turkish currency. Meanwhile, the Turkish lira has recently hit a record low against foreign currencies, which led to the increase of prices in the “de-escalation zone” to levels unaffordable by many.

Nearly 120 people killed and wounded in incidents of security disorders

As the escalating security chaos has topped the events in the areas under the control of opposition factions, Haayyat Tahrir Al-Sham and jihadist groups in Idlib province and surrounding villages in the countryside of Aleppo, Hama and Latakia, SOHR activists in these areas have documented the death of 85 persons since the beginning of 2021 in bombings, shooting or kidnapping and then disposing of many bodies in remote areas.

According to the SOHR statistics, the fatalities are categorized as follows: 41 civilians, including six females and two children, 35 Syrian fighters affiliated to HTS, Islamic and rebel factions, nine of jihadist groups of non-Syrian nationals. At least 78 others have been wounded in these attacks.

Attacks by “Abu Bakr” Jihadist Battalion: 28 Turkish soldiers killed and wounded in five attacks

As a part of the efforts of countering Turkish presence in Syria, a jihadist group known as “Ansar Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq” Battalion carried out five attacks in 2021, targeting Turkish convoys and military posts in Idlib. These attacks left ten Turkish soldiers dead and 18 others wounded. Here is a summary of further details on these attacks:
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The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 23.
ISIS resurgence in 2021 | ISIS kills 625 persons in areas under control of Syrian regime and SDF, and loses more than 500 fighters

SOHR calls on the international community to find a lasting solution to the Syrian conflict and to protect Syrians from ISIS and the dangers the group poses.

Another year is about to end while ISIS presence is still strong in Syria, contrary to the International Coalition announcements of defeating the group in March 2019. ISIS’s strength is manifested in its escalating operations carried out in areas under control of the regime forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). In these areas, ISIS exploits every possible opportunity to sow chaos and carry out attacks, a clear statement that the organisation is here to stay.

On the other hand, the SDF, in cooperation with the International Coalition, have carried out counter-security operations, while regime forces have continued their routine “combing” campaigns with the support of Russia’s intensive air strikes. However, all anti-ISIS security operations have not achieved their goals yet.

In this report, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has documented in details ISIS activities and operations in different areas in Syrian in 2021.

Amid Russia’s escalated operations, ISIS killed 400 soldiers of regime forces and members of proxy factions.

ISIS continues its intensive attacks on different areas of the Syrian desert, a message for the regime forces and their allies that the Islamic group still has enough power to respond. Clearly, ISIS fighters are still deployed in nearly 4,000 square kilometres all along Jabal Abu Rajmin region in north-eastern Palmyra and the desert of Deir Ezzor and its
western countryside, and Al-Sukhna desert and north of the administrative borders of Al-Suwaydaa province.

The areas of Aleppo-Hama-Al-Raqqah triangle, Homs and Deir Ezzor deserts, experience bombings, ambushes and attacks almost daily by ISIS that are countered by periodic security operations of regime’s forces and their proxy factions under cover of the Russian fighter jets.

In 2021, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has documented the death of 880 people in security operations in the Syrian desert.

The fatalities include:

- 484 ISIS fighters, including 83 killed in clashes with regime forces, while the other, 401, were killed by Russian airstrikes.

- 396 of regime forces and their proxy militiamen were killed ISIS attacks, explosions and ambushes.

Here is a monthly breakdown of fatalities in 2021:

- January: 121 persons were killed, including 81 of ISIS fighters, and 40 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

- February: 182 persons were killed, including 89 of ISIS fighters, and 93 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

- March: 97 persons were killed, including 69 of ISIS fighters, and 28 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

- April: 121 64 were killed, including 64 of ISIS fighters, and 21 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.
• May: 59 persons were killed, including 27 of ISIS fighters, and 32 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

• June: 87 persons were killed, including 35 of ISIS fighters, and 52 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

• July: 55 persons were killed, including 23 of ISIS fighters, and 32 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

• August: 25 persons were killed, including 14 of ISIS fighters, and 11 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

• September: 51 persons were killed, including 15 of ISIS fighters, and 36 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

• October: 47 persons were killed, including 31 of ISIS fighters, and 16 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

• November: 33 persons were killed, including 15 of ISIS fighters, and 18 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

• December: 38 persons were killed, including 21 of ISIS fighters, and 17 soldiers and members of the regime forces and their proxy militiamen.

It is worth noting that ISIS in 2020 killed 819 soldiers and members of regime forces and their proxy militiamen in attacks, bombings and ambushes on the Syrian desert, including 108 non-Syrian militiamen loyal to Iran’s factions. However, 507 of ISIS fighters were killed in the same operations and with regime forces and Russian airstrikes.
Nearly 344 attacks in SDF-held areas killed 230 people

ISIS and its sleeper cells continued their operations in areas under the SDF in north and north-east Syria in 2021, carrying out several attacks and attempted assassinations using various methods, including shooting, using sharp tools and planting IEDs and landmines throughout SDF-held areas. On the other hand, SDF launched periodic security campaigns, with Coalition support, targeting ISIS cells and individuals accused of “dealing with these cells”. However, such campaigns remained timid and ineffective and could not put an end to ISIS’ escalating operations in the region.

SOHR activists documented over 344 attacks in 2021 carried out by ISIS cells in SDF-held areas in Deir Ezzor, Al-Hasakah, Aleppo and Al-Raqqah, including armed attacks and explosions. According to SOHR statistics, the number of people killed in these attacks reached 229: 93 civilians, including nine women and five children, and 136 members of SDF, Asayish Forces, Self-Defence Forces and other SDF-backed military formations.

Here is a monthly breakdown of ISIS attacks and fatalities in SDF-held areas in 2021:

- January: 51 attacks left 37 people dead: 16 civilians and 21 military personnel.
- February: 63 attacks left 46 people dead: Ten civilians, including a child and two women, and 36 military personnel.
- March: 41 attacks left 16 people dead: five civilians and 11 military personnel.
- April: 31 attacks left 23 people dead: eight civilians, including a child and two women, and 15 military personnel.
- May: 35 attacks left 21 people dead: four civilians and 17 military personnel.
June: 21 attacks left 16 people dead: eight civilians and eight military personnel.

July: 16 attacks left ten people dead: seven civilians and three military personnel.

August: 18 attacks left 12 people dead: six civilians, including a child and a woman, and six military personnel.

September: 12 attacks left eight people dead: six civilians, including a woman, and two members of SDF-backed formations.

October: 11 attacks left eight people dead: five civilians and three military personnel.

November: 29 attacks left 22 people dead: 15 civilians, including a child and two women, and seven military personnel.

December: 14 attacks left nine people dead: three civilians, including a woman, and six military personnel.

Meanwhile, anti-ISIS security operations by the SDF and the International Coalition in 2021 left 19 ISIS fighters dead and hundreds arrested.

In 2020, SOHR has managed to document 280 ISIS attacks in areas under control of the SDF in Deir Ezzor, Al-Hasakah, Al-Raqqah and Manbij. ISIS attacks, bombings and ambushes killed 208 people detailed as follows:

- 86 civilians, including ten children and six women.
- 122 members of military formations serving in those areas.
The new year is looming while the destiny of Islamic State’s abductees is still unclear amid deafening silence by the international community.

Although nearly 33 months have passed since the International Coalition’s announcement of the defeat of ISIS which was a dominant force east of the Euphrates River, and with the recent developments, silence still surrounds the issue of ISIS’s abductees. Concerns are growing, and all sides remain quiet and provide no clarification on the fate of and lives of those abductees, including Father Paolo Daololio, Bishops John Ibrahim and Paul Yazji, Abdullah Al Khalil, a British journalist, sky news journalist and other journalists, in addition to hundreds of abductees from Ain Al Arab (Kobani) area, Afrin, and Deir Ezzor.

Amid the consecutive developments and growing activities of ISIS, we, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), renew our call to the UN Security Council to refer those ‘war crimes’ and ‘crimes against humanity’ committed in Syria to the International Criminal Court so that all the criminals and killers of the Syrian people are brought to justice.

We, at SOHR, also point out that the Syrian Observatory had already warned, well before “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” declared itself as “Caliphate State” in Syria and Iraq, that this organization did not intend to work for the Syrian people interests, but rather ISIS continued to kill innocent Syrians, millions were gratuitously killed, wounded and displaced.

Furthermore, the “Islamic State” recruited children in the so-called “cubs of the caliphate”, and controlled the wealth and resources of Syrian people and harnessed them to build a “caliphate”, and traded openly back and forth with one of Syria’s neighbouring countries.

SOHR calls on the international community once more to find a lasting peaceful settlement for the Syrian conflict.
HD Infographic: ISIS recovery in Syria in 2021

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 29.
“Al-Hawl mini-state” in 2021 | 89 persons killed by ISIS and proxies, and harsh living conditions claim the lives of 74 children, while 780 families leave the camp under SDC initiative

SOHR calls on the international community to find an immediate and lasting solution for Al-Hawl crisis and urges putting a serious plan for rehabilitating the camp’s children and women.

The recurrent catastrophic events in Al-Hawl camp, located in the far southeast of Al-Hasakah, are clear evidence of the chaos that has been caused by the presence of Islamic States in Syria. The camp, hosting thousands of refugees and displaced people, has become a mini-state for ISIS affiliates and families: virtually a ticking bomb ignored by most of the world countries in an attempt to avoid the repatriation their citizens who had joined the notorious ISIS.

Al-Hawl is a home to at least 57,544 persons of different nationalities:

- 7,972 Iraqi families consisting of 30,182 Iraqi nationals.
- 5,275 Syrian families consisting of 19,070 Syrian nationals.
- 2,427 families consisting of 8,292 European, Asian, African and other nationalities.

Under 18-year-old inhabitants of the camp are 36,743 children whose nationalities are the following:

- 12,540 Syrians.
- 18,377 Iraqis.
- 5,826 of different foreign nationalities.
In this report, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has documented and detailed the developments in the camp in 2021.

Shortage of food and medicine kill dozens of children

The catastrophic conditions in Al-Hawl camp, the lack healthcare provisions, casting and the reluctance of all the international sides to provide a lasting solution to the humanitarian crisis in the camp have all contributed to further loss of lives.

SOHR documented the death of 74 children inside the camp in 2021 due to the worsening living and health conditions and shortage of medicine and food, acute shortage of medical services because of the reluctance of the international organisations to provide support.

Here is the distribution of fatalities:

- 41 Iraqi children.
- 23 Syrian children.
- Ten European children.

It is worth noting that in 2020, SOHR documented the death of 209 persons, including 95 under 18-year-old children for similar reasons.

Growing number of crimes and unproductive counter security companions

In 2021, murder cases witnessed a big increase in Al-Hawl camp amid prevalent insecurity. ISIS cells were responsible for targeting primarily Iraqi refugees and displaced Syrians.
SOHR documented 84 crimes in Al-Hawl camp in 2021 that left 89 persons dead; these were as follows:

- Two members belonging to Al-Asayish.
- 67 Iraqi refugees, including three children and 19 women.
- 20 Syrians, including a male and female children, six women and chairman of the Syrian Council in the camp.

The number crimes recorded in the camp in 2021 (84 murder cases) is more than twice higher than that recorded in 2020 which saw just 33 cases.

Here is the monthly distribution of the murder crimes and fatalities:

- January: 13 crimes (nine Iraqis and five Syrians were killed.)
- February: Ten crimes (six Iraqis and four Syrians were killed.)
- March: 17 crimes (15 Iraqis and three Syrians were killed.)
- April: One crime (an Iraqi refugee was killed.)
- May: Six crimes (five Iraqis and two Syrians were killed.)
- June: Six crimes (four Iraqis and three Syrians were killed.)
- July: Six crimes (six Iraqis were killed.)
- August: Eight crimes (six Iraqis and three Syrians were killed.)
- September: Three crimes (three Iraqi refugees were killed.)
- November: Five crimes (five Iraqis were killed.)
- December: Nine crimes (seven Iraqis and Two Syrians were killed.)
Meanwhile, March witnessed a large security campaign against ISIS cells in the Al-Hawl camp, starting on 28, where joint forces comprising over 5,000 fighters of Syria Democratic Forces (SDF), People’s Protection Units (YPG), Women’s Protection Units (YPJ), Internal Security Forces (Asayish) and Counter-Terrorism Special Units (H.A.T) unleashed a large-scale security operation targeting ISIS cells and affiliates, very reliable SOHR sources had confirmed.

Before the launch of the five-day operation, the joint forces disconnected the internet network and interrupted radio broadcasting in the camp. Anti-terrorism forces arrested nearly 100 of ISIS members and affiliates, most of whom were non-Syrians, including a senior leader “Abu Karrar” and another Iraqi official, Algerian “Al-Zakat Emir”, and 11 ISIS women who were involved in the killing and securing equipment used in the group operations.

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that many more people, including women, were arrested during the five-day campaign, but were released later after interrogation.

The forces participating in the large-scale security campaign took the fingerprints of those aged 15 years and above in order to confirm their identities, confiscated weapons and equipment, and found several tunnels.

The escalating crimes in the camp raised many questions over how ISIS members and leaders entered the camp with such ease and no identity checks; the presence of security guards, and how weapons were smuggled into the camp and why no one was able to discover the existence of many tunnels inside the camp. There are also valid concerns regarding “corruption” in the ranks of the camp’s security guards.

However, the anti-ISIS large security campaign has not achieved its goals, while the camp has witnessed, after end the campaign, 44 crimes that left at least 47 persons.
Syrian and Iraqi families continue to leave the camp, and more children and women are repatriated to their European countries

Throughout 2021, Syrian families continued to leave the camp in accordance with the Syrian Democratic Council’s (SDC) initiative that aimed at evacuating the camp of Syrians. SOHR documented the evacuation of 780 families comprising 2,890 persons in several batches.

Here is the monthly distribution of the batches that left the camp:

- January: 98 families comprising more than 334 persons.
- February: 105 families comprising more than 400 persons.
- March: 125 families comprising more than 525 persons.
- May: 83 families comprising more than 271 persons.
- June: 59 families comprising more than 202 persons.
- July: 82 families comprising more than 299 persons.
- September: 92 families comprising more than 324 persons.
- October: 18 families comprising more than 75 persons.
- November: 67 families comprising more than 259 persons.
- December: 51 families comprising more than 200 persons.

Meanwhile, Al-Hawl camp administration has continued the evacuation of Iraqi families in coordination with the Iraqi side. By end of September, 100 families left the camp. By end of December, 123 Iraqi families comprising of 490 persons left the camp in coordination with Iraqi governmental delegation.
In 2021, dozens of children and women of ISIS families were handed over to official delegations from their countries as follows:

- **January:** The Department of Foreign Relations of the Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria handed over seven French orphans of ISIS families to representatives of France government, after signing a document between both sides, during the French delegation’s visit to the headquarters of The Department of Foreign Relations in Al-Qamishli city.

- **April:** SOHR sources said that an official Russian delegation from the Commission on the Rights of the Child of the President of the Russian Federation arrived at the headquarters of the Department of Foreign Relations in the Autonomous Administration of northern and eastern Syria in the city of Al-Qamishli in order to receive 34 orphaned Russian children from Al-Hawl camp, whose parents had been killed in previous battles while fighting with ISIS, or in previous shelling on ISIS-held areas during the group’s control of the area.

- **April:** SOHR sources said that the Department of Foreign Relations in the Autonomous Administration of northern and eastern Syria, handed over 92 Uzbeks, 24 women and 68 children, of the families of ISIS members held in Al-Hawl camp to representatives of the Uzbek government, under an official return document signed by representatives of the Uzbek side at the headquarters of the Department of Foreign Relations in Al-Qamishli city.

- **June:** SOHR sources reported that the Department of Foreign Relations of the Autonomous Administration in northern and eastern Syria handed over a Dutch woman, her two children and another orphan child of ISIS families, who were held in Al-Hawl camp, to representatives of the Dutch government, in presence of the Netherlands Special Envoy for Syria. The handover of the woman and children took place under an official return document signed by the Dutch delegation at the headquarters of the Department of Foreign Relations in Al-Qamishli city.
We, at SOHR, renew our calls to the international community to immediately find a lasting solution for the Al-Hawl problem.

We, at SOHR, urge international human rights organisations to put an immediate and serious plan for rehabilitating women and children in the camp who were saturated with ISIS ideology, given the large number of children and the widespread presence of the group cells in the camp that continue to impart their poisonous ideas to the residents of the camp, particularly women and children.

“Al-Hawl mini-state” in 2021

- 74 children died of poor health conditions and lack of medicine and food
- 89 people killed in 84 attacks by ISIS cells and affiliates
- Syrian civilians: 22 (2, 6, 14)
- Iraqi refugees: 67 (3, 19, 45)
- Over 780 Syrian families evacuated from Al-Hawl camp under SDC initiative

HD Infographic: Al-Hawl camp’s worrying statistics in 2021

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 31.
Areas under the control of the “Autonomous Administration in northern and north-eastern Syria, AANES” (SDF-held areas) experienced in 2021 scores of incidents of security disorder and violations against human rights. In this context, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked all key developments in SDF-held areas in this year.

In 2021, SDF-held areas have experienced several critical crises, including acute lack of water and bread and frequent electricity blackouts, as well as deterioration in education and prevalence of corruption in AANES institutions. These unwelcome developments spurred many residents in SDF-held areas to stage and participate in protests, expressing their rejection of the Autonomous Administration’s policies and mishandling of crises, demanding improvement of living conditions and calling upon the Autonomous Administration, the holder of power in that region, to guarantee people’s rights.

Nearly 230 people killed in escalating ISIS attacks

ISIS and its sleeper cells continued attacks in areas under the control of Syria Democratic Forces (SDF) in north and north-east Syria in 2021, carrying out several attacks and attempted assassinations using various methods, including shooting, using sharp tools and planting IEDs and landmines throughout SDF-held areas. On the other hand, SDF launched periodical security campaigns, with Coalition support, targeting ISIS cells and individuals accused of “dealing with these cells”. However, such campaigns remained timid and ineffective and could not put an end to ISIS’ escalating operations in the region.
SOHR activists documented over 342 attacks in 2021 carried out by ISIS cells in SDF-held areas in Deir Ezzor, Al-Hasakah, Aleppo and Al-Raqqah, including armed attacks and explosions. According to SOHR statistics, the number of people killed in these attacks reached 228: 93 civilians, including nine women and five children, and 135 members of SDF, Asayish Forces, Self-Defence Forces and other SDF-backed military formations.

Here is a monthly breakdown of ISIS attacks and fatalities in SDF-held areas in 2021:

- **January**: 51 attacks left 37 people dead: 16 civilians and 21 military personnel.
- **February**: 63 attacks left 46 people dead: Ten civilians, including a child and two women, and 21 military personnel.
- **March**: 41 attacks left 16 people dead: five civilians and 11 military personnel.
- **April**: 31 attacks left 23 people dead: eight civilians, including a child and two women, and 15 military personnel.
- **May**: 35 attacks left 21 people dead: four civilians and 17 military personnel.
- **June**: 21 attacks left 16 people dead: eight civilians and eight military personnel.
- **July**: 16 attacks left ten people dead: seven civilians and three military personnel.
- **August**: 18 attacks left 12 people dead: six civilians, including a child and a woman, and six military personnel.
- **September**: 12 attacks left eight people dead: six civilians, including a woman, and two members of SDF-backed formations.
- October: 11 attacks left eight people dead: five civilians and three military personnel.

- November: 29 attacks left 22 people dead: 15 civilians, including a child and two women, and seven military personnel.

- December: 14 attacks left nine people dead: three civilians, including a woman, and six military personnel.

**Security campaigns: Nearly 860 people arrested, mostly for “belonging to ISIS”**

As a response to ISIS resurgence, Syria Democratic Forces, backed by the International Coalition, escalated their security campaigns throughout SDF-held areas in 2021, with the largest number of campaigns being carried out in Deir Ezzor and Al-Hasakah. The frequent security campaigns in 2021 led to the arrest of 858 people, including many civilians, for “dealing, belonging to and communicating with ISIS cells”. It is worth noting that 492 of these people were released after interrogation, while the rest, 366 people, remained in SDF custody.

The monthly arrests are distributed in descending order as follows:

- May: 306 people
- January: 98 people
- February: 69 people
- August: 63 people
- March: 58 people
• June: 58 people
• July: 51 people
• April: 43
• September: 39
• December: 31
• October: 23
• November: 19.

It is worth noting that the joint security campaigns by SDF and the International Coalition have left 23 people dead: four civilians and 19 ISIS members and cells. SOHR stresses that the prosecution of ISIS members and attempts to hinder their attacks can and will never justify the killing of civilians.

“Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah”: Blatant violations of children’s rights

Reprehensible practices by “Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah” (the Revolutionary Youth), which manifested themselves in the luring and recruiting of minors in their military camps, topped the events in SDF-held areas in 2021. These practices represented blatant violations of human rights and international charters signed by the Autonomous Administration and Syria Democratic Forces.

Despite the many calls of families for putting an end to the recruitment of their children, “Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah” (Revolutionary Youth) has been increasingly recruiting and involving children in armed conflict in areas controlled by the “Autonomous Administration” and SDF, disregarding the laws and international covenants that prohibit the exploitation of children.
A few examples of recruitment of children by “Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah”, among many documented by SOHR, can be highlighted as follows:

- A 13-yaer-old boy known by his initials as H. N. From Kika village in Amouda countryside. He was taken to “Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah” camp in Al-Qamishli countryside.
- A boy known by his initials as M. H. From Shaikh Maksoud neighbourhood in Aleppo city.
- Three minor girls known by their initials as “A. A.”, “H. P.” and “A. K.” from Amouda city in Al-Hasakah countryside.
- A minor girl from Plisia village in Al-Malikiyah (Dayrek) countryside.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, renew our demands to both “Autonomous Administration” and SDF, the effective holders of power in that region, to stop taking advantage of disputes of children with their families and put an end to recruitment of children in the ranks of Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah. We also call upon “UNICEF” and all organisations concerned with the rights of the children to intervene immediately and put an end to violations against children and the recruitment of children into armed groups and to bring all minor recruits back to their families.

Alarming escalation of “honour killings”, amid total lack of accountability

In light of proliferation of arms throughout Syria, SOHR documented an alarming escalation of horrific murders under the pretext of “honour crimes” in SDF-held areas in 2021, while the murderers remain at large enjoying “freedom”.

The killing of a little girl known as “Ayda Al-Sa’ido” was the most dramatic incident ever in 2021 committed under this category of crimes.
The girl whose murder has become a matter of public record was killed in cold blood by her family, after she had ran away from home with her boyfriend whose frequent proposals of marriage the girl had been rejected by her family. According to SOHR sources, the girl was killed by her cousin who had also proposed to marry her, despite her refusal. The cousin chased the girl and her boyfriend and murdered the girl with the help of other tribesmen of the girl’s family, inside a house in Al-Malikiyya countryside (Dayrek) in northern Al-Hasakah, while the boyfriend managed to escape and hide in an unknown place.

SOHR activists obtained some video footages showing the barbaric crime and the horrific way of shooting the girl by the armed tribesmen. Local sources confirmed that the gunmen who took part in the crime intentionally posted the video in order to announce “cleansing the shame” according to their tribal beliefs.

A similar crime was also documented in July 6 when a man killed his daughter in Al-Hasakah city. Reliable SOHR sources reported at that time that a man strangled his 16-year-old daughter to death. It is worth noting that the girl had been raped by her cousin more than a year earlier, and her family killed her “illegitimate” baby.

The girl’s cousin was sentenced to 30 years in prison by a regime court for his crime, “the rape of the girl.” The father had held his daughter in a room in his house in Al-Klasa neighbourhood which is under the control of the Autonomous Administration in Al-Hasakah city. The father later strangled the girl to death and fled to regime-held areas in the security zone in Al-Hasakah city.
Also, in July, SOHR activists in Al-Raqqah city reported the death of a little girl affected by the burns she had sustained in her family’s house. The girl’s family had taken their wounded daughter to the National Hospital that rejected treating her due to “lack of beds” on the hospital’s burns ward. The family could not afford transferring the girl to a private hospital their poverty. Some wealthy people in the city intervened and offered to take the girl to a private hospital, but it was too late to rescue her. The girl later died of the burns she had sustained. It is worth noting that the hospital’s administration fired two doctors and three nurses, who were at the night shift in the National Hospital, over that incident.

Moreover, SOHR activists in Al-Raqqah city reported that a 14-year-old girl committed suicide by jumping from the fourth floor, fleeing domestic violence she experience by her father and step mother.

While on July 8, SOHR activists in Ain Al-Arab (Kobani) reported that a gang killed a woman and seriously wounded her brother and two of her sons, after they stole golden accessories, money and personal possessions on the road between Kobani and Al-Qamishli, while the family was heading to visit the sick father in Al-Qamishli. The victim was from Ashqanah village in Kobani countryside.

2021: A year of stifling crises and growing protests

Areas controlled by the Autonomous Administration in Al-Raqqah, Al-Hasakah, Aleppo and Deir Ezzor experienced many protests and demonstrations, criticising the poor administration of these areas by the employees, as well as mishandling of already deteriorating crises. The protestors’ demands were about the provision of basic essentials, release of detainees, control of prices, increase of fuel allocations, provision of job opportunities, and the sacking of former employees. During some protests, skirmishes took place between the protestors and security services, while security services attempted to disperse the protesters by force on several occasions.
In May, Syrian Observatory activists monitored growing public anger and discontent over a decision by the Autonomous Administration in northern and north-eastern Syria to raise the price of fuel, as demonstrations and sit-in protests took place in several areas, along with the closure of many shops in protest to the new prices.

Several demonstrations took place in Al-Shaddadi city, the 47th area, Al-Attalah village and other towns and villages in Al-Hasakah countryside, where the protestors blocked the roads using rubber tires. While in Al-Qahtaniyyah in Al-Hasakah countryside, all shops were closed. Also, many shops were closed in Ma’badah, Tel Hamis, and other areas in Al-Hasakah.

Moreover, a sit-in protest took place in Al-Malikiyah (Dayrik), where officials in the Autonomous Administration expressed solidarity with the people’s demands on social media, as the “Head of Qamishlo District” and the “Minister of Energy and Power” in the Jazeera region demanded that the authorities review the decision.

Hundreds of residents staged demonstrations in the towns and cities of Al-Qamishli, Amudah, Kirke Lake, Kobani, Al-Nashwah, Mufti, Al-Salihiya and Al-Marsho roundabout, denouncing the Autonomous Administration’s decision of raising fuel prices. The demonstrators demanded the “Autonomous Administration” revoked the decision.

SOHR activists documented the death of eight protesters, including a child, by Asayish forces gunfire while dispersing the protesters in Al-Nashwah neighbourhood in Al-Hasakah city and other areas in the southern countryside of the province. The Autonomous Administration later revoked decision No. 119 of the fuel price increase.

The fuel crisis in SDF-held areas coincided with ongoing commercial movement and fuel trade between SDF-held areas on one hand, and regime-controlled areas and Turkish-held areas on the other, as tens of trucks carrying fuel and other goods cross into these areas daily.
On the other hand, campaigns by the Self-Defence Forces to arrest young men who evade mandatory conscripting continued in 2021, despite rejection by the region’s residents of the determination of the Self-Defence Forces and SDF to drive young men to military camps by force. In Deir Ezzor protestors had demands a stop to forcing teachers, who had not served in the ranks of the Self-Defence Forces, to join military camps and exempt them from mandatory service.

On May 31, Manbij city and countryside experienced demonstrations against mandatory conscription, but the demonstrators were faced by gunfire which left several casualties, thus Manbij Military Council imposed a curfew in an attempt to contain the state of disorder which ignited following public protests over the death of a demonstrator in gunfire by Asayish Forces in Manbij countryside. Moreover, dramatic developments continued with the death of more demonstrators by Asayish Forces’ gunfire in early June. According to SOHR statistics, the number of demonstrators who were killed in gunfire by Asayish Forces in a few days reached six: four killed at Al-Khattaf checkpoint in eastern Manbij, one in Manbij city, while the sixth was killed in Al-Hodhod village in Manbij countryside. These demonstrators were killed during demonstrations protesting mandatory conscription in the ranks of the Self-Defence Forces and calling for allowing the exportation of cement and increasing fuel amounts allocated to Manbij.

In light of these dramatic developments, tribes’ elders in Manbij area and representatives of the Autonomous Administration issued a statement following a meeting between the two sides to discuss the dramatic developments in the region. The two sides agreed upon the following main points:

- The suspension of the Self-Defence Forces’ campaign in Manbij city and countryside and referring it to consideration and discussion.
- The release of all detainees arrested during the recent actions.
- The formation of commission in order to investigate the circumstances in which gunfire took place and hold accountable everyone found involved.
Nearly 40 people killed and injured in Turkish military escalation

With reports of imminent military operation by Turkish forces in SDF-held areas, which were circulated noticeably in the second half of 2021, Turkish forces continued their military escalation on areas under the control of the Autonomous Administration through almost-daily bombardment which was concentrated on the northern countryside of Al-Hasakah, exactly Tel Tamr and Abu Raseen, as well as Ain Issa countryside in northern Al-Raqqah.

The Syrian Observatory has documented the death of 14 civilians, including seven children and three women, in Turkish forces' bombardment on SDF-held areas since early 2021. The Turkish bombardment also left 25 people injured, including women and children. The breakdown of fatalities is as follows:

- March 14: A child was killed in bombardment by Turkish forces stationed in their base in Al-Yashily village on Al-Zanqal village in Manbij countryside in eastern Aleppo.
- March 19: A young lady and a child were killed in rocket fire by Turkish forces on Al-Hadriyat village in east Ain Issa countryside in northern Al-Raqqah.
- July 20: A civilian was killed in an attack by Turkish forces on M4 highway in Ain Issa countryside in northern Al-Raqqah.
- August 4: Four persons of the same family: a man and three sibling children, were killed in bombardment on Al-Saffawiyah village in Ain Issa countryside in northern Al-Raqqah.
- August 17: A woman and a little girl were killed in Turkish bombardment on civilian houses and residential neighbourhoods in Tel Tamr and Abu Rasinin Al-Hasakah.
December 21: Four civilians, including a woman and a little girl, were killed in rocket fire on villages of Abu Raseen (Zarkan) in Al-Hasakah countryside.

Critical low level of Euphrates river water in the first third of 2021 threatens food security in the Syrian Jazeera region

In early 2021, Turkey deliberately blocked the flow of Syria’s water share in Euphrates river, storing it behind dams constructed in Turkish territory. This situation led to a critical low level of water in the part running through Syria. The low level of water in Euphrates and Tishreen water dam led to decreasing hours of power availability and shrinking spaces of agriculture land on the banks of the two river and connected irrigation canals.

The decreasing water levels in the Euphrates river caused drought in large spaces along the river, exactly form the Euphrates dam in Al-Tabaqah to Al-Mansurah dam in Al-Raqqah, as Turkey aimed stifle and punish the Syrian Jazeera region. Accordingly, considerable damage plagued the farmlands in the region, affecting two and half millions of people, as well as the suspension of power generators, amid growing public anger.

According to the agreement reached between Syria and Turkey in 1987 regarding the share of each country of Euphrates’ water, Syria’s share of water is supposed to be 500 cubic meters per second (2500 barrels). However, less than 200 cubic meters of water reached Syria during the crisis in early 2021.
Not only did Turkey seize Euphrates’ water, but also it suspended pumping drinking water in Allouk station near Ras Al-Ain, cutting off water supplies to Al-Hasakah city and its surroundings. Despite calls and appeals for over a month, Turkey continued to suspend drinking water supplies to the over populated city which hosts displaced people who had fled from cities and villages near the Syria-Turkey border, fearing new military operation in the region.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), call upon the authorities in SDF-held areas to fulfil people’s demands that call for development of social and living conditions and not punishing them for demanding their rights. We also call on the International Coalition and SDF to intensify their security campaigns against active and sleeping ISIS cells in various areas in east Euphrates to prevent the revival of ISIS which poses a threat to local, regional and international security.

SOHR calls upon the Autonomous Administration in north and east Syria, Syria Democratic Forces and all relevant authorities to put an end to the ongoing violations by “Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah” (the Revolutionary Youth) in the east Euphrates region.
HD Infographic: Violations and security campaigns in SDF-controlled areas in 2021

ISIS attacks left 228 fatalities

79 Men
5 Children
9 Women

135 Members of military formations operating in the region

14 Civilians killed in Turkish bombardment

4 Men
7 Children
3 Women

858 People arrested in security campaigns

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 26.
Coalition operations in 2021 | 23 anti-Iranian and Jihadist attacks...82 security operations with SDF...48 batches of military and logistical reinforcement to NE Syria

ISIS abductees: ignored and unaccounted for

International Coalition Forces have completed the 87th consecutive month of their operations in Syria. Despite subsiding military operations in 2021, the International Coalition continued cooperating with Syria Democratic Forces through sending military and logistical supplies to Syria, participation in security campaigns which aimed to eliminate ISIS cells in SDF-held areas, and targeting jihadist groups and ISIS members and commanders in north and north-west Syria, as well as Iranian forces and their proxy militias.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has tracked and monitored all operations and movements by the International Coalition in 2021, which can be captured in the following main points:

Over 125 Iranian-backed militiamen killed and wounded in 17 airstrikes

A heightened state of tension is growing between the International Coalition and Iranian-backed Syrian and non-Syrian militias across Syria in light of the Coalition’s efforts to curb and eliminate Iranian presence in Syria.

According to SOHR statistics, airstrikes by US aircraft and Coalition drones hit Iranian positions on 17 occasions in 2021, 16 attacks targeted positions, headquarters, posts and vehicles in Al-Bokamal city and countryside, on the Syria-Iraq border, and only one attack was hit Al-Mayadeen.

These attacks left 49 Iranian-backed Syrian and non-Syrian militiamen dead and over 78 others injured, some seriously, and destroyed at least 23 targets.

For more details on these airstrikes, click here.

Iranian-backed militias, however, have not kept silent and reacted to the US and Coalition airstrikes, as SOHR documented several skirmishes and attacks by both sides. Here is a summary:

- **June 28:** Iranian-backed militias fired several rockets on Al-Omar oil field and associated residences in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor, where a US military base is located. The rockets caused material damage and burned down some cars at the targeted site. Shortly after this volley of rockets, artillery units of the International Coalition stationed in the workers’ residential city in Al-Omar oil field targeted positions of Iranian-backed militias in Al-Mayadeen city in Deir Ezzor countryside.

- **June 30:** International Coalition Forces renewed rocket attacks on Iranian-backed militias’ posts in Al-Mayadeen desert in west Deir Ezzor, before the Iranians responded by re-attacking Al-Omar oil field on July 4.

- **July 10:** Iranian-backed militias targeted with a guided missile Koniko gas field which hosts a Coalition military base in east Deir Ezzor countryside.

- **July 11:** Iranian-backed militias fired a homemade rocket on Al-Omar oil field, which hosts the largest Coalition base in Syria.

- **August 31:** Three rockets were fired from Khsham town controlled by Iranian-backed militias on Koniko gas field, near the American base. Meanwhile, the International Coalition aircraft flew over the area after the rockets attack.
The cat-and-mouse attacks between the Iranians and Coalition have been confined to west Euphrates region, as an attack, which was the first of its kind, targeted Al-Tanaf base on October 20 in the 55-kilometre zone in the Syrian desert, near the Syria-Jordan-Iraq border triangle. According to SOHR sources, several explosions were heard in Al-Tanf military base of International Coalition due to drone attacks which targeted the buffet, a mosque, and depot of food supply inside the base.

SOHR sources confirmed that the International Coalition forces and Jaish Al-Maghaweer were deployed in the vicinity of Al-Tanf base, along with reports of drones targeting Al-Tanf base, while the armed faction evacuated the base of vehicles to transport them to other posts which had been equipped with mobile medical clinics.

Ongoing operations targeting Jihadists in Idlib and Turkish-held areas.

International Coalition Forces targeted several jihadists in Turkish-held areas and parts of Idlib, as Coalition and US drones carried out six attacks in 2021, five of which were in the last quarter of this year, which left nine people dead and several injured.

Idlib

SOHR sources reported three drone attacks in 2021, which killed three jihadists and a man who was escorting a commander of the jihadist organisation of “Hurras Al-Din”, while several civilians were also injured. These attacks were as follows:

- April 15: A drone of the International Coalition targeted a vehicle of a military faction in the west of Idlib city, which caused material damage only. However, the identities of the targeted militiamen remained unknown.
- September 20: Three jihadists, “Abu Al-Baraa Al-Tunsi”, “Abu Hamza Al-Yemeni” and “Saleem Abu Ahmed”, the official responsible for planning and funding in Al-Qaeda, were killed in strikes by International Coalition drones on their car on the road between Binnish and Idlib.

- December 3: A US drone targeted a motorcycle on the road to Al-Mastumah in Idlib countryside, which killed an ex-jihadist of Hurras Al-Din organisation. According to SOHR sources, the targeted man had been an escort of the senior commander in Hurras Al-Din organisation “Abu Abdullah Al-Makki”. The former jihadist, who was from Ihsim town in Jabal Al-Zawiyah in the southern countryside of Idlib, had abandoned fighting nearly a year ago, and taught Turkish in an institute in Idlib city. The attack also injured six civilians of the same family, a man, his wife and their four sons, including two children; the family were displaced from KafrBatikh village in the eastern countryside of Idlib, as the car they were traveling in was passing through the site of the drone attack.

In Turkish-held areas, SOHR activists documented the death of five former members of jihadists groups and ISIS in three attacks by Coalition drones in Aleppo, Al-Hasakah and Al-Raqqah countryside.

- October 22: An ex-commander of the former “Jabhat Al-Nusra” which had sworn allegiance to Al-Qaeda, who later joined “Ahrar Al-Sharqiyyah” faction, was killed in an attack by a US drone near Arbid junction in Sluk countryside in the northern countryside of Al-Raqqah, in “Peace Spring” areas.

October 25: A commander called “Sabahi Al-Ibrahim Al-Musleh”, aka “Abu Hamza Shuhayl”, was killed with two of his escorts after
• being targeted with two missiles fired by a Coalition drone near Al-
Adwaniyah village to the west of Ras Al-Ain city (Sere Kaniye) in Al-
Hasakah countryside. It is worth noting that the targeted commander
was the founder of the former “Jabhat Al-Nusra” which previously
swore allegiance to Al-Qaeda in Deir Ezzor. The commander himself
swore allegiance to ISIS and worked in arms trafficking, but recently
joined the Turkish-backed 20th Division.

• November 7: An ISIS member was killed and another injured, after the
car they were traveling in was targeted by a drone of the International
Coalition in Jarabulus city in areas under the control of Turkish forces
and the factions of “Euphrates Shield” operations room in the north-
eastern countryside of Aleppo.

Ongoing military and logistical reinforcement

In 2021, the International Coalition continued sending military and logistical
supplies to its bases in north-east Syria region, particularly Deir Ezzor and
Al-Hasakah. The Syrian Observatory has documented since the beginning
of this year the entry of 48 batches of 1,670 trucks carrying vehicles and
military and logistical supplies from Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Here is a monthly breakdown of Coalition reinforcement supplies:

• January: 210 trucks entered in six batches on the 4th, 7th, 10th, 16th, 19th
and 20th of January.

• February: 295 trucks entered in seven batches on the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 14th,
18th, 23rd and 27th of February.

• March: 140 trucks entered in four batches on the 4th, 13th, 18th and 24th
of March.

• April: 50 trucks entered in two batches on the 1st and 14th of April.

• May: 125 trucks entered in four batches on the 5th, 9th and 13th of.
• June: 55 trucks entered in two batches on the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} of June.

• July: 135 trucks entered in four batches on the 10\textsuperscript{th}, 19\textsuperscript{th}, 24\textsuperscript{th} and 28\textsuperscript{th} of July.

• August: 110 trucks entered in three batches on the 1\textsuperscript{st}, 17\textsuperscript{th} and 26\textsuperscript{th} of August.

• September: 175 trucks entered in four batches on the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 9\textsuperscript{th}, 12\textsuperscript{th} and 27\textsuperscript{th} of September.

• October: 80 trucks entered in two batches on the 24\textsuperscript{th} and 28\textsuperscript{th} of October.

• November: 135 trucks entered in five batches on the 1\textsuperscript{st}, 6\textsuperscript{th}, 8\textsuperscript{th}, 13\textsuperscript{th} and 28\textsuperscript{th} of November.

• December: 160 trucks entered in five batches on the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 7\textsuperscript{th}, 11\textsuperscript{th}, 14\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} of December.

415 people killed and arrested in over 80 security operations with SDF

Also in 2021, SOHR sources monitored the participation of International Coalition Forces in 82 joint security campaigns with SDF, including raids and airdrops, in Deir Ezzor, Al-Hasakah and Al-Raqqah. During these campaigns, 392 people, including ISIS commanders, were arrested for “belonging and dealing with ISIS and arms trafficking”. Moreover, 23 people, including four civilians and 19 ISIS members and cells, were killed in the same campaigns.

Further details of the number and outcomes of these security campaigns are summarised monthly as follows:
• January: 52 people arrested in seven security campaigns. Three ISIS members were killed in an attack by Coalition aircraft on a hut in Suhat Al-Pufirio in north-east Deir Ezzor desert.

• February: 61 people arrested in nine security campaigns.

• March: 38 people arrested in eight security campaigns. Six members of ISIS cells were killed in clashes with the Coalition and SDF in Habbat Al-Eid in north Deir Ezzor desert, near Al-Suwar town.

• April: 13 people arrested in three security campaigns.

• May: 32 people arrested in nine security campaigns.

• June: 19 people arrested in four security campaigns. A member of ISIS cells was killed in Al-Shuhayl town in eastern Deir Ezzor.

• July: 13 people arrested in five security campaigns. Three ISIS members were killed in airstrikes by Coalition aircraft on a house in KherbetJamous village in the eastern countryside of Al-Hasakah, near Jabal Kawkab which is under the control of regime forces.

• August: 23 people arrested in eight security campaigns.

• September: 49 people arrested in seven security campaigns. A civilian was killed in gunfire by the International Coalition in Al-Zarr village in Deir Ezzor countryside, as well as the death of three members of ISIS cells during an airdrop in Al-Shuhayl town.

• October: 85 people arrested in nine security campaigns. A civilian was killed in gunfire by the International Coalition in Shninah village in Al-Raqqah city.

• November: 19 people arrested in eight security campaigns. A man suspected of belonging to ISIS was killed in gunfire by the International Coalition in Al-Sabha village in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor.

ينوه المرصد السوري بأن جميع المعلومات والتوثيقات المذكورة في هذا التقرير هي حتى تاريخ نشره في 30 نوفمبر.
December: 15 people arrested in five security campaigns. Four people, a teacher, two of his sons and his brother-in-law, were killed in Al-Busayrah town in eastern Deir Ezzor. It is worth noting that the teacher and one of the sons were civilians, while the other two men were of ISIS cells.

Abductees forgotten by Coalition and SDF

33 months have passed since the International Coalition’s official declaration of the elimination of Islamic State as a dominating force over east of the Euphrates River. Despite all the developments that took place over the past month, the Coalition and SDF’s silence continues regarding ISIS abductees. No details on the fate of thousands of abductees are provided; and no information about the results of the interrogations of ISIS member is available, as thousands are held by SDF and the Coalition, east of the Euphrates.

Concerns about the abductees’ lives and fate are growing, including the fate of father Paulo Dall’Oglio, Bishop John Ibrahim, Paul Yaziji, Abdullah Al-Khalil, a British journalist, Sky News journalist, and other journalists, and hundreds of abductees from Ayn Al-Arab (Kobani) and Afrin and other people from Deir Ezzor.

2021: another year passes and no investigation into alleged Coalition massacres

Despite SOHR repeated and “unheeded” appeals, International Coalition and SDF have not announced the results of interrogations with ISIS detainees and what happened to the thousands of abductees. The Syrian Observatory had previously called upon the international community to investigate reports regarding the killing of 200 ISIS operatives and their families, women and children, in a massacre committed by the Coalition’s jets by bombing Al-Baghouz camp on March 21, 2019.
According to SOHR sources, 200 bodies were buried at dawn on that particular day, without information as to whether the International Coalition was aware of the presence of children and women from ISIS families inside the camp or not.

However, all these appeals remain unanswered. Therefore, SOHR renews its calls and appeals to all relevant parties to disclose and announce the whole facts and hold accountable those responsible for the massacres and violations over the past five years during which the Coalition were actively involved in the Syrian crisis.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, while providing adequate monitoring of Coalition operations in Syria, stresses once more that it would have been possible to avoid the heavy losses of Syrian civilian lives if the International Coalition had not ignored SOHR’s calls to spare and protect civilians from its military operations, where the presence of Islamic State militants or other jihadist groups in a civilian area does not in any way justify the blank and discriminate bombardment of area and the loss of civilian lives.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also stresses that the negative impact of Turkish military intervention on civilians could have been avoided, if US Presidents had applied enough pressure on their Turkish counterpart to stop a new humanitarian crisis, displacing thousands and killing and injuring hundreds.

On the other hand, we at SOHR would like to remind the world that the oil and gas resources, controlled by the International Coalition, belong only to the Syrian people. Therefore, all the concerned parties are obliged under international laws and norms to preserve these resources and ensure that they will not be stolen or seized in any way; these resources do not belong to the “regime”, “Iran” or any other party; they belong only to the people of Syria, who have been suffering the brutalities of an ongoing war for over nine years. SOHR also warns of repercussions of exploiting these sources, seizing them or depriving the Syrians of their rights in resources.
HD Infographic: Operations and movements by International Coalition in 2021

SOHR provides detailed information about operations and movements by International Coalition Forces in Syria in 2021

1670 trucks carrying vehicles and military and logistical supplies enter Syria in batches 48

Coalition airstrikes

airstrikes on Iranian-backed militias’ positions 17

78 Injured militiamen

49 Fatalities

airstrikes on Idlib and Turkish-held areas 6

78 Arrested people

23 Fatalities

19 ISIS members and cells

4 Civilians

82 joint security campaigns with SDF

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 23
West Euphrates Region | US aircraft and unidentified drones attack Iranians' positions on 17 occasions in 2021, leaving over 125 casualties

SOHR renew its appeals to force Iranian forces and their proxy militias out of Syria

Although Iranian-backed militias have been strengthening their presence in regime-held areas across Syria, west Euphrates region has become the most prominent and strategic region for Iran in Syrian territory. With nearly 30,000 Syrian and non-Syrian fighters operating under their command in that region, the Iranians managed to turn west Euphrates into an "independent colony" in Syria in just a few years.

The key region is located on Tehran-Beirut highway, which the Iranians had sought for imposing their influence on until Qassem Soleimani, who led the military operations in the area at that time, managed to capture al-Bokamal in 2017. Accordingly, Soleimani could secure the highway between Tehran and Beirut, running through Syria and Iraq.

As a part of efforts by the USA, International Coalition and Israel to eliminate Iran from Syria, Iranian-backed militias in west Euphrates region have been subjected to frequent aerial attacks since the Iranians imposed their control of that region.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights would like to shed light on the escalating attacks by US aircraft and other unidentified drones, believed to be American or affiliated to the International Coalition, on Iranian-backed militias' positions in west Euphrates region since early 2021.

According to SOHR statistics, airstrikes hit Iranians' positions on 17 occasions in 2021, 16 attacks targeted positions, headquarters, posts and vehicles in al-Bokamal city and countryside, on the Syria-Iraq border, and only one attack was executed on al-Mayadeen.
These attacks left 49 Iranian-backed Syrian and non-Syrian militiamen dead and over 78 others injured, some seriously, and destroyed at least 23 targets.

Further details of these airstrikes could be summarised as follows:

- **January 7**: A drone targeted a vehicle belonging to the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces, while attempting to enter Syrian territory, via an unofficial border crossing with Iraq near the town of Al-Bokamal in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor. The attack left the four PMF members who were in the vehicle dead and others injured.

- **February 11**: An unidentified drone targeted a car carrying a shipment of weapons coming from Iraq, near an unofficial military crossing between Iraq and Syria. The crossing was used by Iranian-backed militias to move between the two countries and to bring in reinforcement and shipments near the city of Al-Bokamal in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor. Meanwhile, violent explosions were heard in the area after the car loaded with ammunition and weapons was targeted.

- **February 26**: US fighter jets targeted a weapon shipment affiliated to Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, while it was crossing into Syria from Iraq, at 01:00 am Syria time, near Al-Qa’em crossing in Al-Bokamal area in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor. The airstrikes left great human and material losses, as SOHR activists documented the death of 22 Iranian-backed Iraqi militiamen, specifically affiliated to Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces, while three trucks carrying ammunition were destroyed. It is worth noting that forces of the Iraqi Hezbollah were also stationed in the targeted area.

- **March 22**: An unidentified drone targeted oil wells in Al-Bokamal desert in rural Deir Ezzor, near the Syria-Iraq border. According to SOHR sources the targeted wells were rehabilitated by Iranian-backed militias, after they had been destroyed by ISIS during its control of the area.
• April 29: A drone struck the house of a commander of Iranian-backed militias and a military vehicle in Al-Sayyal town, nearly 11 kilometres to the north-west of Al-Bokamal city, on the western bank of the Euphrates river in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor, near the Syria-Iraq border. The attack resulted in the death of a non-Syrian commander and the injury of five militiamen, as the drone targeted the militiamen with a missile after it had struck the commander’s house.

• June 28: Seven members of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces were killed in the US airstrikes on military posts of the Iranian-backed militias near at the Iraq-Syria border in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor. The attacks also destroyed a weapon warehouse and another military post of these militias.

• July 13: An unidentified drone attacked the military gate of Iranian-backed militias in al-Herri village near al-Bokamal city on the Syria-Iraq border.

• July 18: A US drone attacked at least one military vehicle of the Iraqi Hezbollah operating under the banner of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces in Al-Seway’ah area in al-Bokamal on the Syria-Iraq border, just after it had entered Syria from Iraq. According to SOHR activists, the targeted vehicle carried weapons and ammunition belonging to the Iraqi Hezbollah. The attack destroyed the vehicle and killed its driver, but it was not known if there were other militiamen in the targeted vehicle or not.

• September 4: unidentified drones attacked three trucks of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces near the Syria-Iraq border in al-Bokamal countryside. The attacked destroyed the trucks and left three militiamen dead and others injured.
• September 27: Unidentified drones struck al-Mazare’ area in al-Mayadeen desert, which hosts the largest gathering of Iranian-backed militias in the west Euphrates region, destroying Iranian-made surface-to-surface missiles launchpads that had been established by the Iranian-backed militias in that region. Moreover, the attack and rockets’ shrapnel wounded at least 12 pro-Iran non-Syrian militiamen, and they were taken to al-Shefaa hospital which is affiliated to these militias in al-Mayadeen city. Meanwhile, the targeted site was cordoned off and the Iranian-backed militias were seen on high alert.

• September 30: Observatory activists reported hearing several explosions in Deir Ezzor countryside, near the Syria-Iraq, caused by an attack by unidentified drone on positions of the Iranian-backed militias in the region. According to SOHR sources, the drone was seen flying in the region this evening and targeted positions in al-Katef area near al-Bokamal city with two missiles at lease. Meanwhile, the Iranian-backed militiamen attempted to shot down the drone with heavy machineguns.

• October 8: Fires broke out in some military headquarters of Iranian-backed militias nearby Aiysha hospital in al-Bokamal city in Deir Ezzor countryside, after an unidentified drone attacked these headquarters. The drone attack coincided with the sound of heavy gunfire in al-Bokamal city, as the Iranian-backed militias were attempting to shot down the drone using anti-aircraft machineguns. Meanwhile, the Iranian-backed militias were seen on high alert in al-Bokamal city on the Syria-Iraq border, amid unconfirmed reports of shooting down the drone after the attack.

• October 11: Four members of Iran-backed militias were killed due to airstrikes by unknown drones on positions and posts of those factions in al-Bokamal region near the Iraq-Syria border in east of Deir Ezzor. The fatalities included a Syrian militiaman, while the nationalities and identities of the other three militiamen remained unknown.

• November 9: Unknown drone attacked areas under the control of Iranian-backed militias on the outskirts of al-Bokamal, but no casualties have been reported.
• November 10: At least seven Iranian-backed militiamen were killed due to airstrikes by unknown drone, which targeted positions and weapons warehouses in al-Bokamal city in east Deir Ezzor countryside. According to SOHR sources, the deaths included three Syrians who worked for the Iranian-backed militias. However, the nationalities of the other four militiamen remained unknown. Moreover, the airstrikes destroyed warehouses of weapons and ammunition.

• November 15: Unidentified drones struck positions where Iranian-backed militias were stationed on the outskirts of al-Bokamal city in the eastern countryside of Dei Ezzor. Plums of smoke were seen in the targeted sites. However, no casualties were reported.

• On the same day, November 15: SOHR activists reported hearing loud eight explosions in al-Bokamal city in eastern Deir Ezzor, caused by airstrikes by unidentified drones on Iranian-backed militias’ positions. The attacks destroyed a headquarters where weapons and ammunition were stored.

In light of the escalating attacks on the region, Iranian-backed militias adopted timid precautionary measures to avoid considerable losses, such as redeployment and transportation of weapons to different warehouses after every attack. In addition, the Iranians changed the time when they transport weapon shipments from and to Iraq and used some camouflage strategies. However, all these measures have been failed, as the successive attacks could achieve their objects.

It is common knowledge that Iran played a great role in the killing and displacement of thousands of Syrian people, so we, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights which has been all along monitoring and tracking the daily movements by the Iranians across Syria through a vast network of activists and very reliable sources, renew our appeals to all international actors to exert extra pressure on Iran to leave Syria, and to exert diligent efforts to bring all criminals, perpetrators and all those who aided and abetted killing and torturing Syrians to international courts.
HD Infographic: Attacks by US aircraft and other unidentified drones on west Euphrates region in 2021

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, November 30.
2021 | Israel attacks Syria on nearly 30 occasions, destroying over 70 targets and killing nearly 130 people

SOHR emphasises the importance of getting Iran out of Syria and keeping civilians and public properties out of regional conflicts.

Israel continues to violate Syria’s sovereignty, citing the large military presence of Iranian forces and their proxy militias as an excuse, as Israel has noticeably escalated its strikes in Syria since early 2018, and targeted Syrian territory on 29 occasions since early 2021, which is the second largest number of Israeli attacks on Syria in one year; in 2020 Israel targeted Syria on 39 occasions.

In this report the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) presents detailed information of all the Israeli strikes on Syria in 2021. SOHR has also documented the human losses and material damage caused by these attacks. The details of all Israeli attacks during 2021 are summarised in the following main points:

Targeted areas, fatalities, and material damage

SOHR documented 29 airstrikes and ground rocket attacks in 2021, during which Israel targeted several positions in Syria, destroying nearly 70 targets, including buildings, warehouses, headquarters, centres and vehicles. These strikes killed 130 people and they were as follows:

Five civilians, including a man, his wife and their two children and another man.

125 regime soldiers and proxies, members of Iranian forces and Lebanese Hezbollah and their loyal militiamen.
Fatalities of militiamen and regime soldiers are categorised as follows:

- 28 non-Syrian militiamen of Iran-backed militias and Lebanese Hezbollah.
- 25 Syrian militiamen of Iran-backed militias and Lebanese Hezbollah.
- 24 Iraqi militiamen.
- 17 militiamen of the Afghan “Liwa Fatemiyoun”.
- Five militiamen of the Pakistani “Liwa Zainebiyoun”.
- 26 regime soldiers and loyalists.

Meanwhile the attacks are distributed regionally as follows:

- Damascus and Rif Dimashq: 12 attacks
- Homs: six attacks
- Al-Quneitera: five attacks
- Deir Ezzor: two attacks
- Hama: two attacks
- Lattakia: two attacks
- Al-Suwaydaa: two attacks
- Aleppo: one attack

SOHR would like to point out that Israel sometimes targeted more than one province in a single attack.
Here is a monthly distribution of Israeli attacks and fatalities they left:

- January: Three attacks killed 60 militiamen and four civilians, including a woman, her husband and two children.
- February: Three attacks killed nine persons.
- March: One attack left no fatalities.
- April: Two attacks killed four persons.
- May: Three attacks killed ten persons, including a civilian.
- June: One attack killed 11 persons.
- July: Two attacks killed five persons.
- August: Two attacks killed four persons.
- September: One attack left no fatalities.
- October: Four attacks killed 17 persons.
- November: Four attacks killed five persons.
- December: Two attacks killed one person.

Although Israel’s attacks on Syrian escalated in the second half of 2021 with 15 attacks compared to 13 in the first half of the year, the number of fatalities in the first six months remained higher, 98, compared to 32 in the second half of the year.
Full details of the Israeli attacks are categorised as follows:

January 6: Israeli strikes targeted a radar system battalion in the west of Al-Dour village in Al-Suwaidaa countryside, “Najran” battalion in the northwest of Al-Suwaidaa at the administrative border with Daraa province, and the surrounding areas of the 1st Division in Al-Keswa area and other sites on Damascus-Daraa highway. It is worth noting that the targeted areas hosted militias loyal to Iranian forces and Lebanese Hezbollah, as well as regime forces and loyalists. The attack left three people dead, two of whom in Al-Kiswa area and the other at the radar system battalion in Al-Suwaidaa, while more than 11 people were injured, some of whom sustained severe wounds. The attack also destroyed the radar system in west Al-Suwaidaa, as well as weapons depots, south of the capital, Damascus.

January 13: An Israeli attack killed 57 people, the largest death toll ever in 2021 and in a single attack. The attack targeted positions, weapons and ammunitions warehouses and missiles depots affiliated to regime forces, the Lebanese Hezbollah, Iranian forces and their proxies, especially Liwaa Fatimyoun. The attack hit the area between Deir Ezzor city and Al-Bokamal desert on the Syria-Iraq borders. The deaths were documented in the following areas:

- Deir Ezzor city: 26 persons were killed in ten strikes by Israeli fighter jets on Ayyash warehouses, Sa’ka camp, the 137th Brigade, the mountain overlooking Deir Ezzor city and other positions on the outskirts of the city. The fatalities were ten regime soldiers, four members of the “military security” and 12 Iranian-backed militiamen. However, it is unknown whether or not the fatalities included members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and Lebanese Hezbollah. The Israeli strikes on Deir Ezzor city destroyed weapons and missiles warehouses and headquarters.
• Al-Bokamal: 16 Iranian-backed Iraqi militiamen were killed in six Israeli airstrikes on positions, weapons warehouses and ammunition depots in the area of “Al-Hezam”, Al-Jam’iyat neighbourhood and other positions in Al-Bokamal desert. This attack destroyed centres and vehicles.

• Al-Mayadeen: 15 Iranian-backed non-Syrian militiamen, including 11 Afghan members of Liwaa Fatimyoun were killed in Israeli strikes on positions and weapons warehouses in Al-Mazare area in Al-Mayadeen desert in the eastern countryside of Dear Ezzor. The attack also destroyed weapons warehouses and headquarters.

January 22: Israeli fighter jets flying over Lebanon struck at least five positions of Iranian-backed militias and the Lebanese Hezbollah nearby Hama city and Syria’s central area. The airstrikes destroyed all the targeted positions. On the other hand, shrapnels of missiles, fired by regime air-defences in an attempt to intercept the Israeli missiles, hit the residential neighbourhood of Kazu in the north-western part of Hama city, killing a family of four: a woman, her husband and two children, and seriously injured an old man, a woman and two other children.

February 3: Israeli bombardment targeted several military positions, including farms where militias affiliated with the Lebanese Hezbollah and the “Syrian Resistance for the Liberation of the Golan” were located. Meanwhile, explosions rocked military posts of the regime’s Brigade-90 Tanks, where Iranian-backed militias were stationed, in Al-Habbariyah area in Al-Quneitra near the administrative border with Daraa, amid reports of the destruction of these posts.

February 15: Israeli rockets hit headquarters of the 4th Division in the mountains surrounding Damascus-Beirut highway, known as “Beirut old
highway”, where weapons and missiles depots belonging to the Iranians and their proxy militias were located. The Israeli attack destroyed depots of sophisticated missiles which Iran had transferred to the headquarters of the 4th Division. Headquarters of the Syrian regime’s First Division and surrounding area in Al-Kiswa, as well as other locations west and south-west of Damascus also came under attack. This attack left nine pro-Iranian militiamen dead in the airstrikes of Al-Kiswa area, while seven others were killed in the attacks on the Iranian missiles’ depots in the headquarters of the 4th Division in the mountains around Damascus-Beirut highway. It is worth noting that all fatalities were not of Syrian or Arab nationalities.

February 28: An attack targeted positions of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and Lebanese Hezbollah in the south of the capital, Damascus, while the targeted positions were cordoned off and no one was allowed to approach without commanders’ permissions.

On March 12, SOHR obtained new details about the Israeli strikes on the south of Syria’s capital, Damascus, on February 28. Very reliable sources informed SOHR that the attack’s objective was to kill three commanders of Al-Quds Corps, whose nationalities, whether Iranian or Syrian, remained unknown, while unconfirmed reports suggested that one of the three commanders was affiliated to the Lebanese Hezbollah. However, the commanders had evacuated their house in Sayeda Zeinab area in the south of Damascus, just a few hours before the Israeli attack. Accordingly, the Israeli attack’s objective was not achieved. It is worth noting that the commanders of these militias periodically change their residence and places where weapons and ammunition are stored, fearing of repeated attacks.

March 16: Israel airstrikes targeted two weapons warehouses of Iranian forces in regime military positions, a few kilometres away from Damascus
international airport. It is worth noting that the explosions in the first warehouse were more violent. However, it was unknown whether ammunition stored earlier exploded or not.

April 8: Israeli missiles destroyed weapons and ammunition warehouse believed to be used by militias affiliated to the Lebanese Hezbollah in a military post near Al-Demas area. This attack also left three militiamen dead, but it is unknown whether they were Lebanese or foreigners affiliated to Iranian-backed militias.

April 22: Israeli missiles hit the regime Air-Defence base in Al-Dumayr area, destroying air-defence batteries, killing a lieutenant and seriously injuring three other regime soldiers. It is worth noting that Al-Dumayr area hosts headquarters and warehouses belonging to the Iranian-backed militias.

May 5: Israeli airstrikes hit military positions of regime forces and Iranian-backed militias in both the countryside of Hama and Latakia:

- Hama: the airstrikes hit weapons and ammunition warehouses in mountains and forests in the area of Deir Shmail in the western countryside of Hama near the administrative border with Lattakia.

- Lattakia: several airstrikes hit military headquarters, weapons and ammunition warehouses in the south of Al-Haffa. Also, in Suq Al-Jumaa, an area contains old villas in southern Lattakia, several explosions were heard, but it was not unclear whether they were caused by Israeli airstrikes or shrapnels of the missiles of the regime's air-defences, as regime's air-defence batteries were located near Suq Al-Jumaa.
On the other hand, one civilian was killed and over five others, including a woman and three children, were injured; also as well as a plastic factory belonging to a civilian in Ras Shamra and Ras Al-Ain in Lattakia countryside was destroyed. These attacks also left eight members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its proxy militias dead, and the fatalities are distributed as follows:

- Five members of IRGC of Iranian and Afghan nationalities were killed as a result of the Israeli airstrike on their headquarters in Deir Shmail in the western countryside of Hama near the administrative borders with Lattakia.
- Three IRGC-backed militiamen, one Syrian and two non-Syrians were killed by the Israeli strikes on the countryside of Lattakia.

Moreover, nine people were injured.

May 6: An Israeli helicopter flying over the Syrian Golan hit, with two missiles, a regime military post nearby Jbata Al-Khashab town in the north of Al-Quneitra, near the occupied Syrian Golan, hosting members of the reconnaissance and monitoring brigades of the Lebanese Hezbollah. The strike wounded three members stationed at the military post. Meanwhile, another military post nearby Tel Al-Sha’ar came under attack, leaving several members injured. However, it is not known whether the wounded members belonged to regime forces or the reconnaissance and monitoring brigades of Hezbollah.

May 10: An Israeli helicopter targeted a place where a person working for the Lebanese Hezbollah was located, near Ein Al-Tineh in the west of Hadar in the occupied Syrian Golan. The man was taken to the hospital in Al-Quneitra as he sustained severe wounds. According to SOHR sources, the targeted person was from the occupied town of Majdal Shams, and lived in the town of Hadar.
It is worth noting that the targeted man’s father had been detained in Israeli prisons, and his two brothers were killed in previous battles against the opposition factions in the northern countryside of Al-Quneitra.

June 9: Israeli jets attacked military positions in Homs and Damascus as follows:

- Homs: Israeli strikes hit the scientific research centre and other military posts and positions of the National Defence Forces and Air-Defence Forces in the vicinity of Kharbat Al-Tinah in western Homs. The strikes also targeted an ammunition warehouse belonging to the Lebanese Hezbollah, south of Homs city. These strikes left 11 Syrian regime soldiers and militiamen of the National Defence Forces, including a brigadier general, dead.

- Damascus: SOHR activists reported hearing explosions in the perimeter of Damascus international airport and the Air-Defence Battalion in the Al-Dumayr area. The explosions were caused by Israeli attacks on weapons warehouses.

July 19: Israeli fighter jets conducted several strikes on positions of Iranian-backed militias in Al-Waha area in Al-Sferah in the south-eastern countryside of Aleppo. The airstrikes destroyed an Iranian position and a military base and killed five Iranian-backed militiamen, including two Syrians and three non-Syrians.

July 22: Israeli fighter jets flying over Lebanon struck military positions of the Lebanese Hezbollah in Al-Dab’a military airbase, Al-Qusair area in the western countryside of Homs and other military positions and posts in the eastern countryside of Homs. These airstrikes destroyed weapons and ammunition warehouses.
August 17: A fire broke out at a military post of regime forces and Iranian militias in Qurs Al-Nafl hill in the west to Huder town in the northern countryside of Al-Quneitra, after being targeted with three Israeli missiles. No casualties were reported.

August 19: Israeli missiles hit weapons warehouses and military positions in Qarrah area in Rif Dimashq, on the administrative border with the south-western countryside of Homs. The attack killed four “collaborators” with Lebanese Hezbollah, including Iranian, Iraqi and two Syrians.

October 3: Israeli attacks targeted regime military positions used by Iranian factions for weapons development in the area of the scientific research centre in Barzah and Jomraya regions in Rif Dimashq, but no casualties were reported. While ambulances rushed to the targeted site which was cordoned off.

October 8: Three Iranian-backed militiamen were killed by Israeli airstrikes on T4 military airbase in the eastern countryside of Homs, where weapons and ammunition warehouses and platforms for launching drones affiliated to Iranian-backed militias were located.

October 13: An Israeli attack killed nine militiamen, including five Syrians working for Hezbollah and the Iranian-backed militias, while the identities of the others remained unknown. The airstrikes hit several Iranian-backed militias’ centres, including a training centre and a communication tower, a few kilometres to the east of T4 airbase and to the west of Palmyra city.

October 25: Israeli jet fired two missiles on two military centres of the regime forces and their proxies on the outskirt of Al-Baath city and Al-Korom village in Al-Qunitera, leaving material losses.
October 30: Israeli surface-to-surface missiles, originating from the occupied territory, targeted weapons and ammunition shipment belonging to the Lebanese Hezbollah and Iranian-backed militias in Qudsiya area and Al-Demas in the north-west of Damascus, while the shipment was heading to Lebanon. The attack left five militiamen affiliated to Iranian-backed militias and Lebanese Hezbollah. It was unclear whether the causalities were Syrians or foreign.

November 3: Israeli forces fired several missiles from the occupied Palestinian territories on positions in Zakiyah area in western Rif Dimashq. It is worth noting that the targeted positions host weapons and ammunition warehouses affiliated to the Iranian-backed militias, as well as headquarters of the 4th Divisions. However, no casualties were reported.

November 8: missiles originating from the airspace of north Lebanon hit areas hosting military barracks, the headquarters of a regime-backed prominent military formation and Al-Shayrat airbase where the Lebanese Hezbollah and Iranian-backed militias were stationed in the south-eastern countryside of Homs.

November 17: Israeli missiles fired from the occupied Syrian Golan and targeted positions in southern Damascus. However, no casualties were reported. SOHR was unable to verify whether or not the targeted sites hosted headquarters and positions of Iranian-backed militias and Lebanese Hezbollah.

November 24: Five people were killed by the Israeli rocket fire which hit the western suburbs of Homs, as well as by shrapnels of missiles by Israel and regime air-defences which was attempting to intercept the Israeli attack. Two of the fatalities were militiamen loyal to the Lebanese Hezbollah, but their
nationalities remained unknown, while the three others were regime soldiers, two of whom were in plain clothes at the time of the attack.

December 7: Israeli fighter jets fired several missiles on the port of the coastal city of Lattakia, targeting Iranian weapons containers. The Israeli attack caused severe material loses, but no casualties were reported.

December 16: Israel fired missiles from the occupied Syrian Golan targeted an air-defence site, south of Al-Shahba area in the western countryside of Al-Suwaydaa. The Israeli attack killed at least a regime soldier, wounded others, and destroyed the site.

December 28: Israeli missiles targeted weapons and ammunition containers in the port of Lattakia. The attack caused considerable material damage.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) is used to hearing the Syrian regime’s empty mantra that it always reserves the right to respond to Israeli attacks. However, regime forces do not hesitate when it comes to shelling opposition positions or bombarding residential and civilian areas inside Syria. The Iranians also dare not launch a large-scale military operation against Israel, as they know full well that they will be facing the might of Israel’s military, so the Iranians seem satisfied with letting its proxies do its bidding by firing only a few rockets from time to time on the occupied Syrian Golan, using the Iranian and Hezbollah-backed movement “Syrian Resistance to Liberate Golan”.

At a time when the Syrian regime “intercepts and downs” Israeli missiles only with a Russian green light, Israel can hit Iranian targets -with the purpose of undermining the Iranian military presence in Syria- and only with Russia’s full consent.
On the other hand, Washington justifies Israel’s stance that “Tel Aviv practices its legal rights to defend its security and interests against the Iranian direct threat”, not to mention the US desire to get Syria free of Iranian forces and militias.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), call for keeping the Syrian civilians out of the regional conflicts as the targeted areas and facilities are owned by Syrian people alone, not by Iran or its proxy militias.

SOHR stresses the importance of expelling the Iranian forces and militias from Syria without risking the safety and lives of civilians or damaging Syria’s public properties and facilities.

Iran’s presence in Syria is detrimental to all Syrians, as it drags Syria into regional conflicts which do not benefit the people of Syria. Iran is using Syria to further its influence in the wider Middle East and to settle scores with regional foes. Israel’s frequent attacks on Syria would not have happened had it not been for Iran’s presence in Syria. This presence has claimed the lives of many Syrians and deepened the sectarian rifts in the country. Therefore, SOHR calls on all the international community to put an end to Iran’s presence and all foreign interference in Syria and find a lasting political solution to the protracted Syrian crisis.
HD Infographic: Israeli attacks on Syria in 2021

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 28.
Iran’s presence in Syria in 2021 | Aerial and ground attacks leaves 160 Iranian-backed militiamen dead, while demographic change tops events as Iran strengthens influence across Syria.

SOHR calls upon all international actors to intensify their efforts to expel Iran and its proxies from Syria and bring to justice all who aided and abetted the killing and displacement of Syrian people

Iran and its proxy militias have unprecedented influence in most areas under the “symbolic” regime control, as neither attacks by Israel and the International Coalition, nor the “cold war” with Russia could hinder the alarming entrenchment and expansion in these forces across Syria. Strengthening their presence and promoting their ideology, the Iranians are still carrying on with their systematic plan to change the demography of different areas throughout Syria’s geography.

In the following report, SOHR highlights the key developments in areas dominated by the Iranians in 2021.

Aerial and ground attacks on Iranian-backed militiamen’s positions

There is no doubt that attempts and efforts by the major powers to eliminate Iran’s presence in Syria, which manifested themselves in frequent rocket attacks and airstrikes on headquarters, military units and ammunition warehouses, have inflicted on Iranian forces and their proxies considerable human and material losses. However, these losses remained incomparable to the gains Iran has achieved under its limitless ambition in the region.

SOHR has documented the death of 161 Iranian-backed militiamen in attacks on their positions in Syria in 2021. A breakdown of these fatalities, according to the perpetrator and method of death categories, is as follows:

- IED, landmine and rocket attacks by unidentified gunmen: 13
- Airstrikes by US aircraft and Coalition drones: 49
- Israeli rocket attacks and airstrikes: 99

It is worth noting that the Israeli strikes destroyed 70 targets on Iranian-backed militias sites, while the US and Coalition’s attacks destroyed 23 others.

Iranian-backed militias, however, have periodically changed their positions and redeployed as a part of their camouflage tactics over fears of repeated attacks by Israel and the International Coalition. The redeployment included change of posts and positions and replacement of troops. In addition, these militias brought in military reinforcement on a daily basis to their posts and positions, boosting their military bases and structures. Another tactic of camouflage used by the Iranians was the replacement of their flags with the internationally recognised Syrian flag.

Moreover, Iranian-backed militias have reacted and responded to the US and Coalition airstrikes, as SOHR documented several skirmishes and attacks by both sides. Here is a summary:

- June 28: Iranian-backed militias fired several rockets on Al-Omar oil field and associated residences in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor, where a US military base is located. The rockets caused material damage and burned down some cars at the targeted site. Shortly after this volley of rockets, artillery units of the International Coalition stationed in the workers’ residential city in Al-Omar oil field targeted positions of Iranian-backed militias in Al-Mayadeen city in Deir Ezzor countryside.

- June 30: International Coalition Forces renewed rocket attacks on Iranian-backed militias’ posts in Al-Mayadeen desert in west Deir Ezzor, before the Iranians responded by re-attacking Al-Omar oil field on July 4.

- July 10: Iranian-backed militias targeted with a guided missile Koniko gas field which hosts a Coalition military base in east Deir Ezzor countryside.
• July 11: Iranian-backed militias fired a homemade rocket on Al-Omar oil field, which hosts the largest Coalition base in Syria.

• August 31: Three rockets were fired from Khsham town controlled by Iranian-backed militias on Koniko gas field, near the American base. Meanwhile, the International Coalition aircraft flew over the area after the rockets attack.

The cat-and-mouse attacks between the Iranians and Coalition have been confined to west Euphrates region, as an attack, which was the first of its kind, targeted Al-Tanaf base on October 20 in the 55-kilometre zone in the Syrian desert, near the Syria-Jordan-Iraq border triangle. According to SOHR sources, several explosions were heard in Al-Tanf military base of International Coalition due to drone attacks which targeted the buffet, a mosque, and depot of food supply inside the base.

West Euphrates region: Iran’s “autonomous colony” in Syria

Developments in areas under the Iranian domination in Deir Ezzor, exactly west Euphrates region, have topped the events in 2021, after the Iranians managed to turn the region into an “autonomous colony” in just a few years, with tens of thousands of Syrian and non-Syrian fighters and their families under Iranian command.

SOHR highlights the key developments in west Euphrates region in 2021 in the following main points:
Military movements

Iranian-backed militias continued to bring in weapons and ammunition from Iraq to west Euphrates in batches mostly transported in fruit and vegetable trucks for camouflage purposes, fearing frequent attacks. According to very reliable SOHR sources, over 31 weapons and ammunitions shipments, including medium and light weapons and Iranian-made medium-range missiles, entered Syria in 2021. The monthly count of these shipments is as follows:

- January: 2 shipments
- February: 1 shipment
- March: 4 shipments
- April: 0
- May: 3 shipments
- June: 5 shipments
- July: 4 shipments
- August: 3 shipments
- September: 2 shipments
- October: 3 shipments
- November: 3 shipments
- December: 1 shipment
Al-Mayadeen area: Al-Mazare area, which hosts the largest gathering of Iranian-backed militias in that region, Athar Al-Shibli area, nearby Al-Mayadeen city, and the archaeological fortress of Al-Rahba, also nearby Al-Mayadeen city.

In Al-Rahba archaeological fortress, the Iranians store their weapons in warehouses in underground tunnels and cellars, used previously by ISIS during its control of the region, in order to make use of the well-fortified construction to evade significant losses in the frequent attacks which mainly target headquarters and ammunition and weapon depots. This is a blatant violation of Syria’s civilisational heritage and Iran is responsible for any damage to this valuable archaeological site.

Risking the safety and lives of civilians, Iranian-backed militias have stored some of their weapons and ammunitions in populated areas in the cities of Al-Mayadeen and Al-Bokamal and their countryside in west Euphrates, fearing expected attacks by Israel and the Coalition.

In the meantime, batches of weapons and ammunitions stored in west Euphrates have been transported to positions in other Syrian provinces, most prominent of which were Al-Raqqah desert, east Homs desert, Rif Dimashq, near the Syria-Lebanon border, locations close to SDF-held areas in eastern Aleppo and areas controlled by the International Coalition in east Euphrates.

In a bizarre and suspicious development, the Iranians have transported Iranian-made medium-range missiles to positions on the bank of Euphrates river, opposite areas controlled by the International Coalition in east Euphrates, where they installed rocket launchpads directed at the east Euphrates region. According to SOHR sources, 13 rocket launchpads of surface-to-surface missiles have been installed on the hills of Al-Btayn on the outskirts of Al-Mayadeen in eastern Deir Ezzor, while nine others were installed in a barn in Hawi Al-Mayadeen area with Al-Omar oil field, which hosts the largest US base in east Euphrates region, the nearest position on the river’s opposite bank.
In early August, Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps installed aircraft-detecting radar system in Al-Mazare area, where Iranian military experts supervised the process of installing and operating the radar system.

While in October, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) started training courses for IRGC-backed local militiamen on the use of drones in Al-Mazare area in Al-Mayadeen under the supervision of Iranian officers.

Furthermore, as part of ongoing “Shi’aism” and proselytising operations and attempts to recruit more young and adult men by offering financial incentives, exploiting dire living conditions, Iranian-backed militias have graduated new batches of local recruits who joined these militias after having undergone training courses. The militias also offered several services to their recruits, including issuance of cards protecting them from prosecution by regime security services.

Noticeable focus on children and women

Not only have Iranian forces and their proxy militias recruited men, but also they worked on instilling their ideology in Syrian women and children. One example, among many, was in May when “Abu Al-Fadl Al-Abbas” militia entrusted nearly 25 women of its militiamen’s families to communicate with other girls and women in Al-Mayadeen and convinced them to convert to Shi’ism. SOHR sources added that the females were also instructed to convince the new affiliates to join some religious courses that teach Shi’ism in some cultural centres by offering them “food baskets” as an incentive.

While in early May, the “Shiite Waqf” distributed food supplies and washing detergents to the inhabitants of Al-Mayadeen city to woo them as a part of the Iranian efforts to strengthen their presence throughout Syria. Also, in the last quarter of 2021, Iranian-backed militias announced that they needed nurses and young ladies to work in the hospitals and nurseries controlled by these militias for monthly salaries.
that reached 300,000 SYL. The volunteers would undergo training courses, funded entirely by Iran.

On the other hand, Iranian-backed militias have exerted serious efforts to attract and lure children to join their ranks through advocacy, cultural and leisure activities held at the Iranian Cultural Centre and the militias’ advocacy centres in schools, in parks, markets and entertainment places. These centres distribute sweets to the children and display short movies glorifying Iranian-backed militias, praising their efforts to “liberate the people from the grip of terrorism” and motivating them to join the glorious jihad and “the Liberation of Palestine”.

The Iranian militias rely on social media and distribute brochures containing addresses and phone numbers of the Iranian centres in order to spur children to join these centres.

It is worth noting that many children have joined these centres, particularly children who had been in ISIS military formation of the “Caliphate Soldiers”. Furthermore, the locals encourage their children to join the Iranian-backed militias in order to evade prosecution by regime security branches, especially since the Iranian militias provides full protection to the little recruits’ families.

As soon as children join the Iranian-backed militias, they undergo a 25-day “ideology course” and another 25-day military course in closed camps in Al-Mazare area in Al-Mayadeen desert in Deir Ezzor countryside. Those children are later dispersed to the militias’ posts and headquarters, as every militia in Al-Mazare has its own training camp.

Iranian-backed militias compete with each other to recruit children after the “executive leadership” has ordered these militias to intensify recruitment of children in that region. The most prominent Iranian-backed militias that work on recruiting children in Syria are the following:

- Liwaa Fatemiyoun: An Afghan commander called al-Haj Ali Talibi supervises this militias’ camp.
• Al-Nujabaa Movement: An Iraqi commander called Mahdi al-Musawy supervises this militias’ camp.

• The local militia of Abu Al-Fadl Al-Abbas: A local commander called Rubain al-Wahibi supervises this militias’ camp.

• The local militia of Al-Sayeda Zeinab: A local commander called Abu Ali Al-Duwayhi supervises this militias’ camp.

In late May, the “Iranian Cultural Centre” started a free course, dubbed “Bara’em al-Atfal” (Blossoming Children), teaching Syrian children Persian language, where the Cultural Centre promised to give a cash reward of one million Syrian pounds to every child who could pass the Persian language test with an excellent grade. While on June 15, the Iranian Culture Centre in Al-Mayadeen city in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor staged a trip for ten of children from west Euphrates region to Ain Ali shrine on the outskirts of the city. Through this trip, the Iranians aimed to make children aware of the religious significance of the shrine for the Shiite community and the advantage of getting “blessed” by water of the shrine’s spring. During the trip the officials of the Culture Centre distributed sweets to the children.

Ongoing violations

Iranian-backed militias have also wreaked havoc in west Euphrates region through seizure of civilian properties, including houses, shops and farmlands, where many of these units have been turned into warehouses for storing weapons or military posts. In addition, the Iranians have changed the names of several institutions into Shia’a-themed names, which ignited considerable public anger. Here are highlights of key incidents of such type of violations, all documented by SOHR in 2021:

The Iranian-backed Afghan militia of “Fatemiyoun” informed, via the regime’s agricultural association, the owners of farmlands in villages and towns in the area between Al-Mayadeen city and
• Subaykhan town in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor which are under the control of regime forces and Iranian-backed militias, that they had to give the militia a share of 10% of the wheat and barley harvest under the pretext of “protecting their farmlands and facilitating their work”. “Liwa Fatemiyoun” threatened to confiscate all of the farmers’ wheat and barley harvest, if they refused to pay the requested levy. Moreover, “Liwa Fatemiyoun” appointed supervisors to count the agriculture crops to make sure that the Iranian-backed militia would get the correct share of the harvest.

• Patrols of the military security services informed the residents of nearly 50 houses in Al-Mayadeen city to evacuate these houses in no more than one week. These houses belonged to regime opponents who had participated in revolutionary movement in the beginning of the “Syrian Revolution” in March 2011 and who were displaced from Al-Bokamal city after ISIS had captured the city. According to SOHR sources, the “Al-Asdeqaa Office” which is directly subordinate to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps “IRGC” entrusted the military security services to serve the eviction notices to the residents of those houses.

• Militias affiliated to Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps seized dozens of farmlands in eastern Dier Ezzor. The militias’ administration asked the land owners in Hawy and Al-Majary neighbourhoods in eastern Deir Ezzor to head to the militias’ headquarters to prove their ownership of the farmlands. The militias later seized the land whose owners did not head to the militias’ headquarters, most of whom were living outside Deir Ezzor. SOHR sources added that the factions rented the and gave pieces of land to local members who had close ties with the Iranian-backed militias to invest and cultivate it.

Iranian-backed militias have rejected the return of the residents of Al-Tamou neighbourhood in Al-Mayadeen city in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor, as Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Iranian-backed militias have seized all houses in the neighbourhood since November 2017. Since Iranian-backed militias
took over the neighbourhood, they turned many of civilian houses into headquarters, while the other houses were inhabited by the Iranian-backed militiamen’s families, as the militias prevented civilians and combatants of other militias from entering the neighbourhood. The militias also used the neighbourhood’s mosque as a private mosque for their members, where the Shiite Azan (call to prayers) was used and Shiite ritual swere practiced.

**Large areas captured in Damascus and Rif Dimashq**

Iran seems to be proceeding secretly on changing the demography of several Syrian areas, especially with the recent developments in Damascus and Rif Dimashq, as merchants from Al-Mayadeen city in Deir Ezzor, affiliated with the Iranian-backed local militia of “Liwaa Al-Abbas”, continued to buy real estate from residents across eastern Ghouta through a man working for the Iranian-backed militias from Al-Bokamal city known as “Abu Yasser Al-Bakary”, who had bought many properties in various areas in eastern Ghouta at the orders of the leader of a pro-Iran militia known by his initials as A. A.

According to Observatory sources, the purchases in 2021 were concentrated in the areas of Saqba, Jisrayn, Kafr Batna, Beit Sawa, Hamouriyyah, Zabdin, Deir Al-Assafir, Hatitet Al-Turkman and Al-Mulayha, where these merchants purchased a large number of plots of land, houses, restaurants and parks which had been damaged in earlier military operations. The merchants purchased about 100 houses in the city of Al-Meliha alone, some of which were destroyed almost completely.

Moreover, these merchants purchased nearly 500 apartments and shops in Ain Tarma city in, where these units belonged to Syrian people living abroad, and they were sold through representative authorized by the real owners in eastern Ghouta.

In the last third of 2021, Iranian-backed militias turned to purchasing of farmlands, as individuals affiliated with “Abu Yaser Al-Bakari” started
buying farmlands in the area between Al-Mulayha and Htetat Al-Turkman running through Shab’a and Deir Al-Asafeer in the southern part of eastern Ghouta, adjacent to Damascus international highway. The Syrian Observatory would like to point out to the fact that the Iranian-backed militias were in the long run seeking to surround Damascus international airport to the flank of eastern Ghouta. The Iranians see eastern Ghouta as one of the most prominent Syrian areas populated by regime opponents, who played a major role with their participation in the peaceful protests in the beginning of the “Syrian Revolution”, before it was captured by rebel factions.

In western Ghouta, however, the same individuals offered financial incentives to real estate agents and brokers in Ma’damiyat Al-Sham, Darya and surrounding areas in return for purchasing houses whose owners had been displaced during military operations by Iranian and regime forces. Meanwhile, groups affiliated to “Al-Nujabaa” Iraqi Movement and others affiliated to the Lebanese “Hezbollah” seized some houses belonging to displaced people in Darya city and turned them into military headquarters. The seized houses were near the former headquarters and positions of Hezbollah and Al-Najbaa Movement on Al-Fosol Al-Arbaa road, near Al-Maamel road leading to Darya city to the flank of Daraa-Damascus highway, precisely in the vicinity of Sayeda Sakina’s shrine.

According to Syrian Observatory activists, the new houses, which fighters of Hezbollah and Al-Nujabaa Movement lived in, were located in unpopulated neighbourhoods. While the presence of these fighters was confined to their headquarters, they did not walk around publicly in the neighbourhoods of Darya city.

Similarly, Iranian-backed militias started constructing several buildings in Al-Bahdaliyah area in Babilla district in southern Rif Dimashq, neighbouring Sayeda Zeinab area in the suburbs of the capital Damascus which is a prominent stronghold of Iranian-backed Syrian and non-Syrian militiamen, particularly of the Lebanese Hezbollah.
With most of Al-Bahdaliyah area’s inhabitants being commanders and members of Iranian-backed militias, the name “Sayeda Zeinab District” become synonymous with them instead of the area’s real name. Moreover, hundreds of the Iranian-backed militiamen and commanders moved to “Qabr Al-Sitt” camp (the camp of Sayeda Zeinab Shrine) neighbouring Sayeda Zeinab area in the south of Damascus. It is worth noting that the name of the area hosting this camp was changed by Rif Dimashq governorate in 2020 into “Sayeda Zeinab city”. Furthermore, training camps were established in the farms and orchards around Sayeda Zeinab area, “Qabr Al-Sitt” camp and Al-Bahdaliyah area for the Iranian-backed militiamen and new recruits.

It seems that Iran seeks to turn the area from southern Rif Dimashq to the perimeter of Damascus international airport into a new “colony” in Syria to be controlled and dominated by local and non-local militiamen, including Iraqi, Afghan and Lebanese militias. In addition, the Iranians are working in the long run on imposing a security cordon on Sayeda Zeinab area by encircling the area with families of Iranian-backed commanders and militiamen through facilitating construction of houses in Al-Bahdaliyah area and housing these families in “Qabr Al-Sitt” camp.

Also, in 2021, Iranian-backed militias continued purchasing plots of land along the Syria-Lebanon border in Rif Dimashq, under supervision and support of the Lebanese Hezbollah, the de facto ruler of the area, disregarding Syria’s laws which ban selling or purchasing any land plots in border areas. In this context, SOHR activists confirmed that the Iranian-backed militias purchased over 540 plots of land in Al-Zabadani area and at least 650 plots in Al-Tufayl border area since early 2021, turning the region into an “independent” village headed by a Syrian man known by his initials as H. D. who is close to the Lebanese Hezbollah commanders.

Moreover, these militias continued taking over luxury apartments and villas in Bludan area and other surrounding areas, bringing the number of villas and apartments these militiamen inhabited in to more than 500.
These practices take place with full support of the Lebanese Hezbollah which is facilitating such operations.

Aleppo: Iranians settle down in the city and countryside

Like in the other Syrian areas, Iranian-backed local and foreign militias purchased real estate in different neighbourhoods in Aleppo city, exploiting the catastrophic living conditions. The militias’ purchase of houses and shops was concentrated in the eastern neighbourhoods of Aleppo city, including Al-Marjah, Bab Al-Hadid, Al-Mayser and the Old Aleppo neighbourhood, whose residents were displaced years ago, as part of demographic change in the area.

At the same time, Iranian militias continued to expand their presence in Aleppo by wooing tribes’ elders and dignitaries, exploiting the tribal traditions, as many tribesmen obey the orders of the “sheikhs” (the tribes’ elders). Therefore, luring the tribes’ elders and dignitaries to Shia’ism means ensuring the clan members’ loyalty. This coincided with widespread public discontent in Aleppo, as the majority of people in that region reject Iranian presence.

On the other hand, narcotics business and the selling of drugs and hashish publicly in the neighbourhoods of Aleppo city turned into a worrying phenomenon in 2021, where large amounts of narcotics entered the city and were sold to young people via Syrian dealers protected by Iranian-backed militias. According to SOHR, a man known by his initials as R. O. is the main dealer distributing hashish to other dealers in Aleppo city in full view of regime security services.

In Aleppo countryside, however, Iranian-backed militias continued exploiting poverty, lack of job opportunities, low salaries and wages and increasing inflation, to lure more young and adult men. In east Aleppo, over 2,400 young and adult men were recruited in the ranks of Iranian-backed militias led by the Afghan Liwaa Fatimyoun since early 2021, where the recruitment process by spiritual figures and offices offering
financial incentives concentrated in Maskanah, Al-Safirah, Deri Hafez areas and other towns and villages in eastern Aleppo.

In early May, Iranian-backed militias established a military base on a hill near the bank of Euphrates river in eastern Aleppo, opposite SDF-held areas on the river’s other bank, precisely in Habbouba village between the villages of Khafsa and Maskanah. Since then, the militias brought in several batches of military reinforcement and logistical supplies, including medium-range missiles, ammunition and heavy weapons, to the base at various periods of time.

**Homs: Ongoing recruitment operations**

In the first third of 2021, a charitable organisation started recruiting young people from Homs city and residents who had moved from different provinces to the city, offering high monthly salaries in return for joining the pro-Iran militias. The task of the new recruits was supposed to protect and guard the Iranian oil pipeline from Iraq to Homs, where they would guard the part running in the area from the Syrian-Iraqi border to Homs province. According to SOHR statistics, nearly 500 young men were recruited in 2021.

Iran’s affiliates also managed to make great fortune at the expense of the Syrian and Lebanese people through trading in fuel smuggled from Lebanon to Syria, with the Syrian regime being unable to meet the people’s needs of fuel, which forced Syrians to turn to black markets. Exploiting this hardship, the Lebanese Hezbollah brought in massive amounts of fuel, mostly petrol and oil, from Lebanon to Syria via unofficial crossings it controls in Homs countryside, turning the region into a major source for black markets throughout Syria.

Homs city also experienced systematic demographic change by Iranian-backed militias which purchased houses and shops in several neighbourhoods of Homs city. While individuals from Palmyra city in Homs countryside working for Iranian-backed militias started to
communicate with people from the city, who had been displaced to Al-Rukban camp in the Syrian desert near the Syria-Iraq-Jordan border triangle, in order to purchase their real estate, exploiting the dire living conditions of the displaced people in Al-Rukban camp, especially since most of the camp’s inhabitants cannot return to their areas now because they fear being prosecuted by the regime security service. According to SOHR sources, many of these people started to sell their real estate to Iranian-backed militias’ affiliates because of their urgent need to money.

Iranian-backed factions practiced repression in Palmyra city in east Homs countryside through daily violation against the city’s people. Such violations, especially those committed by the Afghan militia Liwaa Fatimyoun, manifested themselves in the remaining residents’ desire to leave the city. However, low funds of some of these residents hindered them from leaving Palmyra city at a time when others managed to reach areas controlled by Turkish-backed factions in east Aleppo countryside.

In testimonies to SOHR, some of the people who arrived in “Euphrates Shield” areas talked about the violations practiced against the inhabitants of Palmyra by Iranian-backed militias. One of these people said “when men go to their work, members of Liwaa Fatimyoun inspect houses and verbally abuse women. The people filed complaints to regime authorities which took no action. Iranian militias forced young men working in the salt mine in Sabkhat Al-Mouh in Palmyra to guard the militias’ headquarters at night or they would not be allowed to extract salt, as well as imposing levies at the militias’ checkpoints. Those are examples of the violations committed by the militias with no deterrence.”

**North-east Syria: attempts to strengthen presence, despite losing key neighbourhoods**

When the Iranian-backed Afghan militia of Liwaa Fatimyoun escalated recruitment operation in the cities of Al-Hasakah and Al-Qamishli and managed to recruit 710 persons (315 NDF leaders and members and 395 civilian and tribesmen, particularly the tribes of Al-Abeed, Yassar,
Harith, Bani Sabaa and Al-Sharayeen), the National Defence Forces (NDF) was expelled by Asayish Forces from Al-Qamishli in late April. However, Iranian militia hurried to purchase tens of houses and shops in regime-controlled areas in Al-Hasakah city, which is an area of a few hundreds of metres known as the “security zone” and it hosts headquarters of the governorate, the court house, bureaus of immigration and passport service and other service and civil departments, as well as military headquarters and security branches.

The purchase of these units coincided with attempts to recruit more young and adult men from the city, especially NDF members, where all men recruited at that time were taken to west Euphrates region.

It is also worth noting that nearly ten officials of the Iranians and Hezbollah are located in two posts in Al-Qamishli city, a post in Al-Qamishli airbase and another post near the railway to the south of the airbase. These officials are tasked with supervising and administering the following military formations:

- The Military Security service.
- The National Defence Forces (NDF).
- Ansar Amn al-Dawlah (State Security Supporters).

In Al-Raqqah, Iranian-backed militias continued their efforts to entrench their presence in regime-held areas in Al-Raqqah countryside, with the help of their affiliates and pro-Iran prominent Syrian figures, as SOHR sources reported that these militias purchased and took over more than 135 houses, farmlands and shops in Ma’dan and its surrounding areas, as well as other towns and villages in Al-Raqqah countryside in 2021. Furthermore, the IRGC-backed Al-Nujabaa Movement started to establish a factory for manufacturing mortars, launchpads of surface-to-
surface missiles and bullets of various calibres. The factory is located in a farm belonging to people who live abroad, on the outskirts of Maadan city in the eastern countryside of Al-Raqqah, as the farm was seized previously by Iranian-backed militias.

A whole army under Iran’s command in Syria

SOHR can confirm that the number of Iranian-backed Syrian and non-Syrian fighters in Syria has exceeded 65,500. These militiamen are distributed regionally as follows:

- Deir Ezzor (west Euphrates region): At least 29,000 fighters, among them there are 11,000 Syrian fighters and nearly 18,000 Arab and Asian fighters. They are deployed in the area from frontlines with areas under the control of the Turkish-backed National Army in east Aleppo countryside to the Syria-Iraq border, running through Deir Ezzor.

- South Syria: Nearly 11,500 fighters. They were recruited by pro-Iranian spiritual figures in “Saraya al-Areen” of the 313th Brigade in northern Daraa, Al-Lajat in Daraa countryside, Al-Baath city and Khan Arnabah in Al-Quneitra countryside, areas near the border with the occupied Syrian Golan and in Al-Suwaidaa countryside.

- Damascus and Rif Dimashq: Nearly 10,200 fighters. They are deployed in several cities, towns and villages and they dominate the entire area from Damascus to the Syria-Lebanon border.

- Aleppo: Nearly 8,350 fighters. They are deployed in Aleppo city, Nebl, Al-Zahraa and its surrounding areas in the northern countryside of Aleppo, Al-Eis, Al-Hader in the southern countryside of Aleppo, Maskanah, Deir Hafer and Al-Sfirah in east Aleppo countryside.
- Homs and the deserts of Hama and Al-Raqqah: Nearly 4,800 Syrian, Arab and Asian fighters.

- Idlib: Nearly 900 Syrian and non-Syrian fighters.

Al-Hasakah: At least 800 fighters, of whom there are 390 fighters and commanders of the regime-backed National Defence Forces, while 410 are of civilians and people of Arab tribes, such as Al-Abid, Yassar, Hareeth, Bani Sab’a and Al-Sharayeen. It is worth noting that these fighters were recruited through offering incentive monthly salaries, while most of them were transported to Deir Ezzor province, after Asayish Forces captured Tayy neighbourhood in Al-Qamishli city.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), renew our appeal to the international community, United Nations and UN Security Council to intensify their efforts to force Iranian forces and their proxy militias out of Syria and bring all criminals, perpetrators of violations and all those who aided and abetted the killing and displacement of Syrian people to justice. Iran’s presence in Syria is detrimental to all Syrians, as it drags Syria into regional conflicts. Iran is using Syria to further its influence in the wider Middle East and to settle scores with regional foes. Israel’s frequent attacks on Syria would not have happened had it not been for Iran’s presence in Syria. This presence has claimed the lives of many Syrians and deepened the sectarian rifts in the country. Therefore, SOHR calls on all the international community to put an end to all foreign interference in Syria and find a lasting political solution to the Syrian crisis.
Iranian military in Syria in 2021

161 Iranian-backed militiamen killed in several aerial and ground attacks

49 Airstrikes by US aircraft and Coalition drones

13 Attacks by unknown gunmen

99 Israeli rocket attacks and airstrikes

31 Weapon shipments arrived in west Euphrates region from Iraq

Ongoing demographic change throughout Syria

HD Infographic: Fatalities among Iranian-backed militias and demographic change in Syria in 2021

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 29.
Regime-controlled areas in 2021 | Nearly 600 people killed in acts of violence, while living conditions deteriorates further forcing over 350,000 Syrians to immigrate

SOHR renews appeal to the international community to intensify its efforts to bring Al-Assad, his affiliates and cronies to justice

With the many calls by the Syrian regime and its allies upon Syrian refugees to return to their homeland which has become “safe and stable” as they claim, regime-controlled areas experienced several worrying developments, dramatic acts of violence and blatant violations of human rights in 2021, which manifested themselves in escalating displacement and fleeing of civilians these areas and chronic crises.

As a human rights organisation, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked all developments in regime-controlled areas in 2021. These developments can be summarised in the following main points:

Fatalities

In 2021, SOHR has documented the death of 590 people in various acts of violence in regime-controlled areas: of whom 281 were civilians, including 27 women and 33 children, and 309 regime soldiers, loyalists and “collaborators” with regime security services. However, the breakdown of civilian fatalities is as follows:

- 168 people, including seven women and eight children, were killed in south Syria region in incidents of security disorder.
- 50 people, including six women and 14 children, were killed by regime forces.
- 47 people, including 13 women and seven children, were killed in murders and indiscriminate gunfire.
Six people, including one woman and three children, were killed in bombardment and attacks by jihadist groups.

Ten people, including one child, were killed by unknown gunmen.

Ongoing repression and more people killed in prisons

The Syrian Observatory has documented the arrest of 2,982 people in regime-controlled areas in different periods of time in 2021, mostly arrested for “not joining on time the mandatory military service of the regime,” or for “communicating with foreign entities.” Many of these detainees were released after their relatives had paid money/levies, while nearly 514 remained imprisoned.

Here is a descending distribution by region of arrests by regime forces and security services in 2021:

- South Syria region (mostly arrested in Daraa): 667
- Aleppo: 489
- Rif Dimashq: 429
- Damascus: 394
- Deir Ezzor, Al-Hasaka and Al-Raqqah: 328
- Syrian Coastline: 286
- Homs: 197
- Hama: 192

SOHR has also documented the death of 55 people, including a woman, under brutal torture in regime prisons and security centres since early 2021.
Meanwhile, regime authorities released nearly 350 prisoners from all provinces, mostly from Daraa and Rif Dimashq. Those released had been arrested for different crimes after regime forces and their allies regained control of the two provinces entirely in 2018. However, political detainees remained in regime prisons. These prisoners are distributed regionally as follows:

- Rif Dimashq: 142
- Daraa: 155
- Al-Quneitra: 10
- Rest of Syrian provinces: 43

Dozens of civilians kidnapped in light of security vacuum

Regime-controlled areas experienced an alarming security chaos in 2021, as it was the case across the entire Syrian geography, which manifested mainly in the escalated kidnappings in light of lack of order and control by security services. Moreover, regime forces and their proxy militias were involved in many of these kidnappings.

According to SOHR statistics, the number of kidnapped Syrian people in regime-controlled areas in 2021 exceeded 295. Of the total number of those kidnapped in 2021, the Syrian Observatory has documented 164 people by names: 139 men, 11 women over the age of eighteen, and 14 children under the age of eighteen. SOHR was also able to verify the remaining 131 kidnappings, but the victims’ families preferred to keep their identities secret, fearing persecution.
2021’s kidnap cases can be distributed regionally in a descending order as follows:

- Al-Quneitra and Al-Suwaidaa: 84 people were kidnapped in the two provinces. They were as follows: five men were kidnapped by regime-backed militiamen, 50 men and three children kidnapped by armed militias and 28 people, including a woman, were kidnapped by unknown gunmen.

- Damascus and Rif Dimashq: 49 people were kidnapped: Eight civilians kidnapped by regime forces, nine men by Iranian-backed militias and 32 people, including five children and six women, kidnapped by unknown individuals.

- Homs: 14 people, including two children and four women, were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen.

- Syrian desert: Nine people, including two children, were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen.

- Daraa: Eight people were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen, despite the Russian-sponsored reconciliation deals in the past months, which aimed to settle the security status of former opposition fighters.

- Syrian coastline: Six people, including two children, were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen.

- Aleppo: A man was kidnapped by regime forces.

- Hama: A man was kidnapped by unidentified gunmen.
Chronic crises

In 2021, residents in regime-controlled areas continued to struggle with scores of stifling crises which made life difficult for ordinary people in terms of securing basic essentials in light of the escalating inflation and prohibitively high prices, as well as in terms of the frequent electricity blackouts with rationing hours lasting for ten consecutive hours. Shockingly, power would be available only for a short periods of 30 to 60 minutes at a time. Moreover, SOHR activists reported noticeable escalation of congestion in front of petrol stations in regime-controlled areas, along with long lines of residents awaiting in front of bread bakeries.

Also, many residents turned to alternative means of transportation in light of the current poor transportation services. Accordingly, people in regime-held areas, particularly in Damascus, resorted to use small pickup trucks used for transporting vegetables and better known as “Suzuki” to travel between cities and villages with many people not relying on public transports because of the lack of minibuses and high fees of private taxies, as the owners of these vehicles were forced to buy fuel from black markets at higher prices than in gas stations.

On the other hand, the prices of food and essential products witnessed alarming increases by a daily and weekly averages of 1.5 % and 10.5% respectively. Prices of essential products were also affected by additional levies imposed by regime security services in different areas controlled by the Syrian regime.

New wave of immigration

Syria’s protracted war, raging for over a decade now, has posed tremendous challenges to young Syrian men who preferred to leave their homeland and search for a better future in another country.

The mass immigration of young men from all Syrian areas, especially regime-controlled areas, topped the events in 2021, as thousands of young men decided to flee the deteriorating living conditions, economic hardship, repression by security services and military battles throughout Syria.
There was growing demand by Syrian people for issuance of passports and visas in governmental directorates in 2021 so that they could travel to various countries, especially to Egypt where the Egyptian authorities facilitated the procedures of the entry of Syrian people. While displacement from regime-controlled areas to north Syria region became noticeable, despite the large sums of money needed to be paid to smugglers, as Syrians sought to flee to areas under the control of opposition factions in north-west Syria region, then to Turkey and other European countries. It is worth noting that attempts by civilians, young men in particular, to smuggle themselves from Syria into Turkish territory occurred daily in 2021. Meanwhile, young people faced many obstacles hindering their immigration, as people who were not able to travel legally by air or by land, found themselves were forced to risk their safety and lives by heading to north Syria with the help of smugglers who took large sums of money which at times exceeded 3,000 USD per person. After that, people who manage to reach north Syria had to take a new risk by attempting to smuggle themselves again into Turkey and then to European countries. However, such dangerous trips would cost 12,000 EURO per person.

**Rampant narcotics business across Syria and new reconciliation deals in Daraa**

With volatile security in regime-held areas, drugs have become readily available and are sold in public in all Syrian provinces, which blatantly violates all international charters.

Drugs are distributed by dealers collaborating with regime officers and have strong ties with the Lebanese Hezbollah, which also turned Syria into a centre for exporting narcotics, especially hashish and illicit pills, to other countries around the world. In Syria, drugs are everywhere now in areas controlled by the Syrian regime, particularly in Al-Quneitra, Al-Suwaidaa, Daraa, Damascus and Rif Dimashq.
Another key development in south Syria in 2021 was the Russian-sponsored reconciliation deals in Daraa following the alarming security chaos and military escalation during which tens of people were killed and injured. It is worth noting that these deals, which covered nearly 55 cities, towns, villages and areas in Daraa Al-Balad, the western, middle, northern and eastern countryside of Daraa, were accomplished in late October, after nearly 6,200 individuals accepted “reconciliation” with regime security service. These people included local gunmen, security suspects, regime army defectors and young men who evaded mandatory conscription.

Moreover, nearly 950 personal pieces of weapons were handed over to the security services. Meanwhile, regime forces opened a centre in Daraa Al-Balad police station for receiving applications by individuals who wanted to strike a reconciliation deal with the Syrian regime later.

Under this agreement, regime forces entered the following cities, towns and villages:

- **West Daraa countryside:** Daraa Al-Balad, Tafas, Tel Shehab, Al-Ajami, Nahj, Al-Yadoudah, Al-Muzayrib, MasakinJileen, Zayzoun, Tasil, Jilin, Jamleh, Al-Shajarah, Ma’ariyah, Abdeen, Koya, Beit Aarah, Naf’aa, Al-Shabraq, Al-Meseritiyyah, Ain Zekr, Sahem Al-Golan and areas in Yarmouk Basin.

- **Middle Daraa countryside:** Da’el.

- **North Daraa countryside:** Inkhil, Nawa, Jasim, Al-Sanamayn, Sheikh Maskeen, Izraa, Al-Hara and Nimr.

- **East Daraa countryside:** Nasib, Nahteh, Um Al-Mayazen, Al-Na’emah, Al-Misfrah, Al-Taybah, Sayda, Al-Karak Al-Sharqi, Al-Harrak, Al-Sahwa, Al-Ghariyyah Al-Sharqiyyah, Al-Ghariyyah Al-Gharbiyyah, KherbetGhazalahl, Namir, Al-Musaqiyyat, Al-Jizah, Alma and al-Surah.

- **Areas in Al-Lajat in north-eastern countryside of Daraa.**
Elections show

After his troops, tanks, aircraft, shells and rockets killed and displaced tens of thousands of Syrians and destroyed their houses, Bashar Al-Assad ironically ran in the presidential elections which was held in May 2021, in which he won a fourth presidential term. In a new “farcical show”, regime media circulated video footage filmed in Douma, showing Al-Assad casting his. At the time, SOHR activists reported that members of the ruling “Arab Socialist Baath Party” in Syria escorted by members of the intelligence service had forced civilians in Douma city in Rif Dimashq to propagandise and fund the presidential election campaign for “Bashar Al-Assad”. According to SOHR sources. Al-Baath party’s members had forced civilians and merchants to hang posters of Bashar Al-Assad and donate sums of money to the elections campaign.

Furthermore, SOHR sources monitored an incident where an official from Al-Baath party threatened to report to the security services the family of a person who refused to hang Al-Assad’s poster in his shop because he did not have an empty space, as the man’s family had opposed the Syrian regime.

The sources added that marches supporting the Syrian regime that appeared on the media were done not by real people but by “stuntmen” who were travelling in cars with registration plates issued by Homs governorate, where these cars headed also to other cities and towns to cover the marches. However, a few numbers of residents of Douma had joined the marches for fear of oppression by the Syrian regime.
To increase interaction and spur young men to participate in the marches and the celebrations, Al-Baath party’s members hired singers from Lebanon to perform in parties in return for large fees, as well as hiring “unveiled” young ladies, which contravened the customs and traditions of the city’s conservative people.

On the eve of the presidential elections, Douma city witnessed deployment of security services in the city’s streets, amid high state of alertness at the checkpoints deployed in the city. Meanwhile, snipers were deployed in the streets of Al-Qawitly, Al-Kournish, and Gamal Abdel-Naser.

Despite the high and strict security measures, some young men managed to leave anti-regime and anti-Al-Assad graffiti on some walls, before security forces removed and distorted the writings.

Douma city witnessed low turnout during the elections, despite threats by Al-Baath party and the security agents to arrest the people who did not participated in the elections, while the people refused to leave their houses until late hours. On Tuesday morning at 6:30 am, electricity was available for five minutes when TV and radio announced the start of the elections.

Reliable SOHR sources also monitored voting fraud, as the sources confirmed that most of the voters were forced by Al-Baath party and security services to cast their votes in specific centres in order to be make sure that they had complied and participated. Moreover, a large number of voters did not use the ‘indelible’ security ink, while some managed to vote more than once.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has been all along warning against the repercussions of the crippling chronic crises and security chaos in regime-controlled areas and elsewhere in Syria, with only the Syrian regime to blame for the disastrous situation Syria is in right now. We, at the Syrian Observatory, call upon all international actors not to abandon their responsibility and obligations towards the people of Syria and urge them to find a lasting solution to the tragedy of millions of Syrians and bring Al-Assad, his affiliates and all those responsible for violations and those who aided and abetted the killing of Syrian people to justice.
Regime-controlled areas in 2021

- **590 people killed in acts of violence**
  - 309 Regime soldiers, loyalists and other militiamen
  - 281 Civilians
    - 27
    - 33
    - 221

- **Kidnappings**: 295
- **Arrests**: 2982

- Living crises, including lack of bread and fuel and frequent electricity blackout

- Over **350,000 people** left regime-controlled areas, searching for better life

HD Infographic: Key developments in regime-controlled areas in 2021

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 28.
Russian intervention in Syria in 2021 | 434 fatalities in nearly 13,000 rocket attacks and airstrikes...66 joint patrols with the Turks in NE Syria...ongoing efforts to curb Iranian expansion

SOHR renew its calls on the international community to exert pressure on Russia to stop its atrocities against Syrian people under the pretext of “fighting terrorism”

On September 30, 2015, the Council of the Russian Federation granted the Russian president Vladimir Putin the mandate to intervene militarily in Syria, where Russian forces launched a series of strikes and raids, and provided military and political support to the Al-Assad regime, resulting in the Syrian regime’s control of more than half of the country’s area, after it was a few steps away from a decisive defeat.

With no major changes in the map of influence in Syria, the Russians focused on other interests inside Syria, including attempts to exercise hegemony over the entire country and to eliminate Iran’s presence or at least contain its expansion in Syria, as well as sponsoring agreements and reconciliation deals.

In 2021, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has managed to monitor and document crucial developments related directly to the Russian intervention in Syria. These key developments can be summarised in the following main points:

*Thousands of airstrikes kill and injure hundreds of ISIS members in Syria’s desert*

The Syrian desert experienced almost-daily flights by Russian fighter jets in 2021 as a part of the escalation of aerial operations on positions of ISIS which is active and present in numerous large spaces of the Syrian desert. Meanwhile, the Russian airstrikes on ISIS caves, hideouts and bunkers were concentrated in Aleppo-Hama-Al-Raqqah triangle, east Homs desert and the deserts of Deir Ezzor and Al-Raqqah.
SOHR documented over 12,230 airstrikes by Russian fighter jets in 2021, which killed 401 ISIS members and injured 331 other members. Here is the monthly distribution of these airstrikes and fatalities they left:

- January: Over 1,090 airstrikes left 58 members dead and 23 others injured.
- February: Over 1,425 airstrikes left 69 members dead and 16 others injured.
- March: Over 1,380 airstrikes left 57 members dead and 25 others injured.
- April: Over 1,260 airstrikes left 60 members dead and 38 others injured.
- May: Over 1,050 airstrikes left 27 members dead and 41 others injured.
- June: Over 1,220 airstrikes left 23 members dead and 31 others injured.
- July: Over 810 airstrikes left 16 members dead and 19 others injured.
- August: Over 530 airstrikes left nine members dead and 20 others injured.
- September: Over 1,370 airstrikes left 15 members dead and 32 others injured.
- October: Over 1,120 airstrikes left 31 members dead and 50 others injured.
- November: Over 585 airstrikes left 15 members dead and 23 others injured.
- December: Over 390 airstrikes left 21 members dead and 13 others injured.
Over 60 people killed and wounded in Turkish-held areas

Despite the ostensible “friendship” between “Putin” and “Erdogan”, areas controlled by Turkish forces and their proxy factions in Aleppo countryside came under several attacks by Russian forces, as SOHR documented six attacks in 2021: four airstrikes and two rocket attacks. These attacks left 15 people dead: four civilians and 11 members of Al-Hamza Division, while 46 sustained various injuries. Highlights of these strikes are as follows:

Airstrikes

- **April 30**: Russian fighter jets attacked military position of Turkish-backed factions nearby Ain Daqna village in the west of Azaz in north Aleppo countryside.

- **September 25**: Russian fighter jets executed five airstrikes on posts of “Al-Jabha Al-Shamiyyah” in Basofan and Basalihiya in Shirawa district in south-west of Afrin.

- **September 26**: Russian fighter jets executed several airstrikes on headquarters and a camp of Al-Hamza Division in Barrad village in Jabal Al-Ahlam area in Afrin countryside. The airstrikes killed 11 members of the faction and injured 13 others.

- **October 7**: Russian fighter jets executed three airstrikes on the perimeter of a Turkish base in Al-Tuwais area in the east of Mare city in the northern countryside of Aleppo.
Rocket attacks

• March 1: Four civilians were killed and 24 others were injured in an attack with surface-to-surface missiles fired by Russian warships on primitive oil refineries in Tarhin and Hamaran controlled by Turkish forces and their proxies in Aleppo countryside. The attack also resulted in the burning down of over 180 oil trucks.

• March 14: Russian forces renewed their rocket fire on the oil market of Al-Hamaran near the crossing in Jarabulus countryside in northeastern Aleppo. The attack injured nine civilians and workers and resulted in break out of large fires in oil trucks there.

“Cold war” with Iran

As Iranian forces and their proxy militias are proceeding with their plan to strengthen their presence throughout Syria, the Russians have intensified their efforts to restrain the Iranian expansion in light of the “cold war” between both sides, as each side is attempting to impose absolute influence on Syria, especially with the “symbolic” regime domination.

Such conflict continued in different areas across Syria. However, it was most noticeable in south Syria and west Euphrates region. Meanwhile, in Daraa, Russia sponsored “reconciliation” deals and other agreements, attempting to lure more ex-fighters to join the Russian-backed 5th Corps so that the Russians could enhance their military presence in south Syria and compete with the Iranians in their western stronghold, west Euphrates region.

SOHR sources have confirmed that the Russians in the first half of 2021 focused on offering financial incentives to attract Iranian-backed local militias to split from these militias and join the Russian-backed military formation.
Russia offers monthly salaries of 240,000 SYL to each fighter splits from Iranian-backed militias and join Russian-backed formation, which is a double of the salary offered by Iran. Moreover, the new recruits of the Russian-backed formations serve in headquarters in Deir Ezzor city and countryside with a 5-hour-shift a day. According to SOHR sources, tens of fighters have abandoned serving in Iranian-backed militias and switched to work for the Russians.

On March 30, the Russian-backed Palestinian militia of “Liwaa Al-Quds” seized 11 houses in Al-Rashada area in Al-Mayadeen city in eastern Deir Ezzor. These houses were owned by opponents of the Syrian regime from the area. According to SOHR sources, “Liwaa Al-Quds” stored weapons and ammunitions in five of these houses, while the other houses remained empty.

66 joint patrols with the Turks in NE Syria

In 2021, Russian forces conducted 66 joint patrols with Turkish forces in north-east Syria region, all documented by SOHR. It is worth noting that 41 patrols were conducted in Aleppo countryside, precisely in the western and eastern countryside of Ain Al-Arab (Kobani), while the other 25 patrols were conducted in Al-Hasakah countryside, some of which were attacked by civilians rejecting the Russian-Turkish agreement.
The monthly count of these patrols is as follows:

- **January:** Three patrols: one in Ain Al-Arab and two in Al-Hasakah.
- **February:** Five patrols: three in Ain Al-Arab and two in Al-Hasakah.
- **March:** Five patrols: three in Ain Al-Arab and two in Al-Hasakah.
- **April:** Five patrols: three in Ain Al-Arab and two in Al-Hasakah.
- **May:** Six patrols: four in Ain Al-Arab and two in Al-Hasakah.
- **June:** Six patrols: four in Ain Al-Arab and two in Al-Hasakah.
- **July:** Eight patrols: four in Ain Al-Arab and four in Al-Hasakah.
- **August:** Eight patrols: Five in Ain Al-Arab and three in Al-Hasakah.
- **September:** Six patrols: four in Ain Al-Arab and two in Al-Hasakah.
- **October:** Four patrols: two in Ain Al-Arab and two in Al-Hasakah.
- **November:** Four patrols in Ain Al-Arab.
- **December:** Six patrols: four in Ain Al-Arab and two in Al-Hasakah.
In the last quarter of 2021, north-east Syria region witnessed noticeable escalation of boosting of Russian bases and the arrival of Russian military reinforcement in the area from east Aleppo countryside and Ain Issa in northern Al-Raqqah, on Aleppo-Al-Hasakah international highway. In early November, Russian forces established a new military base on Aleppo-Al-Hasakah international highway “M4” in eastern Manbij city in the eastern countryside of Aleppo. According to sources, Russian vehicles were stationed in an artillery base where regime forces had been stationed. The new base was nearly 20 kilometres to the south of Turkish positions.

Also, Russian forces exerted pressure on SDF to allow the deployment of regime tanks in Manbij in east Aleppo. However, SDF rejected the request of the Russian general who threatened to bombard Al-Tayeh crossing (AbouKahaf) in western Manbij which connects regime-held areas with SDF-held areas.

On the other hand, SOHR activists documented, on June 9, the death of a Russian soldier who was later transferred to a field hospital in the SDF-held Al-Darbasyah city. The soldier eventually succumbed to the wounds he sustained in the explosion that targeted a Russian military vehicle while it was passing through the village of Al-Asadiyah on the frontline separating areas controlled by SDF and regime forces from areas controlled by Turkish forces and their proxies in Abu Raseen countryside in Al-Hasakah province.
Exhumation of graves belonging to “Israelis”

Exhumation of graves in the south of Syria’s capital, Damascus, topped the events in early 2021, as Russian forces started to search for the remains of two Israeli soldiers and the prominent Israeli spy “Elie Cohen” in Al-Yarmouk camp. These Israelis were killed decades ago and buried in that area. Meanwhile, the Russians excavated and dug several tombs and conducted DNA analyses of the remains exhumed from these graves. This incidents sparked public anger over the desecration of the dead in the region. While the Syrian regime took no action or even commented on such blatant violation practiced in an area under its control, and it seemed to care only about obtaining benefits, including the potential relieving of US sanctions.

Over 560 airstrikes on “Putin-Erdogan” area kill nearly 15 civilians

The “de-escalation zone”, also known as “Putin-Erdogan” area, experienced a complete cessation of aerial operations by regime jets and helicopters in 2021, but instead, Russian aircraft remained active in the area. SOHR documented over 562 airstrikes by Russian fighter jets on the “de-escalation zone” in 2021. These airstrikes resulted in the death of 18 people: 14 civilians, including six women and three women, as well as four jihadists, including one Turkistani jihadist and another Chechen. The Russian airstrikes also left over 117 people, mostly civilians injured.

The total death toll included five civilians: a man, his wife, two of his children and a nephew, who were killed in the only massacre by Russian jets in 2021. The five civilians were killed on November 11 when their house was hit during Russian airstrikes on the outskirts of Bruma and Al-Habat junction in the northern countryside of Idlib.
The Russian airstrikes in 2021 targeted 62 positions, and they are distributed regionally as follows:

Idlib

- 48 positions: Sheikh Bahr, Harbanoush, Qorqanya, the perimeter of the central prison, the surrounding areas of MarratMisrin, the surrounding areas in Sarmada, HurshBasinqoul, Al-Rouj station, Sheikh Youssef, Muhambel, Ain Shaib, Saan, Al-Ruwayha, Sarja, Mantaf, Maarzaf, Bayanin, Sfuhen, Jozif, Al-Bara, Mar’ayan, Kansafrah, Baylon, Al-Fterah, Maarbalit, Majdalya, Hursh Al-Hamamah, Urm Al-Jouz, Ihsim, Al-Kendah, Sheikh Sandyan, Bruma, Bsamis, Al-Aliyah, Al-Ghassaniyyah, the surrounding areas of Zarzour, Deir Sonbol, Mashoun, Shaan, Iblin, Al-Fu’ah, Jisr Al-Sughour, the surrounding areas of Al-Kfir, Qah camps, the surrounding areas of Idlib city, Taltita, Shadirni and Al-Ya’qoubiyyah.

Latakia

- Five positions: Kabana, Al-Khudr, Kafridin, Al-Bernas and Barzah in northern countryside of Latakia.

Hama

- Six positions: Al-Sarmaniyah, Duwayr Al-Akrad, Al-Ziyyarah, Zayzoun power plant, Kherbet Al-Naqous and Hemaymat in the north-western countryside of Hama.
Aleppo

- Three positions: Arhab, the surrounding areas of Darat Izza and Sheikh Suleiman in the western countryside of Aleppo.

Here is a monthly distribution of the Russian airstrikes on the “de-escalation zone” in 2021:

- January: Nine airstrikes left no fatalities.
- February: 20 airstrikes left no fatalities.
- March: 18 airstrikes. A civilian was killed in airstrikes on March 21.
- April: 15 airstrikes left no fatalities.
- May: 15 airstrikes left no fatalities.
- June: 18 airstrikes. A pregnant woman was killed in airstrikes on Mantaf village in Idlib countryside on June 12.
- July: 80 airstrikes left no fatalities.
- August: 95 airstrikes left no fatalities.
- September: 204 airstrikes left four people dead as follows:
  - A child was killed in Al-Bara in Idlib countryside on September 3.
  - A Turkistani child was killed in a camp near Zarzour town in western Idlib on September 15.
  - Two jihadists: a Syrian and a Turkistani, were killed in Idlib province on September 24.
-October: 45 airstrikes. A member of Hayyaat Tahrir Al-Sham was killed in HurshBasinqoul in Idlib countryside on October 7.

-November: 40 airstrikes left eight civilians dead as follows:

- Five civilians: a man, his wife, two of his children and his nephew, were killed in a massacre by Russian jets on November 11, as their house was hit during airstrikes on the outskirts of Bruma and Al-Habbat junction in the northern countryside of Idlib.

- Two olive pickers were killed on the outskirts of Taltita, which is inhabited mostly by the Druze sect, in north-western Idlib on November 22.

- A woman was killed nearby Shenan village in Idlib countryside on November 25, while picking olive.

November’s airstrikes also left over 20 people injured.

-December: 15 airstrikes. Three people: a man, a little girl and a Chechen jihaidst were killed nearby Al-Ya’qoubiyyah village in western Idlib on December 11.

Also in 2021, the Russian base of Hmeimim in Jableh countryside in Latakia came under two separate attacks in 2021, with the first taking place on June 27 when air defences in the base fired several missiles, attempting to intercept unknown “hostile” targets, which resulted in breakout of fires near the base. However, no casualties were reported.

The second attack was on October 4, as several explosions were heard near the Russian base, as Russian air defences were attempting to intercept objects targeting the base. It is not known if these objects were missiles or drones, while no casualties or material damage were reported.
Since the beginning of Russia’s intervention in Syria on the 30th of September 2015, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights documented the death of 20,944 persons. The breakdown of fatalities is as follows:

- 8,679 civilians: 3,005 children under the age of eighteen, 1,320 females over the age of eighteen, 5,254 men and young people.
- 6,039 ISIS members.
- 6,226 fighters of rebel and Islamic Factions, Hayyaat Tahrir al-Sham, the Islamic Turkestani Party, and fighters of Arab and foreign nationalities.

SOHR sources reported that Russia used the “Thermite-type explosives” in their airstrikes, a substance composed of aluminium powder and iron oxide which causes burns as it continues to ignite for about 180 seconds; some of the bombs used by Russian jets on the Syrian territory were loaded with this substance.

It has been discovered that they are “RBK-500 ZAB 2.5 SM” cluster incendiary bombs each weighed about 500 kg (about 1100 pounds) and they were dropped by military aircraft. They carried anti-individuals and anti-vehicles small sized bombs of the type (AO 2.5 RTM), loaded with 50 to 110 small-sized bombs stuffed with “Thermite”, which outpour out of it when they explode; the range of this anti-individuals and anti-vehicles bombs reaches 20 to 30 meters.

As years pass, the Syrians suffer the scourge of the Russian intervention, which cited “fight against terrorism” as an excuse to commit horrific massacres against innocent civilians. Russia also sponsored agreements, then quickly abdicated its duties and abandoned guarantees it vowed to fulfil. Russia’s firepower, shells and missiles have been deadly and fatal. Russia has Syrian blood on its hands, despite its attempt to act as the one coming to lay values of peace and coexistence.
SOHR stresses that Russia’s real objective in Syria has never been eliminating terrorism, but it has aimed to help Al-Assad’s regime to regain control and achieve a victory by killing and displacing countless Syrians and destroying their properties.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), renew our appeal to the international community to exert pressure on Russia to stop its aggression against the Syrians immediately, and constructively help the international community in reaching a peaceful settlement and find a workable political solution to the Syria’s protracted war which has been raging for over a decade.

**Russian intervention in Syria in 2021**

*Nearly 13,000 airstrikes and rocket attacks kill 434 people*

- 401 ISIS members
- 11 Turkish-backed militiamen
- 4 Jihadists
- 18 Civilians

66 joint patrols with Turkish forces in north-east Syria

Ongoing “cold war” with the Iranians

HD Infographic: Russian intervention in Syria in 2021
Al-Rukban camp in 2021: Tragedy ignored by the world

SOHR calls on the international community to immediately intervene to rescue 11,000 Syrian civilians besieged by the regime forces and the Russians

In light of the difficult and deteriorating living conditions in Al-Rukban camp that is located on Syria-Jordan-Iraq triangle in an arid desert area, the displaced people, entrapped between the bitterness of staying in and the difficulty of leaving to a safe region, have been suffering bad weather in summer and winter, and shortage of food and water.

Al-Rukban camp, “the forgotten camp”, lacks almost all essential material, health and educational facilities while even humanitarian aid is traded and profiteered by the barons of corruption and wealth causing the camp's residents further suffering and misery.

The camp, inhabited by 11,000 displaced Syrians, has been witnessing tragic and catastrophic conditions in full view of the world and the international community whose deafening silence is killing innocent refugees. These tragic conditions require immediate interventions to rescue its inhabitants amid suffocating siege and slow death practiced by the regime forces and the Russians.

In 2021, tens of families left the camp in light of the difficult living conditions and due to their inability to coexist with such catastrophic situation. They headed to areas under control of the Syrian regime which are as dangerous as the camp’s miserable conditions. Those families were chased by the regime forces and many were arrested and/or forced to strike “reconciliation deals” with the regime in Homs.
It is worth noting that the displaced people pay large amounts of money to the regime forces and the militia that besiege Al-Rukban to allow them to leave the camp and its miseries.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights’ statistics, some 179 families comprising 780 persons have left the camp in 2021. Here is a monthly distribution of the families that left the camp:

- January: 17 families comprising 95 persons.
- February: 15 families comprising 66 persons.
- March: 17 families comprising 80 persons.
- April: 15 families comprising 62 persons.
- May: 14 families comprising 51 persons.
- June: 17 families comprising 81 persons.
- July: 13 families comprising 45 persons.
- August: 14 families comprising 57 persons.
- September: 15 families comprising 66 persons.
- October: 13 families comprising 44 persons.
- November: 10 families comprising 33 persons.
- December: 19 families comprising 100 persons.
Al-Rukban camp’s barren and dusty land does not protect its inhabitants from cold and hot weather conditions. It has become a breeding ground for diseases amid the absence of heating sources due to high prices of firewood and difficulty of transporting it, high prices of gasoline which forces the displaced people to use coal from the harmful crude and unrefined oil and its remnants that cause respiratory diseases in children and adults.

This is only a snapshot of daily life in the “forgotten” camp.

The intense suffering and ordeals worsened when the Jordanian side closed the only medical centre serving the camp amid shortage and sometimes lack of medicine, specialized doctors or a hospital for treating and transporting patients to regime or Jordanian hospitals. Even basic rights are denied to the residents of the camp. Rights that are based on the third article of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights endorsed by the UNAG on December 10, 1948, which is the cornerstone right for all human rights.

Tragically, SOHR has documented the death of many new-born babies in 2021 due to the lack of medical care. The last death recorded on December 9, 2021 was that of a two-day old baby from Palmyra city whose family was among the displaced and deported people in Al-Rukban camp.

Al-Rukban camp residents have been deprived not only of medical care but also of food, another basic right protected in article 25 of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights, of which Syria is one of the signatory members. Meanwhile, displaced people endure smugglers’ manipulation and the hiking prices of the essential food commodities like oil and flour, amid rampant unemployment and lack of monetary and welfare provisions.
In Al-Rukban, a prison that hosts 11,000 persons, children are deprived of the rights of life and education, while illiteracy has become endemic and a terrifying reality that will hinder their future life. Staying alive is the main objective of families who seek, with the very little resources, to secure daily essentials; and many women found themselves forced to work as cleaners in laundering and drying clothes for very little money in order to provide for their children.

It is also worth mentioning that spread of pollution, poisonous insects and mosquito in the camp due to the sanitation and sewer problems has plagued the camp’s residents. COVID-19 also has worsened the humanitarian miseries in light of the shortage of vaccination campaigns and the necessary medicine to overcome the health problems in highly populated small areas, limited available information and health centres and clean areas which make the camp a hotbed for the spread of dangerous infections.

Moreover, pregnant women are suffering in the camp to the extent that they and their babies are prone to death amid lack of caesarean operation tools, especially after the medical centre of the UNICEF was closed in 2019. Since then, women have been forced to leave the camp for the regime-held areas and have to pay huge amount of money to return to the camp risking being arrested and detained arbitrarily. Accordingly, several families have been split between the regime-held areas and the camp, while some women chose traditional midwife for giving birth in unqualified places.
All these obstacles and lack of healthcare and other essential service to the displaced people inside the camp and the difficulty of the relevant international and UN organisations that hinder entry of aid to all those in need, as well as the difficulty of distributing aid because some parties steal the allocated aid often and sell it on the black market.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) stresses the importance of facilitating the entry and providing services and humanitarian aid to Al-Rukban camp, especially by countries that spend billions of dollars on weapons and militarisation which is against the principles of peace and harmony that are called upon by the UN and the relevant international laws.

SOHR affirms also the importance of ensuring basic human needs such as of food, water and healthcare are available to Syrian people in Al-Rukban camp.

SOHR calls on all the relevant organisations to allow sick people and urgent cases of the camp inhabitant to receive treatment in Jordanian hospitals and/or to open a hospital with specialised doctors inside the camp.

We, at SOHR, also calls for coordinated actions by all humanitarian and legal organisations not only to alleviate the suffering of the displaced people and overcrowding in the camp, but also to push influential international powers to find a lasting peaceful solution for Syria’s tragedy, a solution that enables the displaced and the deported Syrians to return to their homeland under national and international guarantees supervised by UN bodies.
The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, December 30.
Conclusion

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), appeal to the international community to intensify its efforts to find an immediate lasting peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict and put an end to the senseless bloodshed and suffering of millions of Syrians, and to implement all UN Security Council Resolutions, particularly the Resolution No. 2254 unanimously adopted on 18 December 2015 and called for a ceasefire and political settlement in Syria. In the meantime, we also call on the international community and all aid and humanitarian organisations to support the millions of Syrians, particularly those displaced living in makeshift camps, who are in a desperate need of tangible help. We would like to see humanitarian aid taken out of any political calculations and delivered to all Syrians across the country, regardless of who controls which part. Many people may lose their lives if aid is not provided as a matter of urgency.

As the world is in the midst of, and preoccupied with the Covid pandemic, we would also like to call on all human rights organisations across the world not to forget the people of Syria and the violations they have endured. We want to remind the world, in unison, that very little has changed in Syria, and exert pressure on the powers that be to put an end to the Syrian tragedy. Finally, we reaffirm our obligation and commitment to continue defending human rights, the unity of and sovereignty of our country; and we express our complete rejection of all foreign interventions and interference in Syria.