



## **A Press Statement**

**on the Massacre Committed in the Camp  
in al-Shajarah Town in Dara'a**





## Violations Documentation Center in Syria

Violation Documentation Center in Syria is an independent civilian non-profit, non-governmental organization started its work of monitoring and documenting violations of human rights in Syria in April 2011

## On al-Shajarah Town:

Al- Shajarah Town is situated in Yarmouk Valley in the western countryside of Dar'aa. It is bounded by the Jordanian borders to the south and the Occupied Syrian Golan to the west. (It is located in the border triangular of Syria, Jordan and the borders of the Israeli Occupation). It is 25 kilometers to the west of Dar'aa City to the west. In spite of the large numbers of security forces, the town got involved in the Syrian Revolution. Therefore, it has been raided several times. The first raid was in June 2012; where tens of residents of the town were arrested by the regime forces. The circumstances in the town had not changed until 18 March 2013 when the Opposition fighting forces launched a campaign to liberate Yarmouk Valley; including al- Shajarah Town. Meanwhile, the town was heavily bombed that caused thousands of people seek refuge on the border-line with Jordan. After liberating the town, it became relatively quiet; apart from intermittent shelling from the regime-controlled villages and hills, such as Tal al-Jomou'a and al-Sheikh Sa'ad village. Due to this relative serenity, the town became a destination to thousands of people seeking refuge from many of the unsettled areas, such as Rif Dimashq, Homs, Hama, Deir Az-Zour, and some villages and towns of Dar'aa.

### The Displaced in al-Shajarah Town:

Before the Syrian uprising, the population of al-Shajarah was about 10.000 people. However, thousands of them were forcibly displaced as a result of the fierce fighting between the government forces and the Free Army; in an attempt to gain control over it. As mentioned above, after liberating the town by the Free Syrian army, the town became a destination for thousands of people displaced from different towns, cities and governorates. They began to arrive in late April 2013.

At first, they resided in abandoned houses in addition to two schools, which were opened to accommodate arriving displaced people. Activist and camp- supervisor, Mr. Ahmed Mahmoud Hasan, stated the living standards and conditions of the town were meager. They did not receive any kind of support from any authority or body. All help they had received was provided by the residents of the town themselves.



## Wednesday's Massacre:

Early on Wednesday, 18 June 2014, two barrel bombs were dropped by a regime helicopter over al-Shajarah Town. One of them fell on a wooded area. The other fell upon a camp, which had been set up on the First Rural School's playground. [The barrel bomb caused a horrible massacre](#). Dozens of people were killed or injured, most of whom were displaced women and children from [a neighboring town called Nawa](#). [Most of the casualties](#) were from The Tayasneh or The al-Rajeh families.

**Activist and camp- supervisor, Mr Ahmed Mahmoud al- Hasan stated to VDC regarding the <sup>1</sup>massacre :**

“At about 01:20 am, on 18 July 2014, I heard the sound of a helicopter hovering over the town. I ascended to the top of the building to see it. Surprisingly, I noticed that al-Shajarah Town was the only village in the whole area of Al-Yarmouk Valley where the power was not cut. It was weird for usually the power was cut in all the towns of the valley at the same time.

After a few seconds, I heard two successive explosions, following the sound of the barrels falling on the neighborhood in the middle of the valley where one school, accommodating displaced people, was. My house is about 500 meters away from the spot. After hearing the explosions, I immediately hurried there. Upon arrival, I knew that one of the barrel bombs was dropped over the school, particularly on the playground where the displaced people resided. The second barrel was dropped about 100 meters away from the school on a farm.

I also saw a man carrying a little girl with an injury in her head, dozens of injured lying on the ground, dead bodies, and remaining body parts of martyrs scattering all over the place. A state of panic prevailed over the residents of the camp. They were running off the camp; women and children were shouting. We transferred the wounded to either a field hospital or to Jordan. Afterwards, we evacuated the camp from the remaining displaced people.”

<sup>1</sup> All interviews were conducted by Ala'a Al- Faqir , a VDC member and field activist, who went to al- Shajarah Town; where he examined the massacre site and met eyewitnesses



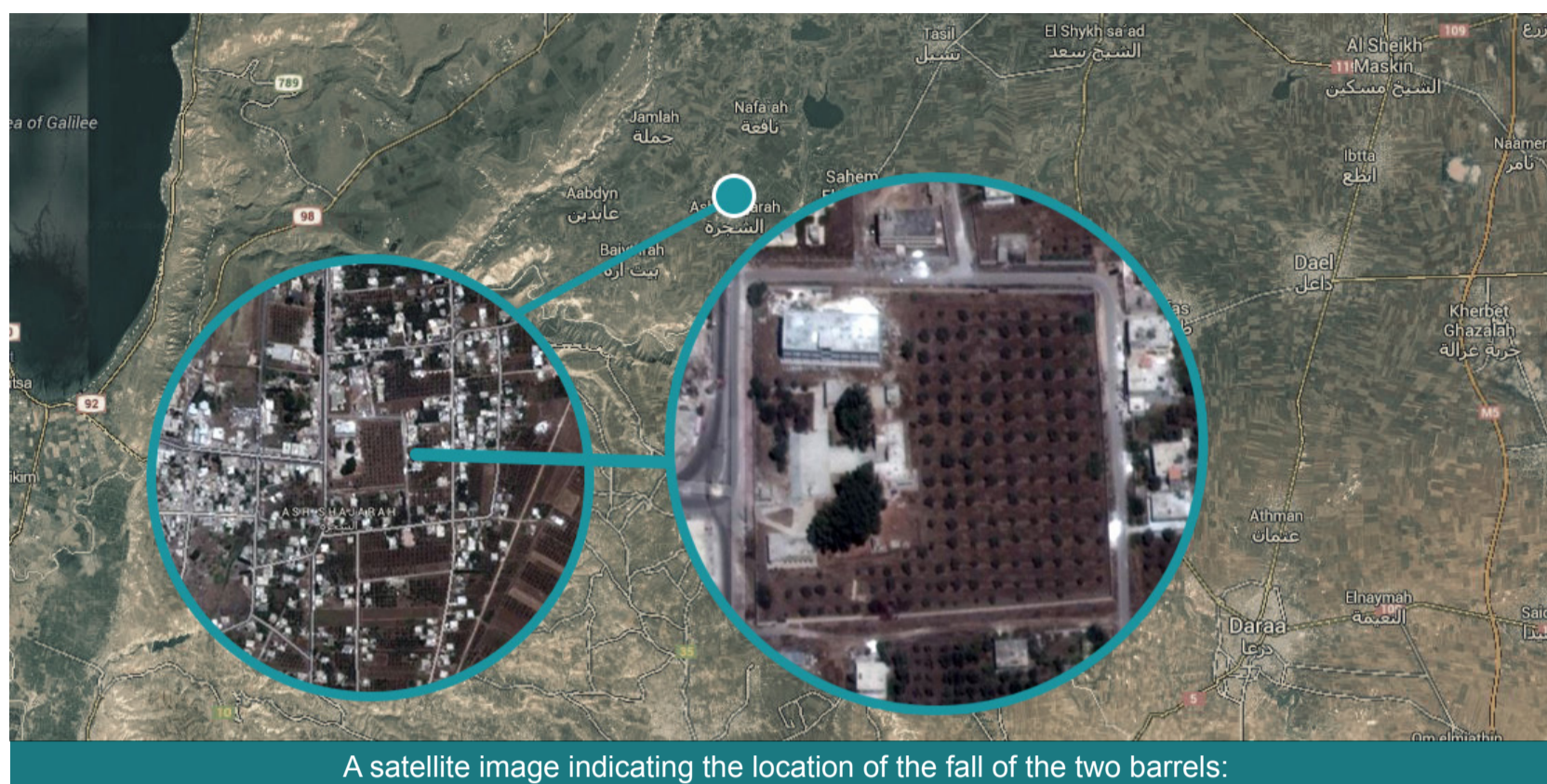


**In another testimony, activist Hussam al-Mathib, a member of Ahrar Yarmouk Valley Gathering and a member of the al-Shajara Media Office, stated:**

“Few minutes before the massacre, social media sites reported that a helicopter had been flying westward above the Town of Ghabaghib. A couple of minutes later, I heard the sound of it above the town of al-Shajara. As I was getting out of the house to see it clearly, I heard two explosions followed by screams from the targeted area that was only 300 meters away from my house. After I got to place and saw the disaster, I went back home and posted an emergency call on Facebook and Skype. When I went back to the scene, the displaced were panicking and running outside the camp barefooted, wearing only their pajamas and looking for family members. Casualties were all over the place; about 60 people were martyred or injured during the attack. The place was immediately evacuated and the casualties were taken to the field hospitals. In the next morning, the residents came back and took their belongings and tents to move to the farms and other secure places. During our inspection, we found an injured woman that was thrown on a top of the tree’s trunk by the force of blast and she was still alive. There was also another little girl on the tree, but she was dead. The final enumeration was 40 casualties and 18 martyrs, most of whom were tore up into carnage.”

A member of VDC has conducted an interview with nurse Abdulsalam al-Eid who is one of the cadres of al-Yarmouk Valley field hospital. The latter stressed that more than forty casualties were received in the hospital, most of whom were children, and that the minor cases were treated there while the serious ones were sent to Jordan. He added that the field hospital faced a difficulty providing all blood types to the injured and that they had released several calls for help. The final enumeration of casualties, mostly children, mounted up to 18 civilian martyrs, a great number of whom turned into carnages.





### The massacre's victims:

- 1-Waleed Muhammad al- Tayasneh, 43 years.
- 2- Hanan Waleed al-Tayasneh, 17 years.
- 3-Lina Waleed al-Tayasneh, 16 years.
- 4-Nada Waleed al-Tayasneh, 12 years.
- 5-Muhammad Ameen Waleed al-Tayasneh, 8 years.
- 6-Khaldoon Waleed al-Tayasneh, 4 years.
- 7-Malek Madyan al-Rajeh, 19 years.
- 8-Ro'aa Madyan al-Rajeh, 14 years.
- 9-Seif Madyan al-Rajeh, 12 years.
- 10-Muhammad Madyan al-Rajeh, 9 years.
- 11-Yasmeen Madyan al-Rajeh, 7 years.
- 12-Nirmeen Madyan al-Rajeh, 4 years.
- 13-Ibrahim Waleed al-Tayasneh.
- 14-Khaled Waleed al-Tayasneh.
- 15-Muhammad Rabei' Naser al-Tayasneh.
- 16-Batoul Naser al-Tayasneh.
- 17-Rabei'a Naser al-Tayasney.
- 18-Muhammad Ahmad Da'as.



## Violations Documentation Center in Syria

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