



Syrian Government's Use of Barrel Bombs in September 2015

Barrel Bombs Killed 103 Individuals, including 23 Children and 13 1715 Women

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I. Introduction:

By daily observing and recording violations, after the beginning of the popular protests in March 2011, we found out that first significant use of barrel bombs by government forces (Military forces, security forces, local militias, and foreign Shi-ite militias) was on Monday 1 October, 2012 in Idlib – Silqean town where a helicopter dropped a barrel bomb on a two-floor residential building which collapsed completely and 32 civilians, including seven women and seven children, were killed in addition to 120 others who were injured as shrapnel scattered everywhere.

It is worth noting that this might not be the first time barrel bombs were used but it was the first time it was used in such a notable manner. The international community was not familiar with that kind of weapon yet. Barrel bombs sometimes weigh quarter of ton and rely on the free fall principle. These barrels are random weapons and locally made, since it is less expensive, causes massive destruction, and causes a great loss of lives. 99% of the casualties are civilians, where the percentage of targeted women and children ranges between 12 and 35%. The same as with any new weapon, government forces cautiously waited for the international community's respond as the Syrian government deems the international community's silence or condemnation a red light to use and employ this weapon on a larger scale which was the case when it started using aerial weapon, poison gases, cluster munitions, and Scud missiles.





The Security Council waited a year and a half before adopting resolution 2139 on 22 February, 2014 which condemned the use of barrel bombs and mentioned it by name: “Demands that all parties immediately cease all attacks against civilians, as well as the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas, including shelling and aerial bombardment, such as the use of barrel bombs” The Syrians welcomed the resolution because it expressed an intention to take further action in the events of non-compliance.

The Syrian government, through its allies at the Security Council first and the other states’ failure to shoulder their legal and moral role, disregarded resolution 2139 the same way it disregarded resolution 2118, adopted on 27 September, 2013, resolution 2042 and 2043, adopted in April 2012.

Additionally, in some cases we documented the use of barrel bombs that contained toxic gases by government forces which violates UN Security Council resolution 2118 and 2209. The Syrian government fully realizes that there are no serious consequences of its action where its forces are openly and proudly violating the Security Council resolutions and international laws (A pro-government politician said on TV that the Syrian government should use nuclear weapons to attack the areas outside its control). Our daily documentation of violations shows that there is no notable difference before 22 February, 2014 (resolution 2139) and after.

SNHR studies and reports prove that most of the attacks were deliberate and targeted crowded civilian areas. The government’s aerial bombardment, displacement and destruction it causes are apparently aimed at thwarting the establishment of any governance model that may serve as a substitute for the Assad government.

II. Executive Summary:

Barrel Bombs Used in September 2015:

Through our daily documentation, SNHR team was able to document the use of not less than 1715 barrel bombs in September 2015, detailed as follows:

Damascus Suburbs: 949

Homs: 190

Daraa: 164

Idlib: 127

Hama: 120

Aleppo: 106

Al Qunaitra: 28

Lattakia: 21

Deir Al Zour: 4

Damascus: 3

Al Swaida: 3





The use of barrel bombs as random weapons killed 103 individuals, including 25 children and 15 women, according to the documentation team in SNHR.

The classification of the victims' death toll according to the Syrian governorates:

Damascus suburbs: 6 individuals, including a woman.

Daraa: 33 individuals including 2 children and two women.

Aleppo: 29 individuals including 14 children and two women.

Homs: 22 individuals including two children and two women.

Hama: one individual

Targeting Vital Facilities:

We could not document all destructions caused by barrel bombs, therefore we recorded the number of vital facilities targeted by government aviation, i.e. markets, schools, hospitals and houses of worship.

During September 2015, not less than 11 vital facilities were targeted by barrel bombs:

Houses of Worship:

Mosques: 2

Medical Centers:

Medical Facilities: 1

Ambulances 2 were targeted

Educational Facilities:

Schools: 2

Residential Neighborhoods:

Markets: 1

Infrastructure:

Industrial Facilities: 1

III. Report Details:

Victim's death toll due to the use of barrel bombs, distributed as follows according to the Syrian governorates:

Damascus suburbs:

On 6 September 2015, government helicopters dropped 4 barrel bombs on Daraya city which killed two individuals.





On 10 September 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Madaya town which killed a woman.

On 25 September 2015, government helicopters dropped three barrel bombs on Zakia city which killed one individual.

On 30 September 2015, government helicopters dropped 12 barrel bombs on Mo'adamiyat Al Sham city which killed 3 individuals.

Aleppo Governorate:

On 12 September 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on Al Bakat town that is under the control of armed opposition groups in Aleppo, which killed one individual.

On 16 September 2015, government helicopters dropped a [barrel bomb on Al Mashhad](#) neighborhood that is under the control of armed opposition groups in Aleppo, which killed [20 individuals](#), including 11 children and two women. Most of the victims were from one family.

On 20 September 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on Al Mousalat neighborhood in Al Shaar neighborhood that is under the control of armed opposition groups in Aleppo. As a result, 6 individuals were killed including a child.

On 26 September 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on Al Halk neighborhood which killed two individuals including a child.

On 27 September 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Al Ma'asaraniya neighborhood in Aleppo which killed one individual.

On 28 September 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Adnan city in Aleppo suburbs which killed one individual.

On 29 September 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on Al Mazaree' Al Tebeya region in Al Safera town in Aleppo suburbs which killed a child.





Idlib Governorate:

On 13 September 2015, government [helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on the industrial region](#) that is under the control of [armed opposition groups which killed 8 individuals](#) including 2 children.

On 13 September 2015, government helicopters dropped four barrel bombs on Al Najeya town in the suburbs of Jisr Al Shoughour in Idlib suburbs which killed one individual.



On 16 September 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Al Skeek town in Idlib suburbs which killed one woman.

On 26 September 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Tiftinaz town which killed 6 individuals, including a woman.

Daraa Governorate:

On 1 September 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Um Walad town in Daraa which killed 3 individuals.

On 1 September 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on Al Ghareya town which killed a child.

On 2 September 2015, government helicopters dropped three barrel bombs on Dael city which killed two individuals, including a child.

On 5 September 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on Al Sheikh Miskeen town which killed a man and his son.

On 6 September 2015, government helicopters dropped three barrel bombs on Al Harak city which killed a child.

On 6 September 2015, government helicopters dropped [three barrel bombs on a crowded market in Busra Al Sham in Daraa which killed 22 individuals](#) including [a child and 6 women](#).





On 27 September 2015, government helicopters dropped 3 barrel bombs on Inkhil city in Daraa suburbs which killed one individual.

On 27 September 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Ekreba town in Daraa suburbs which killed one individual.

Homs Governorate:

On 18 September 2015, government helicopters dropped several bombs on Palmyra city that is under ISIL's control, in Homs. One of the barrel bombs fell on a public square where the residents gathered. As a result, 8 individuals, including 2 children were killed. Most of the victims' bodies were mutilated due to the shelling.

On 19 September 2015, government helicopters dropped 10 barrel bombs on Palmyra city which killed two individuals.

On 22 September 2015, government helicopters dropped 40 barrel bombs on Palmyra city.

One of the barrel bombs fell on a residents' gathering which killed 12 individuals. Moreover, 42 others were injured.

On 25 September 2015, government helicopters dropped several barrel bombs on Talbesa in Homs suburbs which killed a woman.

Hama Suburbs:

On 30 September 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on Braygeth town in southern Hama suburbs, which killed a woman.

Targeting Vital Facilities with Barrel Bombs:

Places of Worship:

Mosques:

On 16 September 2015, government helicopters dropped a barrel bomb next to the mosque of Ammar Bin Yasser in Kafar Houmra town in northern Aleppo suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. The mosque, whose minaret was destroyed due to previous shelling, was partially damaged.





On 25 September 2015, government helicopters [dropped a barrel bomb on Al Maydani mosque in Al Alumji neighborhood](#) in Aleppo that is under the control of armed opposition groups. The mosque and its minaret were greatly destroyed.

Medical Centers:

Medical Facilities:

On 1 September 2015, government helicopters dropped two [barrel bombs on Baghdad Hospital in Hreytan city](#) in northern Aleppo suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. The hospital was greatly damaged and its upper floor was almost completely destroyed. The hospital went out of service.



Ambulances:

On 1 September 2015, government helicopters dropped [two barrel bombs on Baghdad Hospital in Hreytan city](#) in northern Aleppo suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. Three ambulances were greatly damaged.

Educational Facilities:

Schools:

On 11 September 2015, government helicopters [dropped a barrel bomb on a school](#) in Al Latamena city in northern Hama suburbs which caused [great destruction](#) to the [school](#).

On 17 September 2015, government helicopters [dropped a barrel bomb on a school](#) in Al Latamena city in northern Hama suburbs which caused great material damages to the school.

On 20 September 2015, government helicopters dropped a [barrel bomb next to Ikraa' School in Al Mousalat region in Al Shaar neighborhood](#) that is under the control of armed opposition in Aleppo which killed 6 individuals. The school's building was partially damaged.

Cultural Facilities:

Archeological Sites:

On 23 September 2015, government forces dropped several barrel bombs on Palmyra ancient castle and its wall for two consecutive days. As a result, it was partially damaged.





Communal Facilities:

Markets:

On 11 September 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs were dropped on a crowded market in Busra Al Sham in Daraa which killed 22 individuals including a child and six women.

Infrastructure:

Industrial Facilities:

On 13 September 2015, government helicopters dropped two barrel bombs on the industrial region in Idlib city that is under the control of armed opposition groups which killed 8 individuals including 2 children.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations:

The Syrian government has, beyond any doubt, violated Security Council resolution 2139 and used barrel bombs in a widespread and systematic manner. Furthermore, the Syrian government perpetrated the crime of murder in a widespread and systematic manner according to Article VII of The International Criminal Court Rome Statute. Additionally, it violated many principles of the international humanitarian law and perpetrated tens of crimes that can be classified openly as war crimes through its indiscriminate and proportionate bombing.

SNHR notes that the bombing using explosive barrels is an act of indiscriminate bombing that targeted armless civilians, thus the government forces and its militias have violated the articles of the international law for human rights which guarantee the right to live. Furthermore these violations were perpetrated during a non-international armed conflict and hence can be absolutely classified as war crimes.

The random attacks committed by the government forces are considered violations of the customary international law considering the fact that government forces have attacked residential areas rather than a specific military target.

These attacks, especially aerial bombing, have caused immeasurable humanitarian and material losses. There are strong indicators that prove that the damage was deeply severe compared to the expected military advantage.

The magnitude of this wide systematic frequent bombing, the level of its excessive strength, its military nature, and the coordinated approach of these attacks must be based on high orders, and a state policy.





Government forces, and all of its leaderships and forms, are responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes as well as any parties that support the Syrian government politically, materially, and militarily – such as the Russian government, the Iranian government, and Hezbollah in addition to the weapon manufacturing companies. All of these parties must be prosecuted for the crimes they perpetrated, or contributed to, against the Syrian people.

Recommendations

The Security Council

1. The Security Council should take serious steps in order to implement its resolutions which have become ineffective and thus lost all of its credibility and purpose.
2. Also, it should impose an arms embargo on the Syrian government and prosecute anyone who supplies the Syrian government with money and weapon considering that those resources are being used to perpetrate crimes and serious human rights violations.
3. The Security Council is the party who has the authority to refer the Syrian case to the International Criminal Court. Instead of preserving peace and security, the Security Council is hindering this step. Everyone responsible for war crimes and crimes against must be prosecuted.

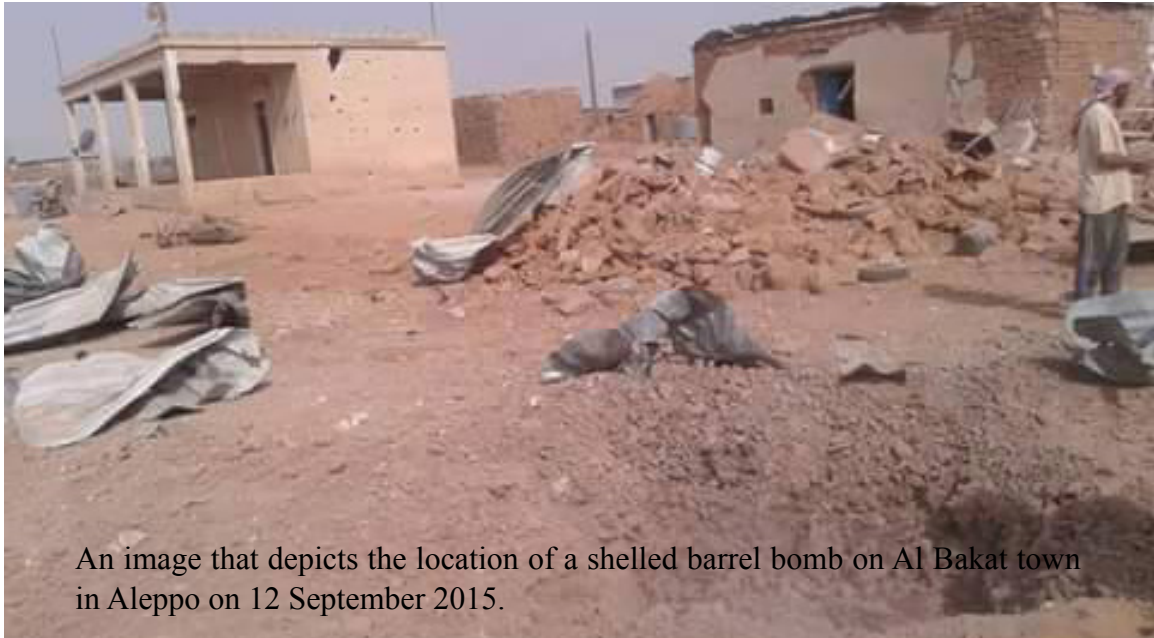
VI. Attachments and Annexes:

Video footages and images that document the use of barrel bombs by government forces in September 2015:

A [video](#) that depicts the shelling aftermath on Al Mazyareeb town in Daraa governorate on 2 September 2015.

An [image](#) that depicts the location of a shelled barrel bomb on Saraqb city in Idlib on 21 September 2015.





An image that depicts the location of a shelled barrel bomb on Al Bakat town in Aleppo on 12 September 2015.

Acknowledgments

Our most profound condolences go out to the victims' families and friends and our thanks to the local activists and families who contributed majorly to this report.



Syrian Network For Human Rights
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

