

International Coalition Forces Targets Armed Opposition Groups for the Third Time

246 individuals were killed as a result including 243 civilians



The Syrian Network for Human Rights is an independent and non-governmental, non-profit human rights organization that investigates and documents all violations committed by all conflict parties involved in the Syrian conflict since 2011. The network, that does not adopt any ideology, was founded in June 2011 and aims to defend the human rights of the Syrian people. It also includes 27 researchers and human rights activists stationed in Syria and in other neighboring countries.

SNHR is committed to all standards and international conventions of Human Rights issued by the United Nations. It aims to ensure that victims' rights are not exploited and perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes.

SNHR issues periodic reports concerning the most notable daily violations, eight monthly statistical or specialized reports, annual reports, and reports concerning global human rights events. It also issues significant studies and documentaries on a regular basis in order to contribute to raising awareness in the Syrian community.

SNHR is considered to be one of the most distinguished and reliable sources of information and references for all the analytical and statistical studies issued by the United Nations.



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Contents

I. Introduction	1
II. Incidents' Details	3
III. Attachments and Evidence	5
IV. Conclusions and recommendations	11
Acknowledgments	11

I. Introduction:

SNHR previously issued eight reports that documented civilian's death by the international coalition forces since 23 September 2014, when the air strikes started to target ISIL. These reports documented civilian casualties, who were affected by the coalition's shelling, and did not document the number ISIL's victims since they do not announce their casualties' numbers.

No organization can claim that they have secret agents inside ISIL or whether they cooperate with an ISIL member, therefore we believe that any statistics about ISIL's casualties are counterfeit; since the documentation process involves victims' names, pictures, background information, and details about their death.

However, in certain incidents limited number of ISIL victims can be identified. It is worth mentioning that this obstacle in documenting ISIL's victims is due to the foreign identities of their members. Syrian nationals can be reached and information about their death or injury can be verified and confirmed, not as ISIL's foreign members.

It is noteworthy to mention that even though all our previous reports were received by relevant authorities, the US Central Command only acknowledged the death of two Syrian children due to the International Coalition shelling. In this report, we document, and for the third time, the targeting of armed opposition groups by international coalition forces.

The first time Ahrar Al Sham was targeted [“New Attacks by the International Coalition Forces against Civilians and Targets Ahrar Al Sham Brigade for the First Time”](#). In that report, we also documented the targeting of Al Sunna Army headquarters that is affiliated to Al Fateh Army, an armed opposition group.

The second time armed opposition was targeted when Ahrar Al Sham headquarters was shelled. The incident was documented in the following report: [“Civilian's Death Toll due to the International Coalition Airstrikes”](#)

This is the ninth report we issue regarding this case and the death toll is distributed as follows:

- 246 citizens were killed as a result, detailed as follows:
- 243 civilians were killed including 74 children and 38 women.
- 3 gunmen from the armed opposition

Fadel Abdul Ghany, head of SNHR says:

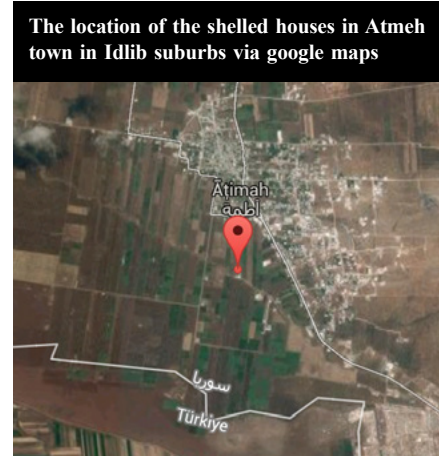
“The targeted town did not contain any ISIL headquarters, was not under its control, and was too far away from ISIL’s clashes with the armed opposition in the northeast of Aleppo. What is the political message that the international coalition wants to send by shelling locations which they exactly know it does not belong to ISIL?”

We have documented by name, location and time, the killing of 3473 armed opposition members by ISIL since it was formed and up till now.”

In this incident, we were able to reach the victim’s father and interview him after his house was shelled and his six daughters were killed due to the international coalition shelling. Five of his daughters were killed at once and the sixth died from her injuries in one of Turkey’s hospitals. We also spoke with a number of eyewitnesses and local activists in Atmeh town. This report includes the victims’ names and pictures. We analyzed the videos and the images which matched the eyewitnesses’ accounts.

II. Incidents' Details:

On 11 August 2015, International Coalition warplanes shelled a military headquarters that belonged to Al Sunna Army (one of the armed opposition groups) that is affiliated to Al Fateh Army (an armed opposition group in addition to An-Nusra front) in Atmeh town in northern Aleppo suburbs. The headquarters was located in an agricultural land in the south-west of Atmeh town. It constituted from a ground floor and a basement, while the basement's area was more than 400 meters and it was used to manufacture mortar missiles.



Next to this headquarters, and few meters away, two houses were located which belonged to Mr. Mo'wiya Al Amouri, the area of each of house was estimated with more than 80 m2.

An image via google maps where we located the headquarters of Al Sunna Army and Mo'wiya Al Amouri's houses.



The shelling happened at 8:30 p.m. with six consecutive rockets that caused complete destruction to the buildings and killed 9 civilians, including 7 children and a woman (the children were Mo'wiya Al Amouri's daughters and a displaced family from Areeha, a mother and her daughter and son). Four other individuals were injured, (two children and two women.)

After analyzing the victims and shelling aftermath images we received from local activists and residents, we realized that fire did not occur. Also, consecutive explosions resulting from the nature of explosive substances did not occur in the headquarters, which indicates that the shelled location did not contain explosive substances and the headquarters was restricted to making missile metal shell casings.

SNHR interviewed Mr. Mo'wiya Al Amouri, owner of the shelled houses which were shelled, and the victims' father:

"I went to the market to buy some necessities for my children. I was 100 meters away from my house when I heard the sound of six consecutive explosions that were very powerful. However, I did not hear the sound of a warplane but I heard it after the explosion happened and went back to my house. It had collapsed and I found the bodies of my five children under the rubble. My son Ali (born on 2010), daughter Nariman (born on 2013) and wife were seriously injured. My child Nariman died from her injuries two weeks later in one of the Turkish hospitals. The shelling also killed our neighbor Um Tawfeek and her two sons. She lived in the other house that I owned. The shelling also targeted the Sunna Army headquarters that was near my house and turned it to rubble. I had seven children. Now, I only have one son who is alive. All my children died and I thank God that my sone remained alive after he underwent a surgery in his head."

SNHR spoke to local activist Ahmad Zarour, who lived next to Al Amouri's house:

"My house is 50 meters away from Al Amouri's house. At 8:30 p.m. I heard powerful explosion sounds and felt the ground shaking from the blast. I knew that the shelling targeted the nearby house to Al Sunna Army headquarters. I went there and saw a great amount of destruction. The two houses had collapsed and five children were pulled from under the rubble. They were Mo'wiya Al Amouri's daughters. Three more bodies were pulled out from under the rubble and belonged to a displaced family from Areeha.

The headquarters that was shelled was used by Al Sunna Army to manufacture missile casings. When it was shelled, the headquarters did not explode which means that it did not contain any explosive materials. The shelling was intense, precise and accurate. Government forces did not shell our town since it is a border town with Turkey that is only one kilometers away from the Turkish borders."

III. Attachments and Evidence:

A. Victims' names according to SNHR documentation:

Child Fatima Al Amouri, born on 2006

Child Hayat Al Amouri, born on 2007

Child Amina Al Amouri, born on 2009

Child Asia Al Amouri, born on 2010

Child Marwa Al Amouri, born on 2011

Child Nariman Al Amouri, born on 2013

Mrs. Latifa Houssien, born on 1965 from Areeha City

Fatima Yaseen, Latifa Houssien's daughter, born on 1998

Youssef Yaseen, Latifa Houssien's son, born on 1993, an armed opposition member from Al Fateh Army, who was visiting his family for treatment after he was injured in Sahl Al Ghab region.

B. Victims' and Destruction Videos and Images:

An image that depicts the six children of Mo'wiya Al Amouri with their injured brother, Ali, (left of the picture).

Their father provided us with their picture.



An image that depicts Mo'wiya Al Amouri's house and shows the headquarters of Al Sunna Army on the right before it was shelled by the coalition forces in Atmeh town in Idlib suburbs. The victims' father provided us with the picture.



A group of exclusive images that depicts the shelling of Mo'wiya Al Amouri's houses which were targeted by the International Coalition forces in Atmeh town in Idlib suburbs. These pictures were taken by local activist Ahmad Zarour on 6 September 2015 after the bulldozers started to lift the rubble in an attempt to remove it later one.



Image of the destruction of the 2 houses of Mou'awia Al Amouri from Attma village in Idlib country side due to International Coalition warplanes missiles, August 11, 2015

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Image of the destruction of the 2 houses of Mou'awia Al Amouri from Attma village in Idlib country side due to International Coalition warplanes missiles, August 11, 2015 © SNHR

Some of the injured Amouri family members:



A group of images that depict the shelling aftermath due to the international coalition shelling on Al Amouri's house and Al Sunna Army headquarters





A [video](#) that depicts the shelling aftermath when International Coalition forces targeted Al Fateh Army in Atmeh border town and an interview with Al Sunna Army commander about the details of the shelling incident:

A [footage](#) that depicts the victims' grandfather talking about the details of what happened on 11 August 2015:

A [footage](#) that depicts the shelled location that belonged to Al Sunna Army headquarters in Atmeh border town on 12 August 2015.

A [footage](#) that depicts the shelling aftermath. One of the doctors in the hospital talks about the number of victims and injured individuals who arrived to the hospital.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations:

1. The International Coalition forces should abide by the International Humanitarian Law, and therefore coalition countries are responsible for these violations since the beginning of the attacks, which were mentioned through this report. These countries must bear the consequences of all these violations, and avoid its recurrence.
2. Indiscriminate bombardment is considered a clear violation of the International Humanitarian Law, and these indiscriminate killings amount to war crimes.
3. International Coalition countries should acknowledge the shelling incidents that killed innocent civilians. Instead of denying these incidents, serious investigations should be conducted and compensations should be given to those affected.
4. Targeting ISIL in certain regions and turning a blind eye against it in other regions depicts the lack of a systemized military strategy.
5. It is necessary to protect civilians from the brutality of the Syrian regime and extremist militias allied with them. A no-fly zone must be established in parallel with the protecting civilians in Syria from the brutality of ISIS.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank everyone who helped to deliver data to SNHR and specifically the activists who cooperated with us. Furthermore, our most heartfelt condolences go out for the victims' families and relatives who agreed to cooperate with us despite their grave losses.

