



Press release: The Syrian Air Forces indiscriminately pounds Aleppo

The Syrian government Air Forces have carried out extensive and indiscriminate attacks on residential neighborhoods in the city of Aleppo since Friday 22 April 2016, while the third round of negotiations in Geneva were taking place between the Syrian government and the opposition, represented by the High Negotiating Committee.

The Violations Documentation Center (VDC) has documented 144 deaths as a result of these attacks until 29 April 2016, with numbers steadily rising as search and rescue operations continue in the affected areas. Most of the 72 civilian casualties documented by the VDC so far include women and children, in addition to doctors and rescue teams who were killed as a result of targeting the residential buildings and hospitals.

As per the VDC's findings, 34 airstrikes by helicopters and warplanes have hit Aleppo so far, targeting residential buildings and vital non-military installations, such as hospitals, clinics, and mosques in different quarters in the city of Aleppo. The following locations were mainly targeted:

- 1. Al-Quds Hospital, run by medical INGO MSF and certified by ICRC, targeted on 27 April 2016, resulting in the death of fifty people, the injury of and scores of others, including three medical staff members;*
- 2. Electricity and water stations in Bab Neirab, hit by rockets on Friday 29 April 2016;*
- 3. The storage units of medicines and the medical supplies of the rapid respond ambulance in Al-Mouwasalat neighbourhood, hit on Friday 29 April 2016, resulting in its total destruction;*
- 4. The Shawky Helal dispensary for internal surgery in Al-Marjah neighbourhood, rendered totally out of service because of explosive barrel bombs thrown from aboard helicopters on Friday 29 April 2016;*
- 5. The dispensary of Bustan Al-Qasr for internal and dermal medicine, rendered out of service because of explosive barrel bombs thrown from aboard helicopters on Friday 29 April 2016.*

Attacks culminated on Friday 29 April.

Meanwhile, the VDC has received reports of attacks by armed opposition groups on residential neighborhoods and infrastructure in parts of Aleppo, directly affecting civilians that are under government control. It has not been possible to date to conduct credible research in these areas due to logistical and security constraints.

The targeting of the medical facilities and personnel is a clear violation of International Humanitarian Law and the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which Syria ratified, and in this case can amount to war crimes.

The VDC condemns such attacks and calls on the the international community, the international sponsors of the Geneva talks, the SSG (Syrian Support Group) and the United Nations to expressly put together effective mechanisms to ensure accountability for these and other violations, by all parties, including, but not limited to the direct targeting of medical facilities. The VDC believes that to continue ingoring such acts contributes to a culture of impunity in Syria, and delays a process by which Syria can be put Syria on the track of justice.