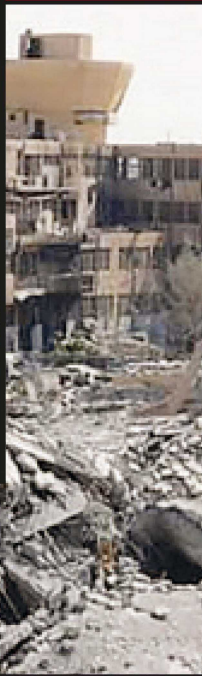


THE FOUNDATION
FOR THE STUDY
OF DEMOCRACY

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CRIMES OF THE US-HEADED INTERNATIONAL COALITION IN SYRIA



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INTRODUCTION

On August 10, 2016, Donald Trump, future president of the United States, called President Obama “a founder of ISIS” and Hillary Clinton – “a co-founder of ISIS”:

“We should have never ever got to Iraq. I said that from the very beginning... I said: “Are you going to destabilize the Middle East?” And we did that... And then we destroyed one of the States and unleashed fury all over the Middle East. It was a terrible mistake. And then Obama came in, and normally you want a cleanup... He made a bigger mess, he made such a mess... And then you had Hillary with Libya. So sad. In fact, in many respects, you know, they honor President Obama. ISIS is honoring President Obama. He’s the founder of ISIS! He’s the founder. He founded ISIS. And I would say the co-founder would be crooked Hillary Clinton, co-founder crooked Hillary Clinton!”¹

On August 11, 2016, journalists asked Donald Trump whether he had meant that Obama had created a power vacuum, but he said: “No, I meant he is the founder of ISIS. I do. He was the most valuable player. I give him the most valuable player award. I also give it, by the way, to Hillary Clinton”.

In 2003, the United States and their allies started their aggression against Iraq. That attack and the destruction of the Iraqi state led, inter alia, to the creation of ISIS. It is also a well-known fact that during the civil war in Syria many groups of Syrian militants trained and armed by the US deserted to ISIS. In 2014, under the pretext of fighting ISIS,

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/us/politics/trump-rally.html>

the United States and their allies began their direct intervention to Syria creating to that end an International coalition called the Global Coalition Against ISIS (hereinafter, the International Coalition or the Coalition). Though areas previously controlled by ISIS have long been liberated, the American troops, in violation of international law, continue to occupy a part of Syria, exploit oil resources of the country, shoot, kill and torture Syrian citizens, destroy civilian houses and vital infrastructure.

Syrians describe in detail what injures they and their relatives have suffered as a result of air and gun attacks, tell how they have lost their sight, arms, legs, fingers or genitalia. They recount how Coalition's attacks killed their sons, daughters, fathers and mothers. Witnesses and victims point to the fact that there were no positions of ISIS near the sites of Coalition's strikes, at least closer than 300 or 400 meters to them. In a number of instances, civilians were hit intentionally, as was the case with a group people who were trying to cross the Euphrates river in an attempt to run from ISIS.

Coalition's victims frequently included women and children. Many of them lost their arms and legs, some lost their sight, sustained burns and head injuries, etc. Victims tell that at the time of the strikes that hit them they were either at home or visiting their relatives, or in public places, such as markets, stores, mosques, drug stores and roads. In some cases, they specifically indicate that they were clearly visible from above but the Coalition planes continued to target them.

International humanitarian law¹ sets legal rules to be observed by all warring parties during wars or military conflicts. Those rules provide for the protection of civilians who are not directly involved in hostilities. The United States is a party to four Geneva Conventions of 1949. Great Britain and France are also parties to these Conventions, as well as to their three additional protocols.

The principle of distinction is one of the basic principles of international humanitarian law. It requires that the parties to a conflict distinguish between civilians and combatants. That means that attacks may only be directed against combatants and must not

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/8367/2018/en/>

be directed against civilians.¹ According to international humanitarian law, attacks targeting civilians not involved in hostilities are considered a war crime.

Prohibition of indiscriminate attacks is another major principle of international humanitarian law. Indiscriminate attacks causing loss of life or injury to civilians also constitute a war crime.²

Yet another principle of international humanitarian law is the principle of proportionality. It prohibits disproportionate attacks which “may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated”.³ A disproportionate attack resulting in an incidental deaths of or injury to civilians makes a war crime.

Actions of the US-headed Coalition in Syria violated the basic principles of international law and, as such, constitute war crimes.

Witnesses testified that they had been targeted with phosphorous and cluster munitions. The use of such munitions in densely populated areas is a war crime for which the countries of the Coalition and the US armed forces should also be held accountable.

Evidences presented in the book are a clear proof that the Coalition, and the US forces in the first place, also systematically targeted and attacked Syrian hospitals, schools, markets, mosques, civilian houses and ambulances. Witnesses point out that some hospitals were bombed repeatedly, which excludes the accidental nature of the attacks and testifies to the fact that they were all intentional. It is also obvious that attacks against such targets are bound to result in civilian casualties.

¹ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Customary IHL Study, Rule 1. The Principle of Distinction between Civilians and Combatants.

² Article 20(b)(ii) of the 1996 ILC Draft Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind.

³ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Customary IHL Study, Practice Relating to Rule 14. Proportionality in Attack, Section A. General, I. Treaties Additional Protocol I, Article 51(5)(b) of the 1977 Additional Protocol I https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v2_cha_chapter4_rule14

Such attacks violate basic principles of international humanitarian law and are war crimes.

Interviewed civilians provided evidence that Coalition forces and primarily the armed forces of the United States occupying parts of Syria shoot civilians using firearms and helicopters, limit their freedom of movement and also arrange for torturing Syrian citizens. The Foundation for the Study of Democracy thoroughly investigated the death of Faisal Khalid Muhammad killed by the US troops on 8 February 2020 in the village of Harbat Hamo, the province of Hasakah, whose only crime was that he grabbed a rock to throw at a US vehicle.

An in-depth investigation was also conducted regarding the situation in the Rukban camp. Syrians who managed to escape from the camp said that the camp is under the full control of the US troops deployed at the nearby At-Tanf military base. Syrian refugees testify that Americans use various groups of militants whom they train, arm and fully control to run the camp. They provide numerous examples of killings and beatings of the residents of the camp by the militants, tell about incidents of rape and harassment in respect of women and children. A separate source of proceeds for militants is abduction of children. Abducted children are returned to their parents only for a substantial ransom.

Under international humanitarian law, the United States bears full responsibility not only for killing non-combatants in Syria but also for crimes committed by the US-sponsored militants.

To conceal those war crimes and to mislead the international public opinion and mass-media, a disinformation campaign against the Syrian government was launched which was unprecedented in terms of its scope and the extent of use of false information.

A vivid example of such cover-up and disinformation activities was the accusation of the Syrian government of conducting a chemical attack on 7 April 2018 in Duma. Western media hit the roof about that publishing huge amounts of falsified materials on the attack which, in fact, never took place.

The public rage was followed by formal accusations on the part of some western countries resulting in a massive missile strike by the Coalition against government targets in Syria. Evidence gathered by the

Foundation includes testimonies of witnesses from the house where it was all arranged. Those testimonies are a clear proof that the attack was a performance staged by militants and White Helmets and they show how exactly it was organized. The book provides detailed information on how the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons falsified the report on the Duma events by concealing conclusions of experts and manipulating facts, and by replacing the team of its own but “inconvenient” experts with a group of people who gathered information on the incident in a different country (most probably in Turkey).

It also presents the results of the Foundation’s investigation into the White Helmets activities related to their falsification of chemical weapons incidents which include multiple accounts of employees of the Organization, as well as participants in and witnesses of their staged video-recordings describing in detail how those recordings were made. Apart from White Helmets, the sources of false information included the Syrian-American Medical Society, the Syrian Human Rights Observatory and the Bellingcat website. All of them were financed by the governments of the United States, Great Britain and other Western countries.

The facts and evidences presented below were compiled on the basis of interviews conducted by the Foundation in Syria with more than 200 Syrian citizens involved. All witnesses have been properly identified with their confirmed names and occupation indicated in the book.

All of them gave their permission to use their photographs and videos and to quote their words in mass-media, as well as in making statements and holding exhibitions and other public events.

Each of the witnesses asked the Foundation to consider his or her account of the violations of his or her human rights as a formal submission to investigative authorities and law enforcement agencies of any country of the world, the UN and other international organizations. It is exactly the way the evidence presented below should be considered.

*M. S. Grigoriev
Director of the Foundation for the Study of
Democracy, member
of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation*



2017 Homs. Akram al-Makuzim school. We came here with humanitarian aid.

By the entrance to the school there are 43 photographs of Year 1 pupils, wide-eyed and smiling boys and girls.

They will never come back for Year 2. They were all killed in a targeted terrorist attack carried out by the “moderate opposition”, nurtured and sponsored by the West, primarily by the USA. The Americans are responsible for their deaths, just as they are for the deaths of other Syrian children killed in indiscriminate attacks carried out by the

US coalition and who have died as a result of the crippling sanctions imposed by the West. These sanctions, imposed by the law known in the West as Caesar’s Law, even prohibit the import of medicines, medical equipment and baby food. But this pitiless law, aimed at exterminating those who are weakest, would be better named Hitler’s law. In view of this conduct, their hypocritical speeches about humane behavior and human rights are worth nothing.

The US aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic and the occupation of part of its territory are flagrant violations of international law. The support and arming of terrorists, killing of dissidents, deadly provocations carried out by pseudo-humanitarian organizations, attacks that are disproportionate to their declared aim of fighting terrorism and which lead to mass civilian casualties — these are all breaches of international law and human rights.

But the self-declared “chosen nation” refuses to accept any blame. Those who are crushed under its inhuman jackboot are legitimate targets.

It is clear to us that, for the West’s champions of human rights, not all victims are equally important. They defend human rights, but it is important to understand just who they consider to be human. They did their best to forget about those patients and doctors who were killed by US missile strikes on an Afghan hospital. They say nothing about those supporters of the Syrian government who are executed in a most savage way or killed in missile strikes or bombing raids. They are silent about Muammar Gaddafi’s grandchildren, the oldest of whom was just 3 years old, who were killed in a precision strike by NATO forces. And they do not want to hear about the people whose tragic experience is described in this book.

Of course sometimes even the politically-biased do-gooders from Amnesty International have been forced to take note of the coalition’s contempt

for considerations of humanity, and they could not close their eyes to such blatant violations as the killing of more than two hundred civilians in an attack in 2016. More than a third of the victims were children.

In the West they do not want to hear the voice of Syria, or of its people. They are unseen victims, because they are on the wrong side of history.

But we consider that it is our duty to give the Syrian people the chance to talk about what they have endured. This truth needs to be heard. Including in countries which are proud of their humanitarian traditions and their respect for human rights.

*D.V. Sablin,
First Deputy Chairman of the All-Russian
organization Brothers in Arms*



Today's globalized world is characterized by technological progress, but this brings with it many problems in the areas of transport, communications and production, and medicine, as well as humanitarian problems. The current global order is also facing many risks and threats.

One of these threats is the attempt by certain countries to “regulate” global problems by interfering not only in international relations but also in the internal affairs of other countries, taking advantage of temporary periods of weakness when a country is unable to resist external pressure, destabilizing the political and economic situation or directly provoking internal crises and conflicts.

That is what we can see happening now in Syria, which has, for the last six years, been suffering from military intervention on the part of the so-called “Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS”, headed by the USA.

In this book I have gathered statements from many witnesses which confirm that the military conflict in Syria was not only, to a great extent, initiated by Western powers, but is being prolonged by them in order to control the region, exploit its natural resources, and sow instability throughout the world – a situation which is of benefit to a country that is aiming for world hegemony, just as it is to global capitalism. All this is accompanied by unprecedented and inhuman levels of cruelty to the civilian population.

A publication of this kind is very welcome, as today we recognize the importance not only of taking a “tough” stand against violence and aggression but also of adopting a “gentle” humanitarian approach in opposition to the current global geopolitical imbalance – an imbalance which is fueled by a belief that not all nations and cultures are of equal value, and which leaves a legacy of death, pain and poverty, deprives children of their parents and engenders cultural and social racism, xenophobia and a culture of inhumanity in which only brute force is respected. Today, all those concerned with raising awareness of humanitarian issues or involved in humanitarian activities on a practical level – journalists, academics, teachers – have a duty to talk about the growing incidence of violence and injustice. And they need to denounce hypocrisy, whether on the part of nations and cultures or individuals, and highlight the open and highly aggressive forms of colonialism operating in our supposedly post-colonial world under the cover

of apparently noble slogans about freedom and democracy. It is essential that young people be taught how to live in our “post-truth” world, and critically assess the barrage of information from the media. This is the only thing that can prevent new humanitarian catastrophes from taking place.

*A.B. Bezborodov
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Chapter I

AIRSTRIKES AGAINST PEACEFUL SYRIAN CITIZENS

The report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic created by decision of the UN Human Rights Council, which was presented at its 42nd session (September 9-27, 2019), cited the facts of the murder of 16 civilian Syrian citizens by the international coalition led by the United States. It states:¹

“The Commission continued its investigations into a series of air strikes carried out by the United States-led international coalition during operation Al-Jazeera Storm (A/HRC/40/70, para. 49), which resulted in a high number of civilian casualties. For example, on 3 January at approximately 7.30 a.m., a series of air strikes hit a single-floor residential building and its immediate vicinity. The building was positioned more than a kilometre east of the centre of Sha’fah, south of Hajin. Analysis of the impact site, including the crater, in conjunction with witness statements describing the launching of rockets from a jet fighter, led the Commission to conclude that an air strike had been the cause of the damage. The strike killed 16 civilians, including 3 women, 1 man, 3 boys and 9 girls. The majority of children killed were aged 5 years or less, with the youngest victim being a 2-month-old infant. Fourteen victims belonged to the same family, while two additional victims were relatives staying at the house. Two boys

¹ https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2016403/a_hrc_42_51_E.pdf. C. 7.

survived the attack, sustaining injuries. Witness statements, satellite imagery and video material received and reviewed by the Commission confirmed the targeted object had been an isolated building on the outskirts of Sha‘fah, hundreds of metres from the next cluster of residential buildings and positioned off the main roads. While interviewees confirmed the presence of ISIL terrorists in Sha‘fah itself, the Commission found no indication of any ISIL presence or military target in the wider area of the building struck at the time of the attack.

The Commission recalls numerous previous attacks by the United States-led international coalition that resulted in death or injury to civilians¹.

Furthermore, the Commission notes the isolated location of the targeted object, the high number of civilian casualties who were overwhelmingly children and the specific statements of eyewitnesses indicating the exclusive presence of civilians at the scene of the incident, all coinciding with the apparent absence of a military target in the area of the attack.

The evidence obtained regarding this incident indicated that international coalition forces failed to employ the necessary precautions to discriminate adequately between military objectives and civilians. The Commission finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that international coalition forces may not have directed their attacks at a specific military objective, or failed to do so with the necessary precaution. Launching indiscriminate attacks that result in death or injury to civilians amounts to a war crime in cases in which such attacks are conducted recklessly”.

The expression “may not have directed their attacks at a specific military objective” is in fact a mild way to express the Commission’s conclusion that the US-led international coalition deliberately attacked civilians. It is especially important that the Commission created by decision of the UN Human Rights Council, recognizes the fact of “numerous attacks by the US-led international coalition that resulted in death or injury to civilians”.

¹ A/HRC/37/72, para. 39, and annex IV (paras. 7-11); and A/HRC/40/70, paras. 46-48.

We also note the reaction of the US representatives in the person of Ambassador James Jeffrey, who, despite all the existing evidence, declared that “the United States does not recognize the conclusions of this body”, referring to the Commission created by decision of the United Nations Human Rights Council.



Photo: Saleh Abd Al-Rashid (55), retired, the village of Al-Husseiniya, Deir-ez-Zor province, and Director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy Maxim S. Grigoriev

The numerous interviews with victims, their relatives and numerous witnesses by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy cited in this book, prove that victims of the strikes of the US-led international coalition belong to each and every age group, any occupation and various income levels. This fact confirms the massive nature of strikes against the peaceful Syrian population, which, according to international law, is a war crime. Victims in almost every settlement hit by the US-led international coalition, are not hard to find in almost every family.

Syrian citizens tell in detail what serious injuries they personally suffered from the coalition’s missile and bomb strikes: “An airplane flew in and fired a rocket, I lost my leg,” “I lost my leg in 2017 from a coalition airstrike. In the city of Hajin”, “ I was in Khatla

next to the bakery. An air bomb from a coalition plane hit there”, “I was on the road, on a motorcycle. There was an airstrike ...

My right leg was broken, two fractures, three on my left leg, a heel”, “there was an airstrike, straight on the pharmacy. As a result, five people died — an old man, a child, three girls 17-18 years old. I was wounded in the spine,” “the coalition hit us in June 2015. An airstrike. We were with the rams, I was wounded, and about 90 rams were killed. I lost my toes and a part of my left leg”, “in 2017, when the whole family got together, there was an airstrike, my son was injured”, “I saw the planes fly by. And then there were several explosions. I lost my leg”, “after I was wounded, I can do nothing.

My left arm is shattered, my right eye is blind”, “as soon as they heard the sound of aircraft, people immediately started to run away... a splinter hit me in the back from this blow. Under the shoulder, under the shoulder blade, it injured the spine, the spinal cord. As a result, I can’t walk”, “on September 29, 2017, an aircraft of the American coalition struck with two missiles in Mayadin.

I got a fracture in my left arm. 12 of my relatives were killed by the impact”, “they fired one missile. I got leg atrophy, four fractures, shrapnel wounds to my chest, shoulder, my left arm does not rise”, etc.

More than by the pure fact of the large-scale killing of civilian population, the victims and direct witnesses of the coalition attacks are surprised by the way scarcer attacks against terrorist fighters: “We never thought the Americans would kill civilians, but we saw what was happening with our own eyes”, “many civilians were injured. Probably, not a single fighter was killed», «the fighters were far away. There were no cases where the coalition hit exactly the fighters.

They bombed only civilians”, “the bombs destroyed mosques, schools, medical centers, but they failed to hit a single fighter”, “my relative, a 10-year-old girl, died from coalition air strikes on August 3, 2016”, “my brother was killed by an American airstrike. His name was Hussein Ali Al-Ali”, “among those killed were my relatives —



Photo: the son of Wadahi Al-Mudahi Suleiman, who received multiple shrapnel wounds as a result of a US-led coalition strike in July 2017, lost an arm and a leg, the city of Maadan, Raqqa province. Photo taken by Foundation for the Study of Democracy volunteers

a nephew and a cousin”, “ in Raqqa they struck our house ... There were 14 people, and a rocket hit them. They all died. “

The evidence about the killings of civilians across various regions of Syria by the coalition and, mainly, by the US armed forces collected by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy, when analyzed in a narrow sphere — as applied to what was happening in the city of Raqqa — is fully confirmed by data from other NGOs such as Amnesty International and Airwars, which will also be cited in this book.

For example, the evidence of victims of the US-led coalition collected by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy, in the vast majority of cases emphasize that “there were only civilians nearby, no militants,” “on the day of the airstrike, there were no militants in the village, no pickup vans, no one was there”, etc.

Amnesty International’s report, “War of annihilation: Devastating Toll on Civilians, Raqqa — Syria”, states that “Most of the cases examined in this report involved attacks that struck civilian objects — homes or other places in which civilians were seeking shelter from the fighting — killing and injuring civilians. Witnesses reported that there were no fighters in the vicinity at the time of the attacks. Such attacks could be either direct attacks on civilians or civilian objects or indiscriminate attacks”. All these types of attacks constitute war crimes according to international humanitarian law.

“I was on the road, on a motorcycle. There was an air strike, 4 missiles. These were coalition aircraft. In the village of Al-Husseiniya, the Al-Waha quarter. In May 2017. My right leg is broken, two fractures, three on my left leg, a heel. I had a brain hemorrhage.

Juma Maray At-Kheimiyya, 40 years old, and his son Muhammad, 15 years old, Ahmed Khodr Al-Abbud, 25 years old, were killed by the blow. There were many houses that they destroyed.

There was no ISIS, there were no military positions, not even a factory, there was nothing, only civilians.”



Photo: Jassim Rajib Ibrahim (38 years old), who received multiple shrapnel wounds and became disabled in July 2017 as a result of a US-led coalition strike, Sharida village, Sabha district, Raqqa province. Photo taken by Foundation for the Study of Democracy volunteers



***Khalil Ibrahim Al-Aji (51),
peasant, the city of Sabha,
Raqqqa province***

On July 21, 2017 at 9 o'clock in the morning we were at home, no one was expecting or awaiting anything.

A plane came up and fired a rocket, I lost my leg. We are simple peasants, no militants were near us, neither to the right nor to the left.

The militants were far from us. There were 8 people in this house.

My family, 5 people, of which two were killed, I lost a leg, my wife lost an eye.

My son Omar Al-Khalil Ibrahim Al-Aji, 14 years old, and my daughter Nawal Al-Khalil Ibrahim Al-Aji, 19 years old, were killed. My wife, Hanuf Ash-Sham Al-Baarib, 49 years old, lost her eye.

My son Muafak Al-Ibrahim Khalil Al-Aji,

born 1989, was also wounded. In the second family, four people died — three girls and one boy.

We never thought the Americans would kill civilians, but we saw what happened with our own eyes.

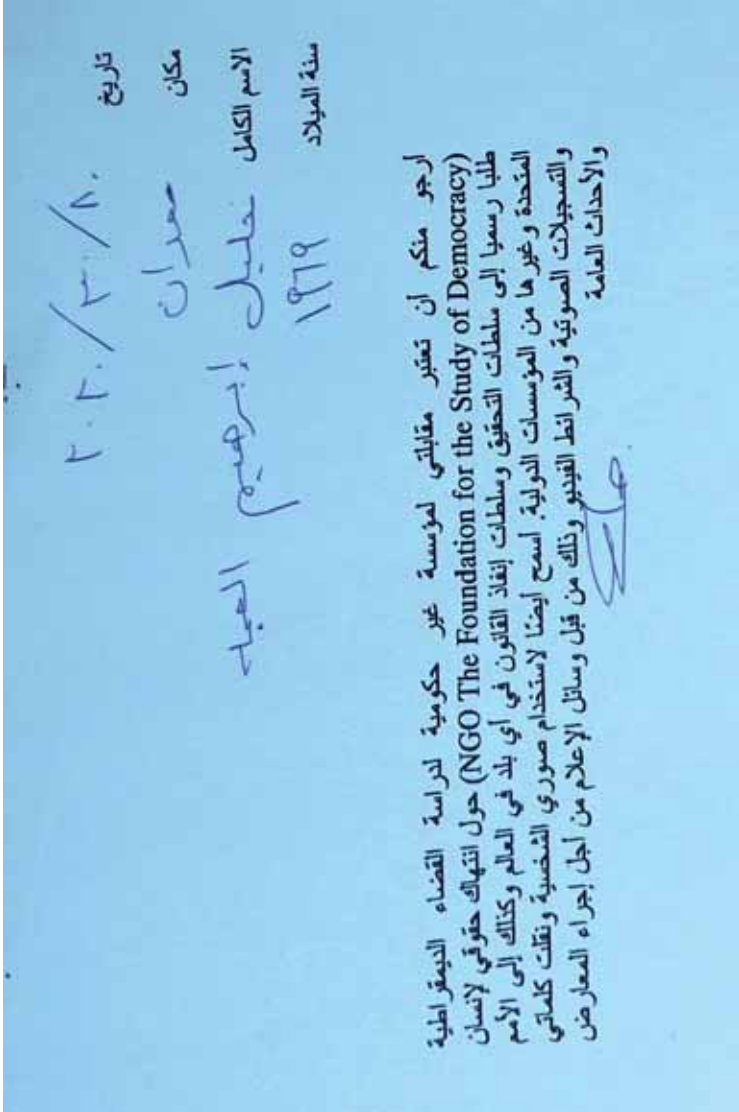


Photo: Khalil Ibrahim Al-Aji's appeal to the Foundation for the Study of Democracy, whereby he asks to consider his interview about the violation of his human and civil rights as an official appeal to the investigative and law enforcement agencies of any country in the world, to the UN and other international organizations, as well as authorizes the release of his photos, quotes of his words and videos featuring him to the media, as well as their use for addresses, exhibitions and any public events



Photo: the house of Abta Al-Hasan Mustafa (58 years old), the city of Raqqa, Raqqa province, destroyed in July 2017 by a US-led coalition air strike. Photo courtesy of Abta Al-Hasan Mustafa



Hussein Trud (40 years old), disabled, the city of Hajin, Aleppo province

I lost my leg in 2017 from a coalition airstrike. In the city of Hajin. I lived there with a relative. It was 18:30. I was in a car. There were four strikes. First three, then the fourth one hit the car. We were going to flee across the river and got into the car. We were hit by the fourth blow. Many people got burnt. There was an incendiary stuff. Even if you come up to touch it, pull it out, you burn. Fragments left in my head. I lost my left leg. My brother was hurt. He had burns, lost an eye. He is 44 years old,

his name is Hamid Adam Trud.

There were only civilians nearby, no fighters. I was scared for the children who were around.



Riyadh Hammoud Al-Mahmoud (34), baker, the village of Khatla, Raqqa province

I was injured on September 13, 2017. There was a bombardment. All the walls fell on me, I was taken immediately to the hospital, I was in a coma. I was in Khatla next to the bakery. It was hit by an air bomb from a coalition plane. There was no ISIS equipment around. A bakery was hit, 7 houses around were destroyed, and many civilians were killed. Abu Daoud died, he was 65, the

girl Noor died, she was 15 or 16 years old. When the blow came, at night, I was sleeping with my family. All the walls fell on them, and I was wounded in the head. Daughter Sham — 9 years old — was wounded in the knee. Not a single militant was killed.



Daoud Suleiman Al-Hussein (36 years old), painter, the village of Al-Husseiniya, Deir-ez-Zor province

There were civilians in the village, the militants used only the road in there for passage. They were not staying in the village. The Americans bombed. They hit the school, destroyed the school. In July 2015, I went out to the pharmacy. But an airstrike hit directly the pharmacy. As a result, five people died — one old man, one child, three girls 17-18 years old. I was wounded in the spine

and passed out. I cannot walk the same way I did before the injury.



Abed Mahmoud Al-Abdullah (58 years old), peasant, the village of Al-Husseiniya, Deir ez-Zor province

The coalition hit us in June 2015. An air strike. We were with the rams, I was wounded, and about 90 rams were killed. I lost my toes and a part of my left leg. And the militants were far away. We passed out. My brother's son Najin Abdullah Al-Abdullah was also wounded. He was a child of 12. It was exactly an air strike, we saw the planes. They shot all the time, they shot everyone. They shoot in all places, here and there, without a target. There are many victims of coalition air strikes

in the village. Approximately 30-40 were killed by them.

Many civilians were injured. Not a single fighter was likely to have been killed.



***Joma Togan Al-Ibrahim (59 years old),
civil servant, the village of Khatla, Deir-
ez-Zor province***

In 2017, when we got together with the whole family, there was an airstrike, my son was wounded. We were in our house. The whole family, everybody got together, I got injured. Guest Yusef was killed on the spot, my brother's son Hassan Joma Togan Al-Ibrahim was killed. He

was 13 years old. Brother's daughter Amal was killed. She was 10 years old. My son was injured. He was wounded by shrapnel, lost consciousness. Thank people for helping us.

I cannot stand without pain. I walk with crutches. A part of our house is destroyed, you can see — there is nothing left — no glass, no doors — nothing. We do not know why the coalition struck. The militants were far away on the main road. There were 4 rockets.



***Ramad Muhammad Ileva (39 years old),
porter, the village of Salhiya, Deir ez-Zor
province***

In 2016, I was walking along the road and there was an unexpected airstrike. I walked along the main road of the village. I saw the planes fly by.

And then there were several explosions. I lost my leg. Many people, about 30-40 of them, suffered. Many lost their legs. Exactly from this blow. It was at 9-10 am.

The fighters were far away. There were no cases when the coalition hit exactly the militants. Only civilians were bombed.



***Rukiya Muhammad Said Al-Ibrahim
(43 years old), housewife, the village of
Buaytiyah, Deir ez-Zor province***

In 2017, there was an airstrike. After namaz at 4 pm. After the blow, we were all covered in blood: me, my husband, children. Two sons and a daughter were killed. The youngest one was 9 months old. Two children survived, but were injured. My daughter Rubba was wounded, shrapnel hit her in the stomach. She was operated on, the fragments were taken out. She was 18 years old. Another daughter, Bara, was injured, she was 10 years old. The house is still destroyed. The house was destroyed, we lost the loved ones, my husband kept agricultural machinery. Now everything is lost, nothing is there, nothing is left.

After I got injured, I can't do anything. I used to work as a housewife, now I can't even cope with it as a housewife. My left arm is shattered, vision is lost in my right eye.

The coalition frequently bombed various locations in the village. The medical facility, as well as schools and mosques, were destroyed.



Photo: Rukiya Mohammed Said Al-Ibrahim in the village of Boyitiya telling about the destruction of her house in the province of Deir-ez-Zor. Photos taken by Foundation for the Study of Democracy volunteers



Photo: the ruined house of Rukiya Mohammed Said Al-Ibrahim in the village of Bouytiyah, Deir-ez-Zor province. Photos taken by Foundation for the Study of Democracy volunteers



Muhammad Ali Al-Mufridge (33 years old), disabled, store cashier, the village of Tawatha, Deir-ez-Zor province

In November 2017, we were going to flee. We knew that many people had been killed or wounded by the American air force. And that day, when we were packing, I got seriously injured.

As soon as they heard the sound of aircraft, the people immediately started to flee. When I heard the sound of aviation, I was going to my workplace to pick up my personal belongings.

I managed to reach them and pick them up, and when I was walking back, a splinter from this blow hit me in the back. Under the shoulder, under the scapula, it injured the spine and spinal cord. As a result, I cannot walk. The bladder became weak, urinary incontinence.

On the day of the airstrike, there were no militants in the village, no pickup vans, nothing.

The shrapnel hit a large private house and a neighboring house, a fragment from these blows hit me.



Photo: Mohammed Hassan Shayb (13 years old), a schoolboy, and his father Hassan Mohammed ShaybAl-Abdalm (49 years old), mechanic, the city of Mayadin, Deir-ez-Zor province

A US-led coalition aircraft struck with two missiles In Mayadin, on September 29, 2017.

They hit a four-storeyed building, 2 apartments on each floor. 52 people lived there.

I was also there during the impact. I got my left arm fractured.



Hassan Nasr Al-Khalef (52 years old), unemployed, disabled, the city of Mayadin, Deir-ez-Zor province

On September 2, 2017, an air strike was struck. I was inside a house near the Al-Hamad Hospital street in the city of Mayadin, and the strike of an American aircraft blew everything away, blew the house apart.

They fired one missile, it hit right the house, I was seriously injured.

I have an atrophied leg, four fractures, shrapnel wounds of my chest, shoulder, my left arm won't rise by itself. Pus is constantly coming out of the leg.

I have been undergoing treatment since 2017. I can't work. I was a cook.



Photo: Hassan Nasr Al-Khalef shows the crash site of a bomb dropped by the US-led coalition, the city of Mayadin, Deir-ez-Zor province. Photos taken by Foundation for the Study of Democracy volunteers



Photo: Hassan Nasr Al-Khalef near the house where he was injured in an air strike by the US-led coalition, the city of Mayadin, Deir-ez-Zor province. Photos taken by Foundation for the Study of Democracy volunteers



Mahmoud Al-Shadid ibn Ubaid (54), unemployed, the city of Maadan, Raqqqa province

In May 2017, there was an air strike. He (Osama al-Shadid Ibn Mahmoud) was hit by a shrapnel. A piece of his neck was torn off and he underwent surgery. He got his jaw and radius broken, a broken, and his eye completely damaged; after a while he completely lost his sight. They sewed it up at a hospital, took a piece from the chest and sewed it to the neck, where a piece was torn

out, and now it has grown together. He could not come to his senses for about a month, and his eyes stopped seeing.

In our village, I did not see a single militant who would have died from air strikes.



Photo: the house of Ali Ar-Ramadan Ahmad, the city of Raqqa, Raqqa province, destroyed by US-led coalition strikes on 02.07.2017. Photo courtesy of Ali Ar-Ramadan Ahmad



Khalisiya Osama Al-Shadid Ibn Mahmoud (22 years old), blindfolded by a coalition strike

There was a lot of aviation, they flew overhead all the time.

I was herding rams.

I don't remember much, I was in a coma for a whole month.



Ahmad Al-Mausi Laham (17 years old), car repairman, the city of Suweida, Raqqa province

In 2017 in Suweida, I heard the sounds of airplanes.

These were aircraft of the American coalition.

There was an airstrike, a splinter flew in, which tore my hand off.

I was at home when the splinter flew in.

It was a missile that exploded near our house.



Ahmad Aboud Ahmad (40), handyman, the village of Mansoura, Raqqa province

In May 2017, I drove to work early in the morning. A rocket flew into the building, and my leg was torn off with a fragment. Abd Ar-Rahman Younis was with me. He was killed. He was sitting behind me on a motorcycle. He was a young guy of about 20 years old.

The American aviation killed many civilians when it struck.

At that time, only coalition planes were flying in Raqqa, no more planes were flying, we know that.

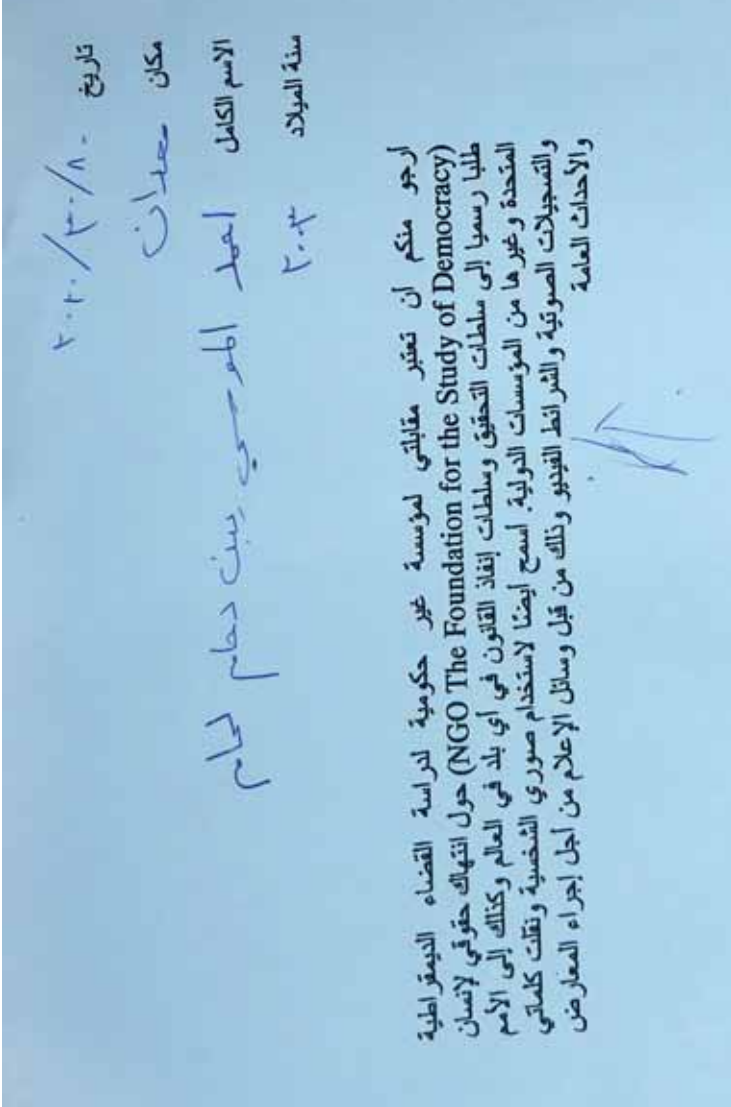


Photo: Ahmad Al-Mausi Laham's appeal to the Foundation for the Study of Democracy, whereby he asks to consider his interview about the violation of his human and civil rights as an official appeal to the investigative and law enforcement agencies of any country in the world, to the UN and other international organizations, as well as authorizes the release of his photos, quotes of his words and videos featuring him to the media, as well as their use for addresses, exhibitions and any public events



*Hasan Taha Taha, 71,
farmer, city of Maadan,
Raqqa governorate*

That day in July 2017, I was asleep at home.

The rest of my family were watching TV in another room of our house.

All of a sudden I heard a powerful explosion. I realized it was a rocket.

I jumped up, started running around the house, looking for survivors, gathering everyone, not sure who was dead or alive. My son's children, triplets, Suhayb, Omar, Asib, were 3 or 4, they could walk already.

If only you could have seen what happened to them... They all suffered various wounds, one of them had shrapnel in his head.

All these three small children were under soil, shrapnel, and stones.

With God's help, Allah helped us, we got them out. After that, they spent 4 months in the hospital.

Thank God, their lives were saved, and I get to hear them call me Grandpa.

Suhayb had a head injury. Omar was hit by shrapnel too, as well as their mother Fatima Al-Saut Al-Taha.

My niece's eye collapsed. She was seven or eight. Her mother Leila Al-Hasan was killed.

All fighters left this area two or three days before the air strike. I did not see them any more.



*Hasan Taha Taha, a farmer from Maadan, talking about the coalition attack on his house. Four of his grandchildren were wounded in the attack, his relative was killed.
Photographs: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy*



House of Hasan Taha Taha, a farmer from Maadan, damaged in an attack by the international US-led coalition. Photographs by volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy.

Syrians give accounts of how their closest relatives — husbands, wives, children, fathers, and mothers — were killed in US-led

coalition strikes: "...There was a massive air strike. I ran out of the house and saw my husband lying dead on the ground", "my husband Umair Al-Ibrahim was walking down the road, when he was hit by an air strike", "...my brother was the youngest of us, he was 19. He was riding a motorcycle, and was hit by an air strike at the beginning of the night", "they blew my house up, razed it to the ground. They killed my daughter, my wife was injured too", "the strike killed seven people: my brother Abd Al-Razaq, 42, sister Aisha, 57, sister Sabriyah, 55, nephew Muhammad, 13, niece Rana, 13, nephew Tariq, 5, Raed, 7 months old", "I lost my husband, two children, and her husband's brother", "I lost my children Asad Hamid Khalaf and Muhammad Hamid Khalaf", "that day, my brothers and sisters died, most casualties were children, young children. My brother Khaled Muhammad Abd Al-Wahid Khaled died, and my mother too."

Just like in the other cases, witnesses stress that there were no fighter positions at all near the sites of the coalition's strikes on civilian population, and only in rare cases were they 300 to 400 m away: "On the day of the attack, there was nobody nearby, neither fighters nor their positions. There was nobody around, and no one at all in the neighbouring village, only civilians", "there were no fighters near the house. They would often bomb us, and the only victims were civilians", "there was not a single fighter in the village. They were far away. They had a command post in the neighbouring village", "fighters were never continuously present in our village, they would only occasionally pass through it in pickup trucks", "fighters were far, about 300 m away", "fighters were more than 400 m away from the house".

Syrians also emphasize that air strikes generally killed civilians, not terrorists and fighters: "Bombs destroyed mosques, schools, medical facilities, but did not hit a single fighter", "why did the US attack that house? They knew everything, they know where the terrorists are and where there are none. If they wanted to liberate Raqqa from fighters, why did they not kill fighters?", "it was only civilians who died, not fighters".

This data is supported by evidence collected by Amnesty International. For example, its data base MDE 24/5037/

2016¹ describes the following situation: ten civilians from one family were killed in suspected coalition air strikes on the village of Al-Hadhad, some 6km north-east of Manbij, on 11 June 2016. The victims were identified as the family of Mahmoud Al-Khataf, including his two sons and their wives and their children, and one other woman. No casualty among IS members or other damage to IS forces was reported.”



*Zahab Rahil Al-Sarhan, 41,
housewife, city of Deir ez-Zor*

We came home from my parents' house and stayed inside.

My husband left home to buy desserts at the market. He was a taxi driver.

It was 9 PM. There was a massive air strike. I ran out of the house and saw my husband lying dead on the ground.

The house next door was two-storey, the second floor was completely destroyed.

A woman named Jamila lost her arm there. My husband had a head injury, and his stomach was split open.

My relatives helped me carry my husband's body and told me to go back home, because the US coalition was about to make a second strike.

That was common, we were afraid there would be a second attack.

After 22 years with my husband, my son and daughter were left without a father.

I am living with my parents, they help me and my children, I have no salary, nothing.

The situation is very, very dire.

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/5037/2016/en/>



*Asma Kardush Al-Abed, 38,
housewife, city of Deir ez-Zor*

My brother was the youngest of us, he was 19. My mother was always worried about him. He was riding a motorcycle, and was hit by a coalition air strike at the beginning of the night. Everybody knew that the US coalition carried out air strikes at night. It was in the village of Boulel. There was a shop my brother was renting. A bomb or a rocket fell near his shop, in the street, at the turn of the road. He was driving up to the shop.

Three more people died. He was the fourth. They were all civilians. I would like to tell Americans that God will punish them. My brother left behind a child of 7 months and an 18-year-old wife.



Huriya Fayad Al-Fayad, 31, housewife. Yunus Awad Al-Hasan, 52, elder of the village of Buaytiya, Deir ez-Zor governorate

Yunus Awad Al-Hasan, 52, elder of Buaytiya village, Deir ez-Zor governorate: In August 2017, there was an air strike. There were coalition aircraft only, they would bomb bridges constantly, destroying many houses. My house was among those damaged. They blew my house up, razed it to the ground.

They killed my daughter, my wife got injured too. Her chest was broken, she had a chest fracture.

She had surgery on her head and fingers. She still cannot use one of her fingers. Roadside shops also got damaged. There were no fighters near our house.

They would often bomb us, and the only victims were civilians: children, young people, old people.

About 40 houses in the village were damaged. fighters only in one or two of them. Americans destroyed the infrastructure completely.



*The house of Yunus Awad Al-Hasan, village of Buaytiya, Deir ez-Zor governorate.
Photographs: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy*



Huriya Fayad Al-Fayad, 31, wife of Yunus Awad Al-Hasan, in the house where she was injured and her daughter died. Photographs by volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy.



Abu Salam Muhammad Al-Mahmoud, 55, civil servant, village of Al-Tabni, Deir ez-Zor governorate

On 2 August 2017, there was an air strike. My house took a direct hit from a missile. The strike killed seven people: my brother Abd Al-Razaq, 42, sister Aisha, 57, sister Sabriyah, 55, nephew Muhammad, 13, niece Rana, 13, nephew Tariq, 5, Raed, 7 months old.

Coalition aircraft were the only ones flying at the time.

They bombed all bridges near my house. The house was almost razed to the ground, there is no way of restoring it, it needs to be rebuilt. We buried those who were killed the very same day at midnight. That day, aircraft were flying for a long time, and launched many attacks. We were scared of them, we had to bury the dead

at night in secret. In another district, they destroyed five houses on the same day. They kept bombing our districts, our village.

fighters were never continuously present in our village at all, they would only occasionally pass through it in their pickup trucks.



Maliq Okla Mustafa, 54, wounded in his right buttock in the attack by the US-led coalition on 6 March 2017; his daughter was killed in the same attack, Al-Sabkhah, Raqqa governorate. Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



***Muhammad Mustafa Al-Suleiman,
46, civil servant, village of Buaytiya,
Deir ez-Zor governorate***

In 2017, the Western coalition carried out an aerial attack on Buaytiya. The only ones affected were civilians, the house where my father and brother lived got damaged. My house next door to it was damaged in those air strikes. My brother was in my father's house. It was razed to the ground, because it was close to a mosque. A school in my area was

completely destroyed in the air strikes.

When we heard the sound of aircraft, we ran out of our house straight away. The house was severely damaged, it was razed to the ground. The trees we were planting were damaged too, as well as animals that were in the basement and on the ground floor.

Bombs destroyed mosques, schools, medical facilities, but did not hit a single fighter.



***Najma Al-Ghazi Al-Hassan,
30, housewife, village
of Buaytiya, Deir ez-Zor
governorate.
Jamila Al-Jamul, 6.***

At the time of the air strike, my husband was at my brother's.

I lost my husband, two children, and my husband's brother.



Ibrahim Mustafa Al-Digam, 59, CEO, city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate

My family was killed in 2017 by American coalition forces. Air attacks would happen on a daily basis. In a single air strike, 32 of my relatives were killed in Raqqa.

The building was near the central square, in the city centre, in the east, in Shabat 33 Street. That day, my brothers and sisters died, most casualties were children, young children. My brother Khaled

Muhammad Abd Al-Wahid Khaled died, and my mother too. The house was razed to the ground in the air strike. They killed all women and old people.

Why did the US Attack hit that house? They knew everything, they know where the terrorists are and where there are none. If they wanted to free Raqqa from fighters, why did they not kill fighters?



Adel Ali Aysha, 67, retired, city of Al-Jinah, Aleppo governorate

All my relatives lived in the village of Al-Jinah.

I had a country house there and a house in Aleppo.

In the village, people would be working or shopping for groceries when suddenly hit by an air strike, rockets, shells. People already know what to expect.

It has been repeated time and again. We already know which member of the American coalition is bombing and from where.

On 3 August 2016, one of my relatives, a 10-year-old girl, lost her life in a coalition attack. Her parents sent her to their relatives' house right next to theirs, 100 m away, to fetch some bread.

There was an air strike and she got killed. There were a lot of victims, killed and wounded.

There was not a single fighter in the village. They were far away. They had a command post in the neighbouring village.



Saliha Al-Mahmud, 39, housewife, village of Maizeela, Deir ez-Zor governorate

I was at home with my husband, then he decided to go outside for a walk. Later, during the evening prayer, the US coalition launched an air strike that killed him.

My husband Umair Al-Ibrahim was walking down the road, when he was hit by an air strike. He was seriously injured and died on the spot, right in front of his house. The nearest fighter position was 50 km away. On

the day of the attack, there was nobody nearby, neither fighters nor their positions. There was nobody around, and no one at all in the neighbouring village, only civilians.



Yusuf Ali Al-Ali, 40, driver, city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate

My brother lost his life in the US Air strike. His name was Husein Ali Al-Ali. He was killed in Abaqa around March 2017. He was a driver as well. He was standing next to a house when there was an air strike, he received a blow to the neck and died. The whole area was civilian, there were no fighters.

It was close to the old mosque, in the district of Jaleb Al-Qadim. A lot of people were injured there. My nephew

Ayman Hussein Ali, 21, suffered shrapnel wounds to his arm and leg. He left five children — four boys and one girl. The youngest is about nine.



Chakib Amin Ibn Abdurahman, 43, general labourer, city of Al-Jinah, Aleppo governorate

On 13 August 2016, there were several coalition air strikes on Al-Jinah, a number of air raids.

Fifteen people were killed, most houses were destroyed. Some houses were razed to the ground. Among those killed were my relatives — my nephew and cousin, Muhammad and Mustafa Jamal Amin, 19.

It was only civilians who died, not fighters.



The house of Shaniz Al-Tabi Muhammad Sabah Al-Din, 45, destroyed on 15 October 2017, in a US coalition air strike, city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate. Photograph: Shaniz Al-Tabi Muhammad Sabah Al-Din



***Shaniz Al-Tabi, 45, civil servant,
city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate***

In 2016, our house in Raqqa was hit by an air strike and completely destroyed.

A lot of people died. There were 20 people in the house.

An 11-year-old child was wounded as well. A family of 14 people had gone out of the house and were ready to board a minibus.

They were hit by a missile. They all died.



***Jamal Al-Dan Mustafa Al-Khodj Saleh, 54, civil servant,
city of Raqqa,
Raqqa governorate:***

On 20 January, 2016, our parents' house near Al-Farabi school in Raqqa was destroyed.

My father's sister was killed. She was 54.

Her son, 11, was wounded. He suffered shrapnel wounds to his abdomen. He lost part of his intestine and half of his liver.

Nine people got injured in the house. We could see the attack coming.

First, reconnaissance aircraft were in the sky, and after

they'd left, there was the air strike. The city's residents know that when reconnaissance planes are flying, there will be an air strike.



***Waha Mosleh Al-Hussein
Al-Jwara, 36, civil servant, city of
Raqqa, Raqqa governorate***

My husband was killed in a US air strike on Raqqa in May 2017.

He went out for water, because it had been shut off from all the houses.

He went out into the street to buy water.

That was when there was a coalition air strike, and shrapnel hit him in the head. He was killed.

May God take revenge on the Americans for him.

On 29 July 2017, 10 more people died in an air strike in Tal Abyad Street.

But fighters were far, about 300 m away.



***Waha Mosleh Al-Hussein
Al-Jwara's husband killed in the US-led coalition air strike.***



Hamd Al-Mhedi Ibn Kweli, 76, farmer, city of As-Suwayda, Raqqa governorate

It happened in 2017 in As-Suwayda. At the time, there were a lot of coalition aircraft that would bomb us.

My son was walking home with bread he had bought from the bakery. A coalition aircraft launched a missile attack. A piece of shrapnel tore my son's head off, and he was lying there with the bread and torn-off parts of his body. His name was Khaled

Hamd Al-Mhedi, he was 14.

Those air strikes made us run out of the houses and look for shelter.

We are just civilians, aircraft came and started bombing us, killing people, I don't know why.



Abd Al-Wajal Al-Ali Al-Sultan, 43, farmer, city of Al-Mansurah, Raqqa governorate

All our women go to work in the field in daytime. On 26 May 2015, they got into a car and set out for the field.

One of them was my sister. A plane fired a missile and killed her. There were about 20 people in the car.

Eight women and a young man died, everyone else was severely injured.

One of my sisters was wounded, another one died.

Fatdah Al-Sultan Al-Ali, born in 1992, died. Halima Al-Sultan Al-Ali, born in 1990, was wounded.



Jamal Al-Musa Shhada Ibn Felaj, 60, spare part seller, city of Maadan, Raqqa governorate

On 23 January, 2016, our house was destroyed. In the air strike, a wall fell down on me.

I got up, saw another wall falling on the brother of a boy who had been killed, and started holding it up.

I spent some time standing like this — I understood that it would fall, and I could not move to the right or to the left, forwards or backwards.

Then I started shouting, calling for someone to come.

People came and pulled the others from the rubble, it was only then that I could let the slab go. Everyone who was pulled out was covered in dirt, and bleeding everywhere.

Two people were killed — my son's son and his mother. My son's wife was 26, her name was Nasrin Shaaba Musa Abd Al Ali.

The child who was killed was only a year old, his name was Kamal Muhammad Musa Al-Shhadi.

My wife, five of my children, and my grandchild were injured. One of them — my daughter Raneem — has a spinal fracture.

They put two plates in her back. fighters were more than 400 m away from the house.



Jamal Al-Musa Shhada Ibn Feladj, 60, spare part seller from Maadan is talking about the coalition strike on his house. His grandson and daughter-in-law were killed in the strike, he, his wife, five children, and a grandson were injured. Photographs: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Ali Hammud Al-Fawaz, 53, farmer, city of As-Suwayda, Raqqa governorate.

In 2014, in As-Suwayda, my house was destroyed in a coalition air strike, and my father and two brothers were killed. My brother's name was Mahmud Ali Al-Fawaz Ibn Mahmud, 66. My father died as well — Hammud Ali Fawaz, 71. My brother's son was killed — Muhammad Mahmud Al-Fawaz, 22. He was a university student. At the time, my family was working

in the field, and the three of them were at home. If there had been somebody else in the house, they would have died as well. The house is burnt to the ground.



Muhammad Ahmad Al-Mesto, 44, head of the Educational Workers' Union, city of Manbij, Raqqa governorate

My relatives were affected by the air strikes, their houses are completely destroyed. Some died, some were killed in air strikes, some lost their legs, arms, suffered eye injuries.

A friend of mine, Muhammad Al-Ahmad, lost his leg in a coalition air strike and is now virtually disabled.

Victims and witnesses say that they were under particularly intense air strikes while fleeing from terrorists and fighters and trying to cross the Euphrates river. "...My husband died near the dam, as

well as my son Iskander, who was eight, and my daughter... My two granddaughters died as well.

One of them was one year old”, “people would die in air strikes while they were crossing the river.

We would take our children and run away, and they would keep killing us”. Witnesses note that air strikes targeted civilians: “A lot of people died near the dam.

They had no weapons, they were civilians.

It is worth noting that unlike in the overwhelming majority of cases, coalition leaders admit honestly that they bombed all boats, including those with civilians.

The New York Times article of 2 June 2017¹ indicates: “The coalition has already destroyed the two bridges that lead south from Raqqa, which is on the northern bank of the Euphrates River...

“And we shoot every boat we find,” said Lt. Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, the American commander of the coalition force fighting the fighters.

“If you want to get out of Raqqa right now, you’ve got to build a poncho raft.”

This confession seems particularly cynical given that the coalition and the US forces let more than 4,000 ISIS terrorists and their families leave the city.

Boat hunting and murdering Syrian civilians while they attempting to cross the Euphrates are an obvious violation of one of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law — the “principle of distinction” that calls to “distinguish between civilians and combatants” and according to which “attacks must not be directed against civilians”.

Under international humanitarian law, the shooting of Syrian civilians who were attempting to cross the Euphrates by the US coalition and armed forces is a war crime, and coalition leaders, including Lt. Gen.

Stephen J. Townsend, commander of the coalition force, are war criminals.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/02/world/middleeast/us-backed-forces-close-to-trapping-isis-holdouts-in-raqqa.html>



Surya Al-Isra (60), housewife, the village of Onmahjarah, Aleppo Governorate

When we were crossing the Euphrates river, the coalition was carrying out air strikes. Those ones who made it to the other bank of the river were saved and those ones who did not... We were running fast and couldn't even provide help under the air strikes. After we crossed the river, my husband

died near the dam, so did my son, Iskander, who was 8, and my daughter... My two granddaughters died. One of them was 1 year old. My granddaughters' mother was injured, seriously injured. Later I was told that my husband died in an air strike and we buried him. Even the pit where he was buried is still there.

A lot of people died in the area around the dam. Many of our relatives died. They did not have any weapons, they were civilians. They were like people, ordinary people walking in the street. Those who died were absolutely innocent.



Surya Uda Mahjub (50), housewife, the village of Tawatha, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

I lost my children, Asad Hamid Khalaf and Mouhammed Hamid Khalaf, 25 and 21 years old.

I lost my children in an air strike carried out by the US coalition.

On a Thursday night in late December. Before the air strike occurred, we lived on the other side of the Euphrates river.

That day we sent our children home so that they fetched the furniture and came to the other side of the Euphrates river. We took the furniture, they started getting on a boat and went to their mother's. The air strike was carried out when they were in the Euphrates river. They died. Their cousin was with them there and his body was not found. The cousin's name was Inad Al-Farhan, he was 25.

They were going to Al-Bhara, which is on the other side of the Euphrates river. God will help us, let God be the judge. The mosque and the school near my house were destroyed.



***Ubaid Ali As-Zubaid (29), sheikh of the Tribe of Shammar,
Abu Kamal, Deir ez-Zor Governorate***

When Daesh came to the town, we had to flee. When we were crossing the river, the US aircraft were bombing us. They bombed our boats. For instance, the As-Salamies all died.

*Some missiles did not explode when they hit the ground there.
These missiles are still there.
They bombed civilian buildings.*



***Fadi Abd As-Salam Al Mahanna (12), disabled,
and his father Abd As-Salam As-Salam Half Al Mahanna (48),
general labourer,
the village of Mukhla Sakhira, Raqqa Governorate***

When the air strikes started, we were fleeing, we were crossing the Euphrates river.

The air strikes were carried out day and night, for example, they occurred late at night when we were crossing the Euphrates river, including in the areas on our way.

The craters are still there near the river.

People died in air strikes when crossing the river. We take our children and flee, and these ones continue killing us.

The strikes targeted us in the Euphrates river.

تاريخ ٢٠٢٠/٣٠/٨
مكان محبان
الاسم الكامل عبد السلام خلف المهنا
سنة الميلاد ١٩٧٢

أرجو منكم أن تعتبر مقابتي لمؤسسة غير حكومية لدراسة القضاء الديمقراطي (NGO The Foundation for the Study of Democracy) حول انتهاك حقوقي لإنسان طلبا رسميا إلى سلطات التحقيق وسلطات إنفاذ القانون في أي بلد في العالم وكذلك إلى الأمم المتحدة وغيرها من المؤسسات الدولية. أسمح أيضا لاستخدام صورتي الشخصية ونقلت كلماتي والتسجيلات الصوتية والشرائط الفيديو وذلك من قبل وسائل الإعلام من أجل إجراء المعارض والأحداث العامة

Abd As-Salam As-Salam Half Al Mahanna's — Fadi Abd As-Salam Al Mahanna's father — appeal to the Foundation for the Study of Democracy in which he asks to consider his interview on the violation of his human and civil rights an official appeal to the investigative and law-enforcement agencies of any country in the world, to the UN and other international organisations and gives his consent to the media to use his photos and videos with him, to quote him as well as to organise presentations, exhibitions and any public events.

The facts collected by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy are confirmed by Amnesty International's reports. For instance, the organisation's report "I Won't Forget this Carnage, Civilians Trapped in Battle for Raqqa"¹ of 23 August 2017 states: "Coalition forces have repeatedly struck boats crossing the Euphrates river, south of Raqqa, killing dozens of civilians, even though this has been one of the most used routes for civilians fleeing the city". Most of the civilians displaced from Raqqa and interviewed by Amnesty International, stated to the organisation that the only opportunity to leave the city was to flee to the south through the river using small boats as the bridges had been destroyed in the air strikes carried out by the coalition forces in the beginning of the year. "Lt. General Townsend's statement appears not to take into account the difficulties civilians face in trying to escape the city, as by then it was well known that civilians wanting to flee the city had few options but to cross the river. Strikes on "every boat" crossing the river on the assumption that every boat carries ISIS fighters and weapons, without verifying whether that was indeed the case on each separate occasion, are indiscriminate, and as such unlawful".

Witnesses say how international US-led coalition used various air munitions against civilians, which are prohibited by different international conventions. This involves the use of phosphorus munitions prohibited by the 1977 Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Convention for the Protection of War Victims and cluster munitions prohibited by the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Syrian civilians say that the US-led coalition extensively used both munitions prohibited by the Conventions: "Americans used phosphorus munitions many times.

I witnessed phosphorus bombardments four times with my own eyes.

The third strike took place near the river. Fishermen were burned there", "in 2017, phosphorus munitions bombardments occurred", "inhabitants left their towns and went along the banks of the Euphrates

¹ "I WON'T FORGET THIS CARNAGE", CIVILIANS TRAPPED IN BATTLE FOR RAQQA — SYRIA, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/6945/2017/en/>

river. People suffered from the strikes carried out by the US aircraft which used cluster munitions”.

The received data is confirmed by the conclusions of other international organisations, such as Amnesty International. The statement by the organisation of 16 June 2017¹ confirms the use of white phosphorus munitions by the US-led coalition:

“The US-led coalition’s use of white phosphorus munitions on the outskirts of al-Raqqa, Syria is unlawful and may amount to a war crime, Amnesty International can confirm after verifying five videos of the incident”.

The videos, published on the Internet on 8 and 9 June, show the coalition’s strike using the munitions over the civilian neighbourhoods of Jezra and el-Sebahiya. International humanitarian law prohibits the use of white phosphorus near civilians.

Samah Hadid, Middle East Director of Campaigns at Amnesty International said: “The use of white phosphorus munitions by the US-led coalition gravely endangers the lives of thousands of civilians trapped in and around al-Raqqa city, and may amount to a war crime under these circumstances.

It can cause horrific injuries by burning through flesh and bone”. The use of white phosphorus in densely populated areas poses an unacceptably high risk to civilians and would almost invariably amount to indiscriminate attacks.

Amnesty International verified and cross-checked five videos shown on 8 and 9 June 2017.

The videos clearly show different angles of a white phosphorus airburst and areas being targeted by burning elements of white phosphorus landing upon buildings.

Repeated use of white phosphorous in circumstances where burning elements are likely to come into contact with civilians violates international humanitarian law.

According to local monitoring group “Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently,” as well as other local sources, at least 14 civilians were killed

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/06/syria-expert-analysis-shows-usled-coalition-use-of-white-phosphorus-may-amount-to-war-crime/>

in one of the strikes. Activists from “Raqa is Being Slaughtered Silently” told Amnesty International that, in addition to the local civilian population, many internally displaced people from western Raqa were also seeking refuge in the areas at the time of the attack.

According to Amnesty International’s analysis, the white phosphorus projectiles seen in the footage are most likely US-made 155mm M825A1’s containing white phosphorus.



Mouhammed Ahmed Al Sheikh (45), Raqa

Americans used phosphorus munitions many times. I witnessed phosphorus bombardments four times with my own eyes.

Still there are traces of the munitions. It was used against civilian population.

One strike occurred in the area of the old Atkhai vegetable market.

Another one occurred in the area which is called Quarter on 23 February.

12 people died there. A bakehouse was situated there, people were standing in line to buy bread.

During the bombing, I stood outside, almost 500 metres away, but I went to help people. The strike took place in the evening. There were several strikes.

At first, the strikes targeted people who were standing in line for bread. It was phosphorus munitions, as if it ejected some threads. Then another strike occurred in the same street, the same quarter.

In front of the bakehouse, there is a marketplace which we call “the Old Vegetable Market”. There are cars, people, greengrocers, etc. A lot of people were injured.

There were no fighters as the bakehouse was situated there. All people were civilians. Fighters have their own bakehouses, made special for them.

The second strike occurred in the area of Al-Jamily. My cousin died there. He was hit by a phosphorus bomb.

His name was Valid Al-Sheikh. He was 30. My cousin stood near one of the diners where takeaway food is sold.

The strike hit a spot close to where he was standing. A car burned down. 80 people died in the Al-Jamily quarter.

All those people were civilians. The third strike took place near the river. Fishermen were burned there.

The fourth one occurred near the railway station, but I do not know how many people died there.



Hussein Al-Ali Boutel (42), the village of Ad Daraya, Raqqa Governorate

In 2017, there were strikes with the use of phosphorus munitions.

They were clearing the area for the Kurds.

Almost 98% of Raqqa is ruined, including the house of my wife’s parents in Al-Mlekha.



Shamsa Jasem, Head for the Environment Department in Raqqa

I am the Head for the Environment Department in Raqqa.

More than 80% of Raqqa is ruined. Americans used phosphorus munitions.

They destroyed absolutely everything. Still there are bodies under the buildings. All those families who lived in these houses, died. Even children.

Testimonies of murders of the Syrian civilians as a result of the coalition's strikes, collected by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy are fully confirmed by the data provided by other non-governmental organisations, such as Amnesty International and Airwars. For instance, Amnesty International's research "WAR IN RAQQA: RHETORIC VERSUS REALITY"¹ gives a detailed description of the repercussions of 288 attacks — air strikes and other shootings carried out by the US-led coalition. According to these data, even in these cases it is impossible to determine the exact number of those killed. Estimates are often given as follows: "from 14 to 50 people were killed" or "5-7 people were killed". However, if one uses minimal figures given, the total number of those killed in the attacks will amount to 1269 people, meaning that the average minimum number of fatalities in each attack amounts to 4,41. According to Amnesty International's data, the US-led coalition destroyed approximately 30 000 buildings and heavily ruined 25 000 buildings, and behind every destroyed or ruined building there is at least one attack. Given that the average number of the fatalities in the attack amounted to 4,41 people, the minimal average estimate of those

¹ <https://raqqa.amnesty.org>

killed by the US-led coalition and predominantly the US Armed Forces in Raqqa alone is more than 132 thousand people.

It is noteworthy mentioning that the US-led coalition carried out strikes on the Syrian civilians and Syrian civil infrastructure sites not only in Raqqa but also in absolutely different regions of the country.

Below you will find only a small part of a long list of war crimes committed by the US-led coalition and, mainly, the US Armed Forces. Although the highest number of casualties is related to 2016 and 2017, killings of civilians continued in subsequent years. Below you will find only some of the examples of the crimes committed.

The aviation of the US-led coalition struck Abu Kamal in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. According to the local sources and publications in the media, three children and a woman were killed in the bombardments. Significant damage has been caused to the residential sector.

According to international humanitarian law, “attacks may only be directed against combatants” and “must not be directed against civilians”.

Attacks on and killings of civilians are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

19.07.2016

The aviation of the US-led coalition raided At-Tukhar situated 14 km north of Manbij. Dozens of civilians were killed, most of them were women and children, a lot of people were injured.

According to international humanitarian law, “attacks may only be directed against combatants” and “must not be directed against civilians”.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

08.09.2016

In Deir ez-Zor Governorate, the US-led coalition destroyed two bridges over the Euphrates river — Al-Ashara bridge over the Euphrates river and Al-Mayadeen bridge near the city of the same name. Earlier it destroyed Ar-Radvaniya power station and Al-Hafsa hydroelectric power plant in Aleppo Governorate.

Attacks on these sites violate the most important principle of international humanitarian law, the “proportionality principle”, which prohibits disproportionate attacks “which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated”.

According to international humanitarian law, these attacks are war crimes committed by the US-led coalition and, mainly, the U.S. Armed Forces.

30.09.2016

The US-led coalition bombed Ash-Shikhan bridge located in the village of Al-Salihyah not far from the city of Abu Kamal and At-Tarif bridge located between the cities of Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa. This attack took place three days after the aviation of the coalition had destroyed another two bridges on the Euphrates river — Al-Ashara and Al-Mayadeen — which resulted in the division of Deir ez-Zor Governorate into two parts. According to international law, these attacks are war crimes and part of the systemic and targeted activities of the coalition to destroy Syrian civil infrastructure.

05.10.2016

Selsan situated in the north of Aleppo Governorate in Al-Bab region located 50 km north of Aleppo, suffered a massive attack by the US coalition air forces.

The bombardments resulted in 20 deaths, including 3 children, more than 40 people suffered, many of them are severely injured which may lead to an increase in the number of victims.

Dozens of residential houses which used to be populated by the civilians who fled from different regions in the north of the Governorate from ISIS atrocities, were destroyed or severely damaged. According to international law, these mass killings of civilians are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

07.10.2016

The longest bridge over the Euphrates river in northern Syria, Al-Siyasiya, connecting it with Al-Jazira region, was attacked by the US-

led coalition. Thus, the aviation of the coalition destroyed already eight bridges in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. Ash-Sheikhan bridge located near the village of As-Salihin in Abu Kamal region, At-Tarif bridge located between Deir ez-Zor Governorate and Raqqa Governorate, Al-Ashara bridge and Al-Mayadeen bridge connecting parts of the Governorate, suffered the most. Earlier, the coalition bombed a power station in Ar-Radvaniya region and hydroelectric power plant in Al Hafsa region in Aleppo Governorate.

According to international law, these attacks are war crimes and part of the systemic and targeted activities of the coalition to destroy Syrian civil infrastructure.

19.10.2016

In Deir ez-Zor Governorate, the US-led coalition destroyed two bridges, one across the Khabur river in the village of As-Sur and another one across the Euphrates river in the village of Al-Bsera.

Over the last few weeks, the coalition has destroyed eight bridges across the Euphrates and the Khabur rivers. These are Al-Mayadeen bridge, Al-Ashara bridge, As-Salihin bridge not far from the city of Abu Kamal, Al-Sbaira bridge, At-Tarif bridge, An-Navan bridge, Al-Siyasiya bridge and As-Suvar bridge.

According to international law, these attacks are war crimes and part of the systemic and targeted activities of the coalition to destroy Syrian civil infrastructure.

09.11.2016

In the north of Raqqa Governorate in the village of Al-Hisha, bombing carried out by the US coalition resulted in 16 deaths of civilians. Local sources and information agencies reported that the fatalities might increase as many injured were in critical condition. According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

21.11.2016

In the north of Raqqa Governorate, the aviation of the coalition killed more than 10 civilians from Al Salhiya. Local and information sources reported that the aviation of the coalition had attacked a

cotton factory, which resulted in deaths of three workers, a resident of the village and a family of six people, including children. Besides, a lot of people were injured. According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

09.12.2016

In the north of Raqqa Governorate, in Al Musherfa region, 20 people became victims of air strikes launched by the coalition. There are also injured people, the Syrian citizens' houses are damaged. According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

24.12.2016

The aviation of the US-led coalition attacked Jaabar region in the west of Raqqa Governorate in the north bank of the Euphrates river, as a result, six people died, including a woman and two members of the same family.

Earlier, the coalition launched an air strike on Tabqah in the west of Raqqa Governorate, which led to the deaths of three civilians. On 8 December, an air strike carried out by the coalition targeted Al Musherfa region in the north of Raqqa Governorate resulted in 20 deaths.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

07.01.2017

The US-led coalition attacked the village of Ghadban and the village of As-Suvaidiya Khabira in Raqqa Governorate. It resulted into deaths of 11 Syrian civilians.

Local and information sources reported that over the last 24 hours aircraft of the US-led coalition had launched raids in the north and north-west of Raqqa Governorate.

The bombings in the village of Ghadban resulted in two deaths, while the ones in Suvaidiya Khabira resulted in deaths of nine civilians with five children among them.

According to sources, the fatalities may increase as a lot of people were severely injured. Significant material damage has been caused.

As a result of the air strikes launched by the coalition on 21 December last year, three residents of At-Tabqah died, while on 8 December, 20 Syrian civilians in Al Musherfa region in Raqqa Governorate became victims of bombardments.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

18.01.2017

Aircraft of the US-led coalition destroyed a bridge in Al-Yamamah region in the west of the Governorate. The bridge is fully destroyed.

According to international law, this attack amounts to a war crime and is part of the systemic and targeted activities of the coalition to destroy Syrian civil infrastructure.

03.02.2017

This morning, when launching air strikes on Raqqa, the US-led coalition has fully destroyed two bridges across the Euphrates river. The aviation of the US coalition also bombed major water facilities supplying Raqqa with drinking water, which resulted in the complete cessation of water supply to the city. Besides, in the north of the Governorate, the coalition destroyed bridges across the Euphrates river in the village of Al-Ghalta and the village of Al-Abara.

According to international law, this attack amounts to a war crime and is part of the systemic and targeted activities of the coalition to destroy Syrian civil infrastructure.

18.02.2017

Over the last 24 hours, the aviation of the US-led coalition has launched air strikes in the east of Raqqa Governorate, which resulted in the destruction of Al-Magell bridge to the west of the village of Maadan located 60 km to the east of Raqqa. This bridge was the last one connecting the banks of the Euphrates river, now being destroyed, it fully isolates Al-Jazira region. Over the last 48 hours, as a result of the bombing carried out by the coalition, 11 Syrian civilians, including

women and children, were killed in At-Tabqah and the village of Mazraa-Tishreen in Raqqa Governorate.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes of the coalition states.

13.03.2017

According to the sources, in Al-Kassarat area in the south of Raqqa Governorate, the aviation of the US-led coalition attacked Kasret Ash-Sheikh Jumaa, Kasret Al-Faraj and the Center for Agricultural Studies, which resulted in 19 deaths of the civilians. The sources also added that the fatalities might increase as many victims were seriously injured.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

22.03.2017

Aircraft of the coalition attacked Al-Badiya Ad-Dakhiliya School in the south of Al-Mansoura, as a result, dozens of civilians were killed and injured, most of them women and children. The school building was completely destroyed.

It is noteworthy mentioning that 50 families displaced from Aleppo, Raqqa and Tadmur, were temporarily living in the school. According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

08.04.2017

The aviation of the coalition bombed Khneyda located 35 km west of Raqqa. Air strikes resulted in deaths of at least 15 local residents, including three children and a woman. There were a lot of victims with wounds of varying severity. Residential buildings were destroyed.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

17.04.2017

In As-Sukkariya located in Deir ez-Zor Governorate, as a result of bombing carried out by the US-led coalition, at least eight civilians who were members of the same family were killed, and many civilians got injuries of varying severity.

Significant damage was caused to the residential sector and citizens' property. According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

18.04.2017

The aviation of the US-led coalition conducted another mass killing of the civilian population of Al-Bukamal in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. The aviation of the coalition launched several raids on Al-Bukamal, Kassarat suburb and Al-Lyabed quarter in Mukhasan. As a result, at least 16 civilians died, about 40 people were injured.

The day before, the aviation of the coalition struck 12 missiles at the building of the Agricultural Faculty of the University and several residential houses in the village of Al-Huseiniya to the west of Deir ez-Zor. Seven people died, including two women, another 12 local residents suffered in varying degrees.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

15.05.2017

In Al-Akershe located in Raqqa Governorate, the US-led coalition conducted another mass killing which resulted in deaths of 22 civilians. The coalition aircraft struck a car with workers on board returning home, killing eight people, including five women. The aviation of the coalition also launched a raid on Al-Akershe, which resulted in 14 deaths, 12 injuries and significant material damage. It is noteworthy mentioning that fatalities may be higher as most of the injured are in critical condition.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

26.05.2017

To the south-east of Deir ez-Zor, the US Air Forces launched strikes on the city of Mayadeen, killing 25 civilians, including women and children, dozens of people were injured. The aviation struck a crowded market and a four-storey residential building, completely destroying it. On 16 May, in the city of Al-Bukamal in Deir ez-Zor Governorate,

during a raid launched by the coalition 31 people were killed, most of them children.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

28.05.2017

The aviation of the US-led coalition conducted another mass killing of civilians with 20 people becoming victims. On the road between the village of Ratla and the village of Al-Kasrah, 8 km from Raqqa, the coalition air forces struck a vehicle, killing 20 civilians, injuring another 27 people, leaving two of them in critical condition.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

03.06.2017

The aviation of the US coalition launched strikes on Al-Jamile six-storey building in Raqqa, killing 43 civilians, mostly women and children, and injuring dozens of other people. The strike also resulted in the destruction of the building.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

06.06.2017

In Raqqa, 12 civilians, including women and children, died in the bombardments carried out by the US aircraft. The aviation struck a dock on the Euphrates river, full of people who were trying to flee from the city by boats.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

09.06.2017

Over the last 24 hours, the US-led coalition has launched 25 air strikes on the residential quarters of Raqqa, using phosphorus bombs prohibited by international law. Activists reported about it on social media. Western outskirts of the city, Al-Mushleb, As-Sinaa and As-Sbagi quarters were raided by the aircraft.

17 people became victims of the air attacks, 12 of them were at the Internet café in Ad-Jezara region located near the Euphrates river.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes.

The use of phosphorus bombs is also prohibited by the 1977 Additional protocols to 1949 Geneva Convention for the Protection of War Victims which prohibit the use of white phosphorus munitions if civilians are thereof at risk.

16.06.2017

The aviation of the coalition launched a raid on civilians' houses in Raqqa, during which Ismail Mohammad Al-Khleif, a badminton coach, and his family members, died.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

20.06.2017

The day before, the aviation of the coalition committed a new crime against the Syrian civilians. As a result of the air strikes launched in Tel Ash-Shaer region in Hasakah Governorate in the south-west of the country near the Syrian-Iraqi border, 12 people were killed. All those who lost their lives were members of the same family.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

28.06.2017

The military aviation of the coalition launched intensive air strikes on Ad-Dablyan located in the east of Deir ez-Zor Governorate, killing more than 40 civilians, mostly women and children.

The aircraft of the US-led coalition launched air strikes on the residential houses in Ad-Dablyan located not far from Al-Ashara in Mayadeen region, which resulted not only in fatalities but also in dozens of injured. Besides, residential houses and the citizens' property suffered severe damage.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

04.07.2017

The aviation of the coalition struck Kash-Kash Az-Ziyanat located 15 km south of the city of Ash-Shaddadi in Hasakah Governorate, killing at least nine Syrian civilians.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

12.07.2017

The aviation of the US-led coalition launched another attack on the village of Kash-Kash Jubur in the south of Hasakah Governorate, which resulted in six deaths.

The air strikes also targeted the village located to the south of the city of Ash-Shaddadi, killing six people, including two women.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

18.07.2017

In the village of Al-Kishkiyah in the east of Deir ez-Zor Governorate, several civilians were killed as a result of the bombing carried out by the US coalition. Civilians' houses in Al-Kishkiyah on the left bank of the Euphrates river in Abu Kamal region were struck, as a result several people died, and a number of civilians were injured. Significant material damage was caused.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

24.07.2017

The aviation of the US-led coalition once again raided residential quarters of the city of Mayadeen in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. As a result, dozens of people were killed and injured, significant material damage was caused.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

27.07.2017

The aviation of the US-led coalition conducted another mass killing of civilians in Deir ez-Zor Governorate launching a strike on the village

of At-Taybah in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. As a result, eight people were killed and more than 20 were wounded.

Besides, infrastructure and private property were severely damaged. The air strike also killed local residents in the village of At-Tayanah located near the city of Mayadeen, at water supply station near the village of Maarat in the north and in Ash-Shmaitiyah in the west of the Governorate.

According to international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, attacks on civil sites are war crimes committed by the coalition states.

29.07.2017

The US-led coalition bombed infrastructure and residential buildings in the village of At-Tiba near Mayadin. Seven members of the Al-Ateish family were killed, five of them were children.

Substantial material damage was caused. Coalition bombardments killed three people and injured dozens of others in the city of Mayadin.

A residential building attacked by aircraft was destroyed to the ground, the nearest buildings and infrastructure were damaged.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

30.07.2017

The US-led coalition air force carried out another mass killing of civilians in Deir ez-Zor governorate. They targeted Aisha Hospital and Ash Shuhada Square in the city of Abu Kamal.

This resulted in the death of six people, including innocent women and children, as well in injuries and significant material damage.

This is the fourth mass killing by the US air force and its allies this month.

Earlier, the coalition bombed the villages of Al-Tayba, At-Tayana, Al-Shmeiteih and Al-Kishkiah. International humanitarian law (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Customary IHL Study, Rule 35) contains a separate part entitled “Rule 35. Hospital and Safety Zones and Neutralized Zones”.

According to the rule, “directing an attack against a zone established to shelter the wounded, the sick and civilians from the effects of hostilities is prohibited” and constitutes war crimes.

01.08.2017

The US-led coalition air force committed another crime against civilians living in the areas of Al Kashmah, Al-Shwed, Al-Dweir and Al-Asharah in eastern Deir ez-Zor governorate. 60 people were killed as a result of air raids.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

04.08.2017

The US-led coalition committed another mass killing of Syrian civilians. In the city of Raqqa, a woman and seven children fell victim to an air raid, several people were injured.

On the night of 3 to 4 August, coalition air force attacked a number of residential neighbourhoods, killing a woman and seven children from the same family, several other people sustained varying degrees of injuries.

The houses of civilians were also damaged. In the past two days, the coalition has attacked Raqqa 44 times — homes in the Jameah Al-Imam An-Nuri, Al-Sakanah and Harat al-Badu neighbourhoods. There were also fatalities and injuries.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

05.08.2017

The US-led coalition carried out massive killing of Syrian civilians, taking the lives of at least 43 people in the city of Raqqa. Today, at least 43 people were killed and several more civilians were injured as a result of air strikes. Considerable material damage was done.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

Dina al-Asa'ad, Deputy Director of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Branch in Raqqa, a Raqqa resident, said that on 3 August, coalition air force bombed the city's National Hospital with white phosphorus munitions. According to Al-Asa'ad, more than 20 shells fell on the medical facility, which led to its destruction; in addition, a large number of cars were destroyed. She stressed that more than 100 thousand citizens were helped in this hospital. The Daesh terrorist organization

had its own medical stations and hospitals, and there were no terrorists in the hospital.

The representative of the humanitarian organization also confirmed that what was happening in Rakka was a systematic destruction, noting that all schools, mosques, bakeries, public institutions and even water wells that provided the city with drinking water were completely destroyed.

She concluded by calling on international organizations and the UN to intervene in order to put an end to the crimes of the US-led coalition whose actions were aimed at destroying infrastructure in the city of Raqqa.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on hospitals and other civilian objects constitute war crimes.

09.08.2017

Over the past 24 hours, the US-led coalition committed a new massive killing of civilians in Raqqa, destroying residential areas of the city. As a result, dozens of innocent civilians were killed and injured, and not Daesh terrorists.

Substantial damage was caused to residential buildings and private property. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

10.08.2017

As a result of another US-led coalition aggression, 19 people were killed and many sustained injuries in Al-Mayadin town and At-Tibni village in Deir ez-Zor governorate. Coalition air force struck residential neighbourhoods in Al-Mayadin and the northern outskirts of Al-Tibni, killing 19 citizens, injuring others and causing extensive damage to infrastructure.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

17.08.2017

The U.S.-led coalition military aviation committed yet another crime, shelling residential areas of the city of Raqqa. 17 civilians, including women and children, fell victim to the last air raid, dozens of

them were injured, and residential houses and infrastructure facilities were damaged. Earlier, on 8 August, the coalition bombarded a number of residential neighbourhoods in Raqqa, killing dozens of civilians. Two days later, it committed another massive killing in Deir ez-Zor governorate, in Mayadin and Al-Tibni, taking the lives of 19 people.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

22.08.2017

The US-led coalition committed a new crime by bombarding Raqqa with 78 civilians killed. Today, the Al-Sakani, Al-Badu and At-Tusiya neighbourhoods in the city of Raqqa were struck.

At least eight people from the city's civilian population were killed. In addition, a large number of houses and infrastructure facilities were destroyed.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

24.08.2017

A U.S.-led coalition aircraft attacked residential neighbourhoods in the city of Mayadin in eastern Deir ez-Zor governorate. The victims of another air raid were seven civilians, most of them were women and children from the same family. The death toll may increase due to the fact that not all of the victims were removed from the ruins. It is worth recalling that on 17 August, six civilians, including three children, were killed by coalition air strikes against several human settlements in Deir ez-Zor governorate.

In addition, the other day air raids on residential areas of Raqqa city took the lives of eight people. This happened about two days after another aggression, when 20 civilians, mostly children and women, were killed by coalition bombs in the village of Jazaa near Al-Shaddadah city in Al-Hasakah governorate. Washington-led coalition acknowledged that in June this year, they used munitions containing white phosphorus to bomb the city of Raqqa.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

26.08.2017

Coalition strikes killed three residents of the village of Al-Fadghami northeast of Al-Shaddadah in the south of the governorate, and caused injuries to several others. The day before at the crack of light, the US-led coalition deliberately bombarded a bridge near the town of Al-Azhar, which led to its partial destruction.

It should be recalled that in August 2014, the illegitimate coalition destroyed most of the Euphrates River bridges, dozens of road junctions, infrastructure facilities, water pumping stations and power substations in eastern Syria.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

04.09.2017

Air force of the so-called US-led coalition committed another crime in the city of Raqqa: in the last 24 hours, at least 14 civilians were killed under its attacks.

Local news sources reported that US coalition air force raided the Duvar An-Naim residential area in Raqqa. The bombardment killed at least 14 citizens and caused enormous material damage.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

08.09.2017

Coalition air forces committed another crime: an air raid on a school in Raqqa killed at least 11 civilians, including three children. The school was located in the An-Nahda neighbourhood in western Raqqa, where several families were sheltering from Daesh and coalition bombardments. The air raid killed 11 people, including a family with three children, many sustained injuries.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

13.09.2017

The US-led coalition military air force killed 22 Syrian civilians. The coalition attacked residential neighbourhoods in the city of Raqqa and northern Deir ez-Zor governorate.

A residential building in the Harat Al-Badu neighbourhood in Raqqa was bombarded, as a result 11 people were killed, most of them women and children.

In northern Deir ez-Zor governorate in the village of Al-Shahabat, a coalition air strike killed 11 members of one family and severely damaged homes and infrastructure.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

26.09.2017

US-led coalition aircraft killed nine civilians in Al-Hasakah governorate. A warplane struck residential neighbourhoods in Markada town, about 100 km south of the city of Hasakah.

The air raid killed three Syrian citizens, two of them were women, and an Iraqi family of six who had Mosul, Iraq, to escape from terrorists and coalition bombardment.

Sources reported that there had also been air strikes against the villages of Hadaj, Hneidis and Hassan Al-Ali in the eastern Hasakah governorate near the border with Iraq. Significant material damage was caused.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

27.09.2017

The US-led coalition resumed bombardments of settlements in Deir ez-Zor governorate with internationally banned phosphorus munitions. Air strikes killed the civilian population and caused damage. White phosphorus was used in the village of Al-Sur in the north-east of the governorate.

Three people were killed, five civilians sustained injuries, and material damage was caused. It should be recalled that in June this year, the US-led coalition acknowledged the use of banned phosphorus munitions in the bombing of Raqqa city, where 17 people died.

The use of phosphorus bombs is also banned by the 1977 Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Convention for the Protection of War Victims, which prohibit the use of white phosphorus munitions if it endangers civilians.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

01.10.2017

The US-led coalition air force struck the village of Bukros Al-Fokani and the town of Abu Kamal in Deir ez-Zor governorate, killing 12 civilians, most of them women and children.

According to local sources, five people fell victim to an American air raid in the town of Abu Kamal, seven in Bukros Al-Fokani, and at least ten persons sustained injuries.

Significant material damage was caused. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

03.10.2017

The US-led coalition air force attacked two buildings in Raqqa's Tawasu'iyah neighborhood, killing more than 45 civilians and injuring dozens at various severity levels. Significant material damage was also caused.

Thus, the US-led coalition continues to commit its crimes by indiscriminately attacking civilians and the country's infrastructure. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes. Launching an indiscriminate attack that will cause excessive loss of life or injury to civilians also constitutes a war crime¹.

14.12.2017

Coalition air force killed 23 residents of the village of Al-Jurzi Sharqi in eastern Deir ez-Zor governorate.

The coalition struck the village of Al-Jurzi Sharqi several times, killing 23 people, mostly women and children, and destroying their homes.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

¹ Article 20(b)(ii) of the 1996 ILC Draft Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind

Chapter II

WOMEN AND CHILDREN — VICTIMS OF THE US-LED INTERNATIONAL COALITION

The documents of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic¹ relating to the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council (24 February — 20 March) state that “international coalition forces carried out an air strike on the night of 20 to 21 March 2017 against Al-Badiya school in Mansurah (Raqqah Governorate)...

During the attack, coalition forces failed to take all feasible precautions to avoid or minimize incidental loss of civilian life in violation of international humanitarian law.

The attack caused the death of 150 displaced persons housed in the school, leaving few survivors.

This included 21 children, all but one of whom was under the age of 11, as well as eight women, one of whom was in the final stages of pregnancy”.

The reports of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic relating to the 42nd session of the UN Human Rights Council (9-27 September) note that “the Commission received several accounts of night raids carried out by SDF with the

¹ https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/A_HRC_43_CRP.6_EN.docx. C. 9

aerial support of helicopter gunships provided by international coalition forces, which killed and injured civilians.

For example, on 4 January 2019 at approximately 1.00 a.m., a night raid in SDF-controlled Kashmah village killed up to eight civilians including five men, two women and one boy, and further injured one man and one girl...”.¹

A large, but far from exhaustive and not always an accurate amount of information can be found in the materials of some independent public organizations.

One such organization is Airwars², a non-profit organization based in the UK that tracks military operations, including air strikes in Syria and Iraq.

Together with Amnesty International, the organization carried out a detailed analysis of satellite images of Raqqa, identifying buildings destroyed by coalition and collected a considerable amount of data related to US-led coalition’s strikes.

For example, according to one of the tens of thousands of reported attacks, on 15 November 2018, the US-led international coalition attacked the village of Al Boubadran near the town of Al Soussa in Deir ez-Zor governorate: “...an alleged Coalition air strike targeted a residential area and reportedly killed between eight and 23 civilians, in what local sources described as “a massacre”.

Step News added that 17 belonged to the same family of Al Hamid al-Saleh Al Abdullah, of whom many were women and children.

The dead include: Mahmoud Saleh Al-Abdullah, Kaddifa Ali Al Khalaf, Samira Dideb al-Jassim, Hamid Saleh Al-Abdullah, Warfa Aef al-Azzawi, Khalifa Al Hussein, Hamdan Saleh Al-Abdullah and many others.

Witnesses interviewed by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy details numerous cases of US-led coalition air strikes in which women and children — their immediate relatives — were killed: “I lost two children, one was seven and the other was three”, “I lost three children and my wife, my nephew lost an arm, my brother’s wife lost a leg”, and “five people were killed in an air strike. One daughter

¹ https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2016403/a_hrc_42_51_E.pdf. C. 8

² <https://airwars.org/>



*Child victims of a coalition air strike in Al Soussa
15 November 2018*

was eight months old — her name was Ayad, the second, Gufran — two years old, Samer — nine years old,” “the mother died, my daughter’s leg was hit by a shrapnel,” “my daughter, Amal Abd al-Rahman Al-Gabush, died. She was six,” and so forth.

The affected women and children share what kind of injuries they or their immediate family members sustained as a result of strikes by the US-led international coalition: “I lost my left leg”, “my daughter got hit in the spine by shrapnel”, “I was wounded in the back”, “I almost died, I lost a lot of blood, and my leg,” “I heard my son screaming,” “my son was injured by shrapnel, and his eye was completely gone”, “my daughter got hit by shrapnel in the head and six other people, children, were injured”, “my daughter was wounded and burnt,” “two or three missiles burst right into our house”. The whole family got injured”, “my daughter was struck by shrapnel in her spine”, “I got wounded in the back, and got a spinal cord injury”, “my two sons were wounded and my husband was killed by this air strike,”

“I lost a leg and my neighbour lost her eye,” “my son, Masaab, 12, ... a shrapnel took his arm off”, “a strike shattered my daughter’s hip bone, she is 13”, “I woke up in the hospital and saw that I had no hand”, “my son was wounded by a US air strike. After the strike, he was in a coma for ten days. Now he can’t move the right side of his body”, etc.

Many women and children lost their arms and legs as a result of coalition strikes, some of them went blind, received burns, shrapnel wounds to the head, and so on. The victims testify that at the time of these strikes they were both in their own homes or those of their relatives, as well as in crowded places — markets, stores, mosques, pharmacies and roads.

In some cases, victims and eyewitnesses emphasize that they were clearly visible from the air, but coalition air force continued to strike at them. Eyewitnesses of coalition attacks say that in the overwhelming number of cases, there were no fighters or terrorists in the settlements the coalition attacked: “There were no fighters at all. We lived in a clean neighbourhood.

There have never been any fighters in our village. In any case, we do not understand who they are bombing. There were no fighters in our village, air strikes were carried out in our village”, “There were no fighters at all. They did not live in the village”, “at that time, only coalition air force was flying over this place.

The fighters were somewhere about a kilometre away from my house”, “there was no one around, no command posts, no post-sites, no movement of the fighters, “there have never been any fighters near our house”, “this missile was clearly dropped on civilians to kill and destroy peaceful people.

Our neighbourhood was absolutely peaceful, there were no fighters there at all,” “there were no fighters near us”, “the fighters were about one kilometre away from our house, “I swear to God there were no fighters in the village”, “only civilians lived in the neighbourhood.

The nearest ISIL position was far away”, US coalition bombed for no reason, attacking randomly”, “my parents and I went to the pharmacy. A missile fell down, I lost my leg. There were no Daesh near the pharmacy”. In some cases, witnesses say that the fighters



*Ahmed Mohammad Oklah, 13, Abd Al-Rahman Muhammad Oklah, 15,
Hatla village, Deir ez-Zor governorate*

were far away from the strike site: “The fighters were somewhere within a kilometre away from my house”. Sometimes they say that the fighters left the settlement a month or days before a strike: “The fighters left this village a day or two before air strikes”.

This evidence makes it clear that the coalition, and primarily US military forces, have systematically and deliberately violated one of the basic principles of international humanitarian law — the “principle of distinction”, which states that “hostilities must be directed exclusively against combatants” and “must therefore not be directed against civilians”.

Another principle of international humanitarian law — the “principle of proportionality” — which prohibits disproportionate attacks that “may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated” has also been violated. Obviously, the attacks on hospitals, markets, stores and mosques could not but result in the mass death of civilians.

Under international humanitarian law, such attacks, attacks and actions of the coalition, mainly the US military, are clearly considered war crimes.

Witnesses noted that, unlike the coalition’s consistent pattern of targeting civilians, ISIS and insurgent sites had rarely come under fire: “They very rarely bombarded fighters, but they always hit civilians” and “the air force hit all the places. None of the fighters were killed”, “there were no fighters at all. They did not live in the village, they just passed through this village. I don’t know why we were bombed”, “the Americans started bombing civilians from the very beginning, they knew fighters’ locations, but they bombed civilians and killed civilians”.

The killing of women and children by the US-led international coalition sparked strong reactions from Syrian citizens: “If I met the pilot, I would have stabbed him on the spot. Many civilians died from coalition strikes”, “Azam, eight years old, lost his eye after being wounded, his leg was injured and he lost his genitals. If I saw this American pilot, I would kill him on the spot, because these are my children”.



Ahmed Mohammad Oklah, 13, Hatla village, Deir ez-Zor governorate

We were walking when American planes struck.

The planes flew away.

I almost died, I lost a lot of blood, lost my leg. I was wounded in my legs by shrapnel.



Abd Al-Rahman Muhammad Oklah, 15, Hatla village, Deir ez-Zor governorate

We got injured at a market in Hatla. We were walking with my brother, we were going back home through the market.

The two of us were treated for two years. Coalition has been striking all the time. I was with a neighbour and Abdurakhman was up ahead, and the neighbour was also wounded in the arms and legs.



*Son of Aida Al-Darwish Suleiman, suffered multiple shrapnel wounds and disabilities as a result of an American coalition strike in June 2017, Maadan, Raqqa governorate
Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy*

Mariam Haliqa Al-Ahmad, 48, housewife, Boqrus Foughani village, Deir ez-Zor governorate: On 20 October 2017, we ran to the Euphrates from the US air force. We were about 40 people. There, near the Euphrates, we were struck by air force. They saw us from the air. We were all scattered by two meters. I heard my son screaming when he got wounded.

I swear to God, there were no fighters in the village. There were only women and children — 40 people, the oldest among children was Aysar. The child was 14. American air force targeted civilians, they are lying when they say they want to eliminate terrorists. They kill civilians.

Aysar Ayman Al-Omar, 14, Boqrus Foughani village, Deir ez-Zor governorate: I heard the sound of air force. I lost consciousness right after.



Aysar Ayman Al-Omar, 14, and Mariam Haliqa Al-Ahmad, 48, housewife, Boqrus Foughani village, Deir ez-Zor governorate

Fatima Ayed Hala Al-Hammad, 10

My parents and I went to the pharmacy on a motorcycle. A missile fell down and I lost my leg. I lost consciousness. We were taken away together with my parents. I lost my leg. A pharmacist was also killed. There were no Daesh near the pharmacy. All people were civilians.



Fatima Ayed Hala Al-Hammad, 10, lost her leg as a result of a strike by the international coalition



Ouday Ayed Hala Al-Hammad (18 years)

My parents and I went to the pharmacy. And when we were in the pharmacy, there was an air strike on the pharmacy.

A total of 5 people were killed.

My parents, father and mother, they lost the upper body parts as a result of the strike.



Abd As-Salam Khalf al-Mahannah, 48, general laborer, Mukhla Sakhirh village, Raqqa governorate

They hit us from the air. Everybody started running, we also ran, but as soon as we came to our house, another shell or missile fell. Shrapnel struck my son. He was the youngest and had no time to catch up with everyone else. He fell a little behind and got injured.

All the people know those were American coalition aircraft. When those aircraft would approach around noon time, we knew they were going to bomb houses and civilians, so we would run away.

There are no fighters in our village and never have been. In any case, we do not understand who they are bombing. There were no fighters in our village, but air strikes were carried out in our village.



Fadi Abd-al Salam Al-Mahannah, 12, went blind as a result of a strike by the US-led international coalition

We were running, I was running too, then a missile exploded and something got into my eyes, I stopped seeing”.



Omar Saleh Geddar, 14, went deaf and blind in a US-led coalition air strike, his father, Saleh Mahmoud Geddar, 41, general labourer, Al-Sabkhah, Raqqa Governorate, Ruveida Amr Marai, 31, housewife.

Saleh Mahmoud Geddar, 41, general labourer, Al-Sabkhah, Raqqa Governorate:

In 2017 air strikes began. There were bombings on the first and on the second day.

Omar went to play outside and lost his arm after bombings. They started bombing our neighbours' house, it was near our house where he was playing. Our son was injured by shrapnel of that house. When we evacuated him one of his eyes was already missing, his other eye was in shrapnel.

When we came to hospital, the doctors had no choice but to remove the second eye because of many shrapnel inside it.

When we evacuated him, his arm was mostly gone, it was amputated in the hospital. The doctors tried to restore his hearing.

They started to examine his hearing but found out that his ears had been permanently damaged by the loud blast.

His hearing can't be restored.

The fighters had left the village a day or two before air strikes.



*Omar Saleh Geddar, 14, who lost his arm and went blind in a coalition air strike.
Photographs: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy.*

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تاريخ

مكان

الاسم الكامل

سنة الميلاد


عبدان

عبدان

سالم محمد الجداد

١٩٢٩

أرجو منكم أن تعتبر مقابلي لمؤسسة غير حكومية لدراسة القضاء الديمقراطية (NGO The Foundation for the Study of Democracy) حول انتهاك حقوقي لإنسان طلبا رسميا إلى سلطات التحقيق وسلطات إنفاذ القانون في أي بلد في العالم وكذلك إلى الأمم المتحدة وغيرها من المؤسسات الدولية. أسمح أيضا لاستخدام صوري الشخصية ونقلت كلماتي والتسجيلات الصوتية والشرائط الفيديو وذلك من قبل وسائل الإعلام من أجل إجراء المعارض والأحداث العامة



Appeal of Saleh Mahmoud Geddar, father of the blind child, Omar Saleh Geddar, to the Foundation for the Study of Democracy where he requests to consider his interview about violations of his human and civil rights as an official appeal to the investigation and law enforcement authorities of any country of the world, to the UN and other international organizations, and gives his consent to use his photos, words and videos with him to the mass media, as well as to make statements, organize exhibitions and any other public events



*Saleh As-Sadu Al-Ibrahim, 53, civil servant, Hatla village,
Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Ala as-Sadu Al-Ibrahim, 14, schoolgirl,
Hatla village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate*

*Saleh As-Sadu Al-Ibrahim, 53, civil servant, Hatla village, Deir
ez-Zor Governorate:*

*It happened in the evening. We heard an aircraft flying, then there was
a blast.*

*My daughter got shrapnel wounds in her head, the other six children
were wounded. Aged 4 and over.*



Marvan Mouhammad Al-Ahmad, 33, general labourer, Al-Husseinia village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, and Leila, 7, Marvan Mouhammad Al-Ahmad's daughter

In 2017 the coalition aircraft started an attack. We stayed at home. A bomb landed in front of our house. Shrapnels fell inside. Our daughter got wounds and burns. They attacked a school as well.



*Yasin Muhammad Gattavi, 59, civil servant, Hatla village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate,
Ziyad Yasin Gattavi, 14, Hatla village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate*

Yasin Muhammad Gattavi, 59, civil servant:

In 2017, around 10 PM, we were all at home, the whole family. Thirteen people. Eleven children.

The aircraft flew twice above us. Then they made a strike. Two or three missiles landed at our house. All the family was wounded. Zakariya, 19, was wounded in his left arm.

Favel, 16, got wounds in his leg and stomach. Rukkaya, 11, was wounded in her head.

Our son was wounded most seriously. He got a shrapnel wound in his back. One shrapnel hit his spine, we couldn't get it out. We can show you, if you want. All the thirteen people were injured.

The Americans bombed a hospital, all schools around it, they destroyed them. They destroyed the schools on their way, even a mosque. The international coalition.

They want to ruin the infrastructure in our country, it is the economy. There was no Daesh near by.

Ziyad Yasin Gattavi, 14, Yasin Muhammad Gattavi's son, Hatla village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate.

We were sitting at that moment. When we stayed with our family, we were listening to the elders like children. The US coalition is bombing civilians because they are not afraid of God. There had been no fighters before that for a month already. When they were, there were no strikes.



Abd Al-Rahman Razq Muhammad Al-Jarfan, 47, farmer, Buaytiya village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, and his son, Magher Abd Al-Rahman, 10, who was seriously injured by an international coalition strike

It happened when the coalition was bombing bridges. Only their aircraft was there. My house is on the Aleppo-Raqqa highway. We stayed at home, in the kitchen, gathered to have dinner. In my family, five people were killed in the air strike. One of my daughters, Ayad, was 8 months, another, Gufran, 2 years old, Samer was 9 years old. The only one to survive was my son Magher Abd Al-Rahman. He was injured in his abdomen and groin. He was five then.

There lived no fighters, they would only pass by in their cars. All the people who support our government are targets to the US strikes. All these strikes hit civilians. They hardly ever bombed fighters, but they bombed

civilians every time. My neighbours who live 500 m away from us, were killed in the strike. Seven people died.



Abd Al-Rahman Razq Muhammad Al-Jarfan, 47, farmer, shows his house destroyed in the US-led coalition air strike, Buaytiya village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. His son was seriously injured in the air strike. Photographs: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Fatima Mahmoud Mazhar, 49, housewife, Buaytiya village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, and her daughter Malak Saleh Al-Atullah, 22, who suffered in the coalition air strike

I stayed at home doing my household chores. The coalition aircraft started an attack. My daughter got a shrapnel in her spine. Aircraft were flying not far from the crossroads on the way here. She was outdoors. Doing household chores. Our family keeps sheep, she was standing there looking after them. Children were playing near by, when they heard the aircraft, they hid. She stayed with those sheep alone and got hit in her spine with a shrapnel.



***Halmiya Abud Al-Ali, 49, housewife,
Buaytiya village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate:***

When the US coalition aircraft flew in August 2017, they aimed to strike us. I got wounded in the back, and got a spinal cord injury. In August 2017. I was outdoors when they struck. We planned to go to the market. A bomb or a missile was dropped near the car. Other people also got wounded.



Fatma Faizan Al-Hasat, 10, niece of Gaziya Khodr Al-Ali's husband. Gaziya Khodr Al-Ali, 30, housewife, Buaytiya village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

In the mid August 2017, I took care of cows, I went to take a cow home, at that moment the aircraft flew above us. I saw them with my own eyes. We were bombed. I lost my left leg. On the same day, another civilian got killed, I also suffered. The aircraft were striking everywhere. No fighter was killed.



Shadiya Al-Abbas As-Salamah, 17. Abdullah Mahmoud Al-Abbas As-Salamah, 60, farmer, Al-Masrab village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

We stayed in our tent near the river, in our kitchen garden close to the road. I kept sheep there. This road is not the main road, this is just a dirt road, I took care of these sheep. We were having tea. Suddenly, there was an air strike.

My mother died, my daughter got a shrapnel in her leg. My mother's name was Vashiha Al-Ahmad Al-Badi. That day, after lunch, I saw from the tent with my eyes the aircraft flying and striking. A relative was with us. When we were struck, he got a shrapnel in his left arm.

He is still alive, but his left arm has been severely injured. He was standing near the trees in the shadow, also having tea with us. The fighters did not take this road at all.

Two days passed since the first strike on his house. I took my daughter Shadiya to Mayadin for treatment. When I came back, I found my house destroyed. His house was destroyed, as well as his father's, neighbour's, around four houses near by. My uncle also was killed. Saleh Al-Hammad As-Saud As-Salama. Dahama Musa As-Salama, 85, broke a leg.



Muhammad Al-Halil Al-Hasan, 16, schoolboy. Suda Al-Yasin Al-Jarad, 40, housewife, Buaytiya village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

I stayed at home, when there was an air strike. I lost two children, whose names were Ali and Gazi,

one was 7 and the other was 3 years old. My uncle got killed, his name was Jammul Al-Mahmoud. A bomb hit our house. Muhammad was wounded in his left arm, right leg, and abdomen.

He got shrapnels. Right in the house.

There were no fighters whatsoever. Not a single one. It was all clear in our area. Fighters were never seen there.



*Muhammad At-Tallah Hassan Al-Ahmad, 9, Attallah Hassan Al-Ahmad, 47,
farmer, Tref village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate*

Our house is 2 km away from the Euphrates. In summer, they struck my house and Muhammad was hit by a shrapnel.

The child suffered a concussion injury and lost the use of his legs and the right arm.

There were no fighters around. They never used to live in the village, they would only drive through occasionally.

That day, several houses were bombed, including mine. I don't know why they would have to target us.

Several people were killed in the coalition air strike, some houses were severely damaged, schools and mosques were also hit.



Muhammad Ahmad Ad-Deiri, farmer from the Ad-Jawada village speaks about the coalition air strike on his house. Both he and his seven-year-old daughter Ravan Muhammad Ahmad Ad-Deiri were injured



*Ravan Muhammad Ahmad Ad-Deiri, 7.
Muhammad Ahmad Ad-Deiri, 30,
farmer, Ad-Jawada village,
Deir ez-Zor Governorate.*

In July 2017, the Ad-Jawada village was hit by an air strike, my daughter and me suffered.

My daughter got a broken jaw, she can't move her right arm. My arm and stomach were injured. In the Ad-Jawada village. We were on the rooftop, when we were hit.

At that moment only the coalition aircraft were flying there.

The fighters were at a distance of about one km from my house. The air strike happened in the morning.



Halid Mahmoud Ad-Jarakh, 12, who suffered in the international coalition air strike, and his father Mahmoud Saleh Ad-Jarakh, 50, farmer, Ad-Jawada village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

In 2017, the children were playing outdoors in the village, Khobar. This is near the Euphrates.

A coalition aircraft made an air strike. Our cows and sheep also got injured in the air strike.

I went for my son to see what happened. I saw my son with a wounded right arm.

We all got anxious about him and cried, but Halid took it like a man, without a tear. He came up to me and said, “Father, I’m wounded”. He didn’t cry.

He started to calm me down, he said, “Father, don’t worry about me, I’m fine.” I took him to hospital right away.



*Halid Mahmoud Ad-Jarakh, 12, who was wounded in a coalition air strike.
Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy*

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(NGO The Foundation for the Study of Democracy) حول انتهاك حقوق الإنسان
طلباً رسمياً إلى سلطات التحقيق وسلطات إنفاذ القانون في أي بلد في العالم وكذلك إلى الأمم
المتحدة وغيرها من المؤسسات الدولية. أسمح أيضاً باستخدام صورتي الشخصية ونقلت كلماتي
والمسجلات الصوتية والشرائط الفيديو وذلك من قبل وسائل الإعلام من أجل إجراء المعارض
والأحداث العامة



تاريخ
مكان
الأسم الكامل
سنة الميلاد

أبيرا وريا
غير
الأكبر
٢٠١٦

Appeal of Abir Walid Al-Qarta to the Foundation for the Study of Democracy where she requests to consider her interview about violations of her human and civil rights as an official appeal to the investigation and law enforcement authorities of any country of the world, to the UN and other international organizations, and gives her consent to use her photos, words and videos with her to the mass media, as well as to make statements, organize exhibitions and any other public events



Abir Walid Al-Qarta, 36, housewife, suffered in the US-led coalition air strike, Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

My son has asthma. On June 15, 2015, I had to take him to a doctor. I didn't have electricity at home. We went to our neighbours and called a doctor. At that moment, the US coalition made an air strike. It hit our house on the side. I lost my arm, all my body got shrapnel, it hurt.

My daughter, Amal Abd Ar-Rahman Al-Gabush, died. She was six years old. She got a shrapnel in her head. There was a lot of smoke after the strike.

We could not make anything out. We did not see anything in front of us. We were all in blood because of this strike.

We could not find out who died and who was alive. We took the injured to hospital.

My son Mustafa Abd Ar-Rahman Al-Gabush was also injured, he got shrapnel in his leg.

We took him to the doctor who said that there could be no surgery, if he was treated, he could become a disabled.

I got a shrapnel in my knee and in my toe, the shrapnel in my knee is still there.

There was no one around, no command posts, no positions, no movement of fighters.

I will pray to God to punish this pilot. I lost my arm and my daughter.



Hasa Shaher As-Suvadi, 79

My son and his wife were wounded in this air strike.

I am alive but feel very bad. I am injured.



Yazan Yasin Al-Hamad, 6, Yasin Ayad Al-Hamad Al-Hastaf, 37, mechanic, Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

On July 22, 2017, there was an air strike. We stayed at home. After lunch, around 3 PM, there was an air strike.

Three houses got damaged, 39 people injured. There were no fighters whatsoever. Many people were left unconscious. Four died. One was 40 years old, the second was 16 and the third was 20 years old. One little girl was killed.

The others were taken to hospital and saved.

The Americans were bombing civilians from the outset, they knew ISIS fighters' locations, but they targeted civilians, killed civilians.



Hassan Muhammad Al-Ali, 16, schoolboy, Yousra Saleh Al-Hammad, 49, school teacher, Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

On September 15, 2016, we were in the shop. An aircraft was flying and then made a strike. It was the US coalition aircraft. I heard the sound of it. Hassan got shrapnel in his spinal cord, so he lost the ability to walk normally.

My other two sons also got injured, my husband got killed in the strike. His name was

Muhammed Salekh Al-Ali, he was 48 years old. He was also a teacher. The children's names were Hussein Mouhammed Ali and Mahmoud Mouhammed Ali. they were 15 and 16 years old.

The houses where fighters' families lived were more than 500 m away. The coalition aircraft destroyed a lot of schools, mosques and health posts. My two brothers were also killed by their strikes.



***Abbas Al-Auwi Mohammad, 38, general labourer, his wife Nadira Turqi
Al-Ahmad Dbris, 18, his nephew Abud Abd Al-Manfi, 16,
At-Taybah village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate***

Abbas Al-Auwi Mohammad, 38, general labourer, At-Taybah village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate: On 26 June 2017, there was an air strike on the village of At-Taybah, where we lived. It happened around 9:30 AM. I lost three of my children and my wife in the strike; my nephew was left without one arm, my brother's wife lost her leg and suffered other serious injuries. They killed my elder sister too. My children were 6, 4 and 3 years old. Salman Abas Al-Mouhammad, 4, Abd Al-Azis Abas Al-Mouhammad, 6, Ravan Abas Al-Mouhammad, 7 months. My wife's name is Rim Huram Al-mouhammad, she is 29 years old. My sister's name is Shaha Al-Auwi Mouhammad, she is 55 years old. The whole family was outside by the

house. My brother's wife Nadira Turqi Al-Ahmad Dbris lost her leg. My cousins died, a girl Iman Hamid Al-Manfi, 9 years old, and Hasan Hamid Al-Manfi, 4 years old. 11 people were killed in total. They were all my relatives. We all lived in one neighbourhood. One strike destroyed four houses. The coalition's aircraft. If I came across this pilot I would have stabbed him to death. Many civilians died in the coalition air strikes. For example, in 2016, there was an air strike during the holidays. Salem Huran Al-Mouhammed, 26 years old, was killed.



Fatima Khodr Al-Moussa, student from Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, lost her leg in the international coalition air strike

I lived in Raqqa under the fighters for three years, between 2014 and 2017. On July 19, 2017, I heard a sound of the US aircraft.

We lived in Sharqi Dawar Street in Tell-Abyad District. I was sitting in my room, did my homework to pass my exam, I was in 10th grade. My parents were sitting in the living room. Suddenly, there was a sound of an aircraft flying in the sky. Then, there was a strike, I lost consciousness. I lost my leg, a woman next door lost her eye.

Only civilians lived in the neighbourhood. The closest ISIS post was far away. The US coalition bombed for no reason, they were striking indiscriminately. Another time, an air strike destroyed a house and thus killed 11 people. All civilians.



Sabha Ayn Al-Asmad, 41, housewife, Maadan, Raqqa Governorate

On August, 8, 2017, my son Mus'ab, aged 12, was with his friends outside the house. An aircraft passed and dropped a bomb. A shrapnel cut his arm off. Those were coalition aircraft. It happened in Maadan. There had never been fighters near our house. We have never had any fighters near by. My son lost his arm in these air strikes.



Mus'ab Mouhammad Al-Khodr As-Sheikh, aged 12

I hardly remember what happened. I remember playing outside the house. When I awoke, I realised I'd lost my arm.



*Hussain Galf Al-Ali, 57, teacher,
Maadan, Raqqa governorate*

The only airplanes flying here were the airplanes of the coalition. There were no airplanes besides the coalition's ones that bombed our public institutions, critical facilities of the city and also the houses themselves and civilians.

In early July 2017, during the fast of Ramadan, we were at home waiting for the call of prayer.

That day, we heard the sound of an airplane moving in our direction. Then we heard a weird sound. When we came to senses, everything was in total chaos. We started screaming, tried to figure out who was alive, what had happened. Our neighbours came to us and took us to a health care unit.

When I woke up, I couldn't understand almost anything. I was told that my wife, Mariyam Howeidi Hummada, she was 41 years old, had been killed, and my daughter had also been killed.

My daughter, Loyal Hussein Al-Ali, was less than one year old, when she was killed. She had just learned to say the words "mama" and "papa". When they were hit by the missile, she was in her mother's arms.

My other daughter, aged 13, had her hip shattered in that strike. Her name is Leyla.

My sons were also injured. I was hit from behind by a fragment that went into my left shoulder and came out of my ribcage. My rib on the left side was shattered.

I was lucky it had missed by heart. Another fragment hit my lower back lacerating my kidney that later had to be removed.

My house is divided into two parts, one of them has five rooms, the other one has two. The missile landed between two buildings. It was obvious that the missile had been dropped on civilians to kill and destroy

innocent lives. Our neighbourhood had been perfectly peaceful, there had been no IS fighters whatsoever. Neither in this neighbourhood or elsewhere near.



Shibli Hussain Al-Ali, 12

I was on the ground floor when the missile hit us. I woke up when I was in the hospital.

When I woke up in the hospital, I saw that my hand was missing.

My leg was also injured, and my finger was fractured.



Mariam Al-Gaher Al-Shadid, 53, housewife, Maadan, Raqqa governorate

On 22 July 2017, there was an airstrike. Our house is to the west, in the outskirts of Maadan. I was at home with my family and my brother's son. His entire face got completely scorched. The whole house was destroyed. Me, I had to have four surgeries, I've been at hospital for a long time now.

My brother's son got killed. His name was Nisard Wahar Al-Shadid, he was 16 years old. My daughter Nesrin got an abdomen wound. My daughter Darin was

wounded in her head. My daughter Nadin got a leg wound. I was wounded in my leg. Nesrin is 21, Darin is 17, and Nadin is 16 years old. Our house was left destroyed, simply razed to the ground. There were no militants anywhere near.

American jets destroyed all of our town. They left hospitals, schools, and all of the town destroyed, they wanted to destroy it. They were killing innocent people, they killed my brother's son, he was only 16.



Photograph: Muhammad Ali Al-Khodr, 52, general labourer, Hamisiya village, Raqqa governorate, and Hussain Muhammad Al-Khodr, 14, school student, victim of the international coalition's strike

**Muhammad Ali Al-Khodr, 52, general labourer, Hamisiya village,
Raqqa governorate**

Late at night in June 2017, we were at home, everyone was busy doing their things.

I heard the sound of an airplane. It dropped a missile, and now my son has a fractured bone in his leg. The militants were about one kilometer away from our house.



*Photograph: Omar Khalef Al-Khalef, 13, school student,
and Malka Al-Khalifa Moustafa, 37, housewife, Sharida village,
Raqqa governorate*

At that time, we were in a tent, we used to live there during field work on our land. A coalition jet came and hit us; it killed Omar's father, and Omar got wounded in his shoulder and finger. My husband's name was Khalef Al-Khalf.

It was a medium-sized airplane. It approached, made the strike, and then flew away.

We often watched airplanes circle over a settlement and then strike.

The first strike was on Sabkha, the next one against us. We could see them making strikes in Sabkha, then they came here.



Photograph: Ala ad-Din Abeid, 64, retired, Maadan, Raqqa governorate, Ala ad-Din Abeid's sons Azam ad-Din Abeid, 8, and Bassam ad-Din Abeid, 10, Ala ad-Din Abeid's nephew Omar Muhammad al-Omar, 9

Ala ad-Din Abeid, 64, retired, Maadan, Raqqa governorate

In summer 2017, my sons went to see their uncle's son. When they were there, an airplane approached, dropped a bomb and destroyed the house. As a result, all three boys got wounded in a blink of an eye. They were outside, in the backyard. There were no militants anywhere near.

Azam, who is 8 years old, lost one of his eyes as a result of the injury, his leg was injured and he lost his genitals. His inner thigh was injured, so his leg has shortened slightly, and he walks with a limp. Omar has a spine injury, and a piece of shrapnel is lodged in his head.

If I'd seen this American pilot I would have killed him right there, these are my children.

Airplanes of the coalition, of the coalition countries attacked civilians, destroyed houses. We know that the coalition countries intended to destroy the economy. The American coalition pursues its own goals of destroying, annihilating the entire economy. We see that the war against ISIL has

seemingly ended, but we are still witnessing Americans in our territory. What do they want to do here?

Ala ad-Din Abeid's nephew, Maadan, Raqqa governorate: I have a fragment in my left eye. My eyesight now is significantly worse.

Omar Muhammad al-Omar, 9, Maadan, Raqqa governorate: *We were playing on the ground near the house. The airplane was flying above us, and it launched a missile. Suddenly, there was an explosion. Everything inside me shattered.*



Hassan Muhammad Shayb Al-Abdallah, 49, mechanic, Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor governorate, and his son Muhammad Hassan Shayb, 13, school student

Hassan Muhammad Shayb Al-Abdallah, 49, mechanic, Mayadin

On 29 September 2017, an American coalition aircraft fired two missiles in Mayadin.

12 of my relatives were killed in the attack. My brother, wife, nephew, sisters and their children. The coalition killed Daria Omar Shayb Al-Abdallah, aged 6 months, my brother Luwei Muhammad Shayb Al-Abdallah. He was 51 years old. They killed my brother's wife, Muntaha Shayb Al-Sui. They killed my niece, Uriya Safyan Shayb Al-Abdallah; Kana Muhammed Shayb Al-Abdallah; his wife, Ramzia Jaudat Al-Frey; my brother's niece, Hiba, aged 10; Bayan y Bessan, aged 8, twins; my nephew's wife, Fatima Al-Munem Hammadi, aged 26.

My son was wounded in the American airstrike. He was in a coma for ten days after that. He's lost the use of the entire right side of his body.



Photograph: Hassan Muhammad Shayb Al-Abdallah, 49, mechanic, Mayadin, shows the side of the airstrike that killed 12 of his relatives. The photographs were taken by the volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Mahmoud Issa Al-Muhammad, teacher, Al-Nafira village, Raqqa governorate

The nearby village of Al-Zarajia was also bombed by Americans.

There were no militants there. The entire family of 9 people was killed.

Their name was Al-Sattoum.

They had four children, aged 2 to 6.

The bomb was dropped by a military aircraft.



Ali Hammoud Al-Fawaz, 53, farmer, Suweida, Raqqa governorate

They used special munitions that, once hitting the building, burst into flames.

My relatives burned alive.

All the injuries were caused by fire.



Photograph: Samir Al-Zaher Muhammad, 29, victim of the airstrike of the US-led coalition of July 2017 that left him with multiple shrapnel wounds and physically disabled. The airstrike of the US-led coalition partially destroyed his home in Maadan, Raqqa governorate. The photograph was taken by the volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy

The International Convention on Cluster Munitions of 30 May 2008 prohibits the use, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions, i.e. the munitions dispersing multiple explosive submunitions. The Convention entered into force on 1 August 2010. The countries that have ratified the Convention have undertaken “never under any circumstances to use cluster munitions”. The International Committee of the Red Cross gives the following assessment on cluster munitions¹: “The wide area effects of these weapons and the large numbers of submunitions that fail to explode as intended have caused large numbers of civilian casualties”.

Amnesty International holds the same opinion; for instance, its Deputy Regional Director in Beirut, Lynn Maalouf, emphasizes the non-discriminate nature of such munitions saying that the use of cluster munitions is prohibited by international laws, since such munitions are inherently indiscriminate and, given the high percentage of failure, pose a long-term threat to the civilian population.

Witnesses and victims also recount that the US-led Coalition and the US military that account for more than 90 per cent of the strikes and have not supported the Convention prohibiting cluster munitions used such munitions.



Saleh Mahmoud Gaddar, 41, general labourer, Al-Sabkha, Raqqa governorate

Our neighbours' house, I had never seen anything like that, was hit by something resembling small balls, they caused great destruction.

¹ <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/legal-fact-sheet/cluster-munitions-factsheet-230710.htm>



Mohammed Al-Moussa Al-Jassem, 52, sheikh of the Boumana tribe, Sabkha, Raqqa governorate

In September 2017, people left their communities and went along the Euphrates banks. People suffered from the strikes of the American coalition that used cluster munitions. The American coalition dropped a package, and that package released something that started spreading over a 200-meter area and exploding.

The use of cluster munitions in a densely populated city is yet another one of the numerous war crimes committed by the coalition and the US military in Syria.

It is worth mentioning that the US-led coalition launched strikes against Syrian civilians and civilian infrastructure almost every day in various parts of the country. With almost every single strike, the coalition killed women and children.

Almost none those cases have been mentioned in Western media that launched a large-scale disinformation campaign against the Syrian government. Here are some examples from a small number of publications about the killings of the civilian population by the US-led international coalition that have been released by the Western media.

On 20 July 2016, the Guardian published an article titled “US airstrikes allegedly kill at least 73 civilians in northern Syria”¹. It

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/20/us-airstrike-allegedly-kills-56-civilians-in-northern-syria>

indicates that “a majority of them [are] women and children, activists say” and that it was “the deadliest coalition attack on non-combatants since the start of the bombing campaign”.

“In the early hours of Tuesday morning, activists described coalition aircraft hitting a cluster of houses in the village of Tokkhar, where nearly 200 people had gathered to seek shelter as the frontline shifted towards their homes. Most of those inside were killed or injured.”

““The death toll is 117. We could document [the identity of] 73 civilians including 35 children and 20 women. The rest of the dead bodies are charred, or have been reduced to shreds,” said Adnan al-Housen, an activist from Manbij. He said around 50 injured survivors were rushed for treatment to the border town of Jarablus, where they provided details about the attack.”

On 26 July 2016, the Washington Post published a feature titled “500-pound bombs struck their targets in a Syrian village. But who was killed?”¹.

The article says: “The American bombers came in several waves in the middle of the night... Just before 3 a.m., A-10 and B-52 aircraft bore down on the village again. Their 500-pound bombs struck their targets and, when the dust settled, at least 95 people lay dead, thrusting Tokhar into the center of an international debate over how the Syrian war has been waged and who has paid the price... The planes, carrying laser-guided GBU-54 and GBU-31 bombs...”

“While one group reported that as many as 203 people had died, between 70 and 80 civilians were named, including at least 11 children, according to reports compiled by Airwars. Among the alleged victims, according to those reports, was a man named Suleiman al Dhaher, who was killed along with at least five of his children and grandchildren, including two infants. Some sources reported that the area struck was a school occupied by displaced Syrians. “The victims of the massacre were all civilians, not a single member of ISIS,” according to Abu Abdullah.”

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/the-500-20-pound-bombs-struck-their-targets-in-a-syrian-village-but-whom-did-they-kill/2016/08/26/30324884-649d-11e6-be4e-23fc4d4d12b4_story.html

Below are just a handful of examples from the long list of war crimes (under international humanitarian law) committed in Syria by the US-led international coalition in 2018 and 2019. Most of the killings were carried out by the US military.

25.01.2018

In eastern Deir ez-Zor governorate, in the village of Al-Shaafa, the US-led coalition committed yet another crime claiming the lives of 15 people. Coalition aircraft hit residential buildings in the village of al-Shaafa near the Al-Boukamal city killing 15 people, including seven women.

Sources confirmed that many of the victims had been heavily wounded, which may result in higher death toll.

Significant material damage has been caused.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

20.02.2018

American coalition aircraft killed 16 civilians in eastern Deir ez-Zor governorate in the Al-Bakhra settlement. Last night, the US-led coalition bombed the Al-Bakhra settlement, 45 km north-west of the Al-Boukamal city.

The attack resulted in 16 civilian deaths, including 9 children, and some of the injured are in critical condition, which may increase the death toll.

The strikes also caused severe damage to the houses and properties of citizens.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

22.02.2018

On the evening of 21 February, the US-led coalition launched several strikes against the Hajin village, approximately 50 km north-west of the Al-Boukamal city.

The strikes killed 12 people, mainly women and children, and injured dozens. The death toll may increase since several victims are still in critical condition.

Furthermore, the US strikes caused severe damage to residential buildings and destroyed a bakery.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian targets, such as the bakery in question, constitute war crimes.

The offensive of the US-led coalition took place less than two days after the bombing of the neighbouring Al-Bakhra, where the US strikes had killed 16 people.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

26.02.2018

Coalition aircraft carried out two new attacks against the Deir ez-Zor population. 29 civilians were killed and many were injured, some of them heavily, in the villages of Al-Shaafa and Dhahra Al-Alouni in the eastern part of the governorate.

Earlier, the coalition's actions in the Al-Bakhra settlement eastern Deir ez-Zor killed 20 people.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

28.02.2018

The US-led coalition launched an airstrike against the refugee camp in Zakhra Al-Alouni in eastern Deir ez-Zor.

The bombings killed 24 civilians. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

02.03.2018

The US-led coalition attacked the Al-Safavi village in south-eastern Al-Hasakah governorate killing and injuring at least five people. Coalition aircraft fired missiles against residential buildings killing three people, including one child, and heavily wounding two more. Besides, widespread damage was caused to houses and properties of the local population.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

01.05.2018

The US-led coalition's airstrike in the Al-Hasakah governorate killed at least 25 people in Al-Fadel near the Al-Shadadi city in southern Al-Hasakah.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

02.06.2018

Eight people were killed in the strike by the US-led coalition against the Dib-Hadaj village near Al-Shadadi in southern Al-Hasakah governorate. Yesterday, coalition aircraft attacked the village claiming the lives of 8 members of one family.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

03.06.2018

Coalition aircraft attacked the Tel Al-Shayer area in the Al-Hasakah governorate. The attack left a husband and a wife killed and another two people wounded. Earlier, the coalition aircraft had struck the Dib-Hadaj village to the south-east of Al-Shadadi claiming the lives of eight people. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

05.06.2018

The US-led coalition attacked the Al-Jazaa village in southern Al-Hasakah governorate. The coalition aircraft raid killed at least 10 civilians, including women and children. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

Local residents reported that the coalition had recently intensified its attacks in south-eastern Al-Shadadi deliberately shelling residential areas, especially the villages where people had refused to join the illegal units of the Syrian Democratic Forces. Hundreds of families had been forced to flee their homes in fear of air and artillery strikes.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

11.06.2018

The US-led coalition aircraft killed 18 civilians, mainly Iraqi women and children who were fleeing their homes to escape from Daesh and the US occupation. The strike was delivered in southern Al-Hasakah in the Hveybir village and mostly claimed the lives of women and children refugees from Iraq.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

12.06.2018

The US-led coalition killed residents of the Tel Al-Shayer village claiming the lives of 14 members of one family. The aircraft belonging to the US-led coalition bombed the Tel Al-Shayer village resulting in the deaths of the members of the family of Hassoun al-Basha.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

13.06.2018

The US-led coalition aircraft launched a strike against the Al-Hardan village in south-eastern Al-Hasakah governorate. The attack left four civilians killed and one female local resident heavily wounded. Earlier, the coalition's bombings in the Tel Al-Shayer village of the Al-Hasakah governorate had also claimed the lives of 12 civilians.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

22.06.2018

The attack launched by the US-led coalition in the Al-Shaafa village of the Deir ez-Zor governorate killed eight people. Furthermore, damage was caused to residential buildings and infrastructure. Most residents were forced to flee their homes in fear of renewed shelling.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes. Besides, local residents reported that the coalition had recently intensified its attacks against the settlements of the Deir ez-Zor and Al-Hasakah governorates with a view to forcing people to join the militants of the illegal armed groups of Kasad supported by the United States.

13.08.2018

On the night from Thursday to Friday, the US-led coalition aircraft attacked two settlements near the city of Al-Boukamal in the Deir ez-Zor governorate. More than 30 civilians were killed, dozens were injured, the majority of them being children and women. The airstrikes also hit the settlements of Al-Bagouz Fokani and Al-Soussa on the east bank of Euphrates. The death toll may increase due to some of the victims being severely wounded and the difficulties related to the rescue from under the rubble. Local residents reported that dozens of residential buildings had been destroyed.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

16.07.2018

The US-led coalition launched another strike against residential areas near Al-Boukamal of the Deir ez-Zor governorate. The coalition bombings killed and injured several civilians and destroyed numerous houses. Local residents reported that the Al-Soussa village near Al-Boukamal had been massively bombed by the coalition aircraft that day resulting in the deaths of a husband and a wife and severe injuries to other members of that family, including women and children.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

08.09.2018

On 8 September, two F-15 planes of the US coalition attacked the Hajin settlement in the Deir ez-Zor governorate with the use of phosphorus incendiary munitions. The attack caused large fires in the area.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

13.10.2018

The coalition bombed the Hajin city in south-eastern Deir ez-Zor using prohibited white phosphorus munitions. The US military aircraft launched several strikes against the Hajin city 110 km south of Deir ez-Zor using shells with white phosphorus prohibited by international

resolutions. Activists disseminated pictures of the coalition strikes against the Hajin city on their social media pages showing the use of prohibited white phosphorus.

The use of phosphorus bombs is forbidden under the 1977 Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts that ban the use of white phosphorous munitions if it puts civilians at risk.

19.10.2018

The coalition aircraft bombed the Al-Soussa village 140 km to the east of the governorate's capital. The attack killed and injured numerous civilians and damaged their property.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

20.10.2018

Local residents reported that at least 62 civilians had been killed and dozens had been injured in the airstrikes by the US-led coalition against the villages of Al-Soussa and Al-Boubadran in eastern Deir ez-Zor.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

24.10.2018

The US-led coalition launched airstrikes against the Al-Soussa village located 140 km south-east of the Deir ez-Zor city. The attacks caused deaths and injuries. Significant material damage was caused.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

28.10.2018

The coalition aircraft launched another attack against the Al-Soussa village in eastern Deir ez-Zor. It killed five civilians, including two children, and damaged residential buildings and properties of the residents.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

29.10.2018

The US-led coalition launched airstrikes against the Hajin village of the Deir ez-Zor governorate using prohibited phosphorus bombs. It was reported by local residents and information sources that published photographs on social media showing the use of white phosphorus by the coalition. Earlier, on 13 October, the US-led coalition dropped white phosphorus bombs on several Hajin districts. The use of phosphorus bombs is forbidden under the 1977 Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts that ban the use of white phosphorous munitions if it puts civilians at risk.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

03.11.2018

The coalition aircraft launched airstrikes against the Hajin city in the Deir ez-Zor governorate killing and injuring dozens of civilians, mainly children and women. Local residents reported that the US-led coalition had killed 15 civilians near the Khalid bin Walid mosque.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

5.11.2018

In Deir ez-Zor governorate, US-led coalition aircraft bombed a residential area of Al Shafa village near Al Bukamal, killing three children and injuring several others.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

10.11.2018

The US-led coalition committed yet another massacre of civilians in Deir ez-Zor governorate, striking the village of Hajin, 110 km from the capital of the governorate. Housing facilities were struck several times, which resulted in the death of at least 26 people, including women and children, with dozens injured, as well as residential buildings were destroyed.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

14.11.2018

Coalition aircraft ones again attacked the town of Hajin and the village of Al Shafa in the east of Deir ez-Zor governorate, which resulted in deaths and injuries of civilians and damage of private property. The new acts of aggression occurred two days after coalition aircraft committed a massacre in the village of Al Shafa, killing and injuring 60 civilians.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

15.11.2018

According to local residents, during the coalition air strikes on Al-Bubadran and Al-Sousa villages, 23 civilians were killed and houses destroyed. On the eve, the coalition used cluster bombs to strike the town of Hajin and the village of Al Shafa, killing and injuring civilians.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

17.11.2018

Local residents reported that the US-led coalition aircraft had killed at least 40 civilians, mostly women and children, in Al Baqarah village located in the south-east of the governorate. According to residents, coalition aircraft have continued heavy shelling of the town of Hajin and other settlements, particularly Al Shafa, since yesterday. Dozens of residential buildings were destroyed, and hundreds of families were forced to leave their villages. The number of deaths may increase, since it is unknown how many people were under the rubble of the destroyed buildings at the time of the shelling.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

21.11.2018

The coalition used white phosphorus during an attack on the town of Hajin in the north of Deir ez-Zor governorate. There are dead

and wounded among civilians. This was reported by local sources. Previously, coalition aircraft had attacked a number of villages in the east of Deir ez-Zor governorate using white phosphorus and cluster bombs. More than 100 innocent citizens became victims.

Last week, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) confirmed that more than 30 children had been killed as a result of a coalition bombing of Al Shafa village in the southeast of the governorate.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

24.11.2018

In Deir ez-Zor governorate, 11 civilians, mostly women and children, were killed as a result of coalition air strikes. Coalition aircraft launched heavy attacks against Al Shafa village in the southeast of the governorate. Dozens of residents were injured, and significant material damage was caused. The number of deaths may increase due to ongoing air raids and the difficulty in finding and removing victims from the rubble. Moreover, many of the wounded are in critical condition.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

24.11.2018

The coalition aircraft attacked the Al-Suq district, Hajin, east of Deir ez-Zor governorate. As a result, 20 civilians, including nine children and eight women, were killed and much damage was done to residential buildings and property.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

25.11.2018

The US-led coalition attacked the houses of the civil residents of Al Shafa village in the east of the governorate, killing 14 members of the same family, mostly women and children. As a result of ongoing US air raids, many residential buildings and infrastructure facilities have been destroyed.

In the past 48 hours alone, 31 people, mostly women and children, have been killed in similar air raids committed by the US-led coalition in the town of Hajin and the village of Al Shafa.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

26.11.2018

Coalition aircraft attacked houses of the civil residents of Abu Al-Hasan village southeast of Deir ez-Zor. As a result, dozens of civilians were killed and injured, mostly women and children. Residents noted that the number of deaths would increase, since some of the victims were in critical condition and there were difficulties in finding people under the rubble.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

30.11.2018

As a result of the air strikes committed by the US-led coalition, more than 30 civilians, mostly women and children, were killed in Al Shafa village, Deir ez-Zor governorate. The number of victims may increase due to the scale of the destruction and the difficulty in removing victims from the ruins.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

6.12.2018

The US-led coalition attacked houses of the civil residents of the town of Hajin, east of Deir ez-Zor governorate. This has led to the death of five civilians, including women and children, and significant economic damage.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

7.12.2018

US-led coalition aircraft conducted several air raids on the town of Hajin located 110 km southeast of Deir ez-Zor, resulting in civilian casualties. Eight people from the same family were killed, including

three women and two children. There were also wounded persons and destroyed houses.

Air strikes continued, causing many residents to flee Hajin.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

16.12.2018

In the southeast of Deir ez-Zor governorate, US-led aircraft attacked houses of the civil residents, killing 17 people, including women and children, and damaging private property. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

4.01.2019

US coalition aircraft conducted several raids on Al Shafa village, Deir ez-Zor governorate, killing 11 civilians and making much damage to their houses.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

5.01.2019

Less than 24 hours after the massacre in Al Shafa village, Deir ez-Zor governorate, coalition aircraft killed ten civilians in Al Kishkiya town.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

18.01.2019

The US-led coalition conducted a raid on the village of Al Baghuz Fokani, located in the southeast of the country, near the town of Al Bukamal, Deir ez-Zor governorate, killing 20 people, including women and children, and injuring dozens. Locals noted that the strike was directed against dozens of families who tried to leave areas where Daesh terrorists were operating. They stressed that the number of deaths was likely to increase, since many of the wounded were in critical condition.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

23.01.2019

Around midnight, in Al Baghuz village, the US-led coalition aircraft attacked a convoy of vehicles which the civilians used trying to flee the area controlled by Daesh terrorists. As a result, a large number of civilians were killed and injured. It is expected that the number of deaths is likely to increase, since many of the wounded are in critical condition

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

30.01.2019

Local residents reported that in Al Baghuz village, Deir ez-Zor governorate, coalition aircraft carried out missile attacks on the residential buildings, killing three women and five children. The number of deaths may increase, since many of the wounded are in critical condition. It should be noted that this month the coalition conducted four air raids on such Syrian villages as Al Baghuz, Al Shafa and Al Kishkiya. Dozens of citizens, mostly children and women, were killed and injured.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

1.02.2019

Following an air raid by the coalition, a woman was killed in Al Baghuz village, Deir ez-Zor governorate. There were also attacks on houses of Al Baghuz residents, killing a woman and damaging citizens' property. Following a bombing by the coalition, two civilians were also killed in Al-Baghuz village the day before yesterday.

Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

9.02.2019

Coalition aircraft attacked houses of the civil residents of Al Tayana village, east of Deir ez-Zor governorate. As a result, three civilians were killed. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

11.02.2019

Four people were killed in an air strike by the coalition in Al Baghuz village, east of Deir ez-Zor governorate. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

12.02.2019

At least 70 civilians were killed and injured following a US coalition air raid on Al Baghuz village, Deir ez-Zor governorate. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

11.03.2019

The US-led coalition conducted an air raid on Al Baghuz Camp, east of Deir ez-Zor governorate. Coalition troops killed more than 50 people, mostly children and women. Under international law, attacks on and killings of civilians, as well as attacks on civilian objects constitute war crimes.

Chapter III

DESTRUCTION OF SYRIAN HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND CIVILIAN HOMES BY AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION

The resolution adopted in 1970 by the UN General Assembly (UN General Assembly, resolution 2675 (XXV)) on basic principles for the protection of civilian population in armed conflicts establishes that “places or areas designated for the sole protection of civilians, such as hospital zones or similar refuges, should not be the object of operations.”

International humanitarian law¹ also contains a separate section, titled “Rule 35. Hospital and Safety Zones and Neutralized Zones.” According to this rule, “directing an attack against a zone established to shelter the wounded, the sick and civilians from the effects of hostilities is prohibited.”

The evidence received and presented below unequivocally proves that the US-led coalition, primarily US military, has systematically attacked and targeted Syrian hospitals, schools, markets, mosques, civilian houses and ambulances. These attacks violate the basic principles of international humanitarian law.

For example, according to direct evidence from witnesses, in a number of cases, attacks on hospitals were carried out repeatedly, which excludes an error or unintentional nature of strikes. In most

¹ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Customary IHL Study, Rule 35

cases, there were no positions of fighters or the fighters themselves in the vicinity of the destroyed facilities. In this case, this obviously means a violation of the “principle of distinction,” according to which all parties to conflict must distinguish between civilians and combatants, while making the civilian population the object of attack is a war crime. Similarly, given the ammunition used by the coalition, including phosphorus and cluster munitions, as well as the items with a circular error probable of over a hundred meters, indiscriminate attacks were carried out that resulted in the death or injury of civilians, which also constitutes a war crime. Similarly, “disproportionate attacks,” which may cause “incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated,” are criminalized.

According to the data received, the destruction of Syrian hospitals, schools, markets, mosques and civilian houses by the coalition and US military was part of their deliberate strategy to devastate towns and villages in order to gain control over them and transfer fighters to pro-American forces and groups. These actions conducted by the coalition and the US military are classified as war crimes under international humanitarian law.

The victims, their relatives and direct witnesses, as well as civilian doctors interviewed by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy list clinics, hospitals, polyclinics, maternity hospitals and other medical facilities that were destroyed by coalition strikes in various towns of Syria: “In Raqqa, the national hospital, maternity hospital, health building, preliminary examination and vaccination points, infectious diseases treatment building and various health centres, specialized polyclinics, children’s hospital, Al Mouwasat Private Hospital, Dar Al Shifa Hospital, Al-Teb Al-Hadith Hospital, Al-Salam Hospital, Al-Mashhadani Hospital and Al-Ahli Hospital were destroyed,” “I saw Americans bombing hospitals,” “before the strikes, it was a large scientific and medical centre that provided care and medical services to those living here, in Maadan,” “Americans were striking hospitals and schools,” “in Deir ez-Zor governorate. The Americans destroyed all the hospitals. They destroyed four hospitals,” “the aircraft did not hit specific targets, it destroyed everything: hospitals,



*Al-Teb Al-Hadith Hospital following U.S coalition air strikes.
Photograph: Jamal Mohammed Al-Isa*



*Surgery at the Raqqa National Hospital following the US-led coalition air strike.
Photograph: Jamal Mohammed Al-Isa*

mosques, and houses,” “Americans bombed hospitals and a fire station,” “the American coalition bombed schools, mosques, and health centres.” There were also cases when the US aircraft attacked ambulances from a low altitude.

The evidence obtained by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy is confirmed by reports from other independent organizations. For example, as for the city of Raqqa, which was practically destroyed by coalition strikes, and mainly by US military forces, the International Amnesty report titled “War of annihilation”: Devastating toll on civilians, Raqqa — Syria, 2018,¹ states that “in the case of deaths and injuries to civilians resulting from artillery strikes or mortar fire, these would appear to be indiscriminate attacks. The repeated use of imprecise explosive weapons, such as these, in the vicinity of civilians is a reckless tactic that violates the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks. If at the outset the Coalition was not aware that using artillery in this manner in Raqqa city would lead to needless deaths and injuries to civilians (which in itself is implausible given the experience of fighting IS in Mosul), it should have very quickly learned this lesson and changed its tactics.” Thus, launching mass artillery strikes against a populated city is a war crime under international humanitarian law. Almost all the artillery shelling of Raqqa was carried out by the US Armed Forces with a 155-mm M777 howitzer. The main ammunition they used was a standard M795 high-explosive projectiles with a circular error probable (the radius of a circle within which half of a missile’s projectiles are expected to fall) of over a hundred meters.

In an interview with Marine Corps Times, Sergeant John Wayne Troxell, Senior Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US Armed Forces, said that “they fired more rounds in Raqqa, Syria, than any other Marine artillery battalion, or any Marine or Army battalion, since the Vietnam war,” and “in five months they fired 35,000 artillery rounds.”² Thus, the US military has been systematically

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/8367/2018/en/>

² <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2018/02/06/these-marines-in-syria-fired-more-artillery-than-any-battalion-since-vietnam/>



*A flat in the multi-stored house destroyed following the air strike by an US coalition on 2.01.2017, where Ali Al-Romadan Ahmad, 42, Raqqa city, Raqqa governorate, lived.
Photograph: Ali Al-Romadan Ahmad*



*Al-Teb Al-Hadith Hospital before US coalition air strikes. Photograph: Jamal
Mohammed Al-Isa*

committing war crimes throughout the entire duration of the Raqqa attack, actively using indiscriminate weapons.

Witnesses stress that the same hospitals have been bombed many times, which rules out their random nature: “The Maadan Hospital has been repeatedly subjected to air strikes by the US coalition in 2015, 2016 and 2017.” Witnesses also noted that these facilities were used by Daesh or the fighters not for military purposes, but rather for just medical ones: “Maternity hospital was bombed. There were no Daesh members, only women. There were almost 150 people in the wards,” “a mosque, the Culture Centre, the polyclinic and hospital were destroyed. There were no fighters there,” “I saw it myself, there were no fighters in the hospital,” “I have never seen fighters in Suwaida, there were no fighters.”



Jamal Mohammed Al-Isa, 49, Head of the Physicians' Union of the Raqqa governorate

What damage has the international coalition done to us since the beginning of the operation? It destroyed the national hospital, maternity hospital, health building, preliminary examination and vaccination points, infectious diseases treatment building and

various health centres, specialized polyclinics, children's hospital, Al Mouwasat Private Hospital, Dar Al Shifa Hospital, Al-Teb Al-Hadith Hospital, Al-Salam Hospital, Al-Mashhadani Hospital and Al-Ahli Hospital, etc.

Besides, it destroyed dozens of polyclinics, including my polyclinic and my brother's one. It destroyed laboratories and X-ray diagnostics, drug stores and pharmacies. I think it had a purpose to destroy these objects.

Many of my friends and neighbours were killed following international coalition strikes. For example, Dr Qais Al-Sayed Ahmad, a gynaecologist. And two physicians more: Fuad al-Ujayli and Dr Muhammad al-Shawah, dentists. Lawyer Ubeid Al-Kakaji. He was 65. He died in 2017 as a result of coalition strikes.



Dr Qais Al-Sayed Ahmad, 58, a gynaecologist, who died in a strike by the US coalition. Photograph: Jamal Mohammed Al-Isa



Dentist Fuad al Ajeili, 58, dentist, died in a strike by the US coalition. Photograph: Jamal Mohammed Al-Isa

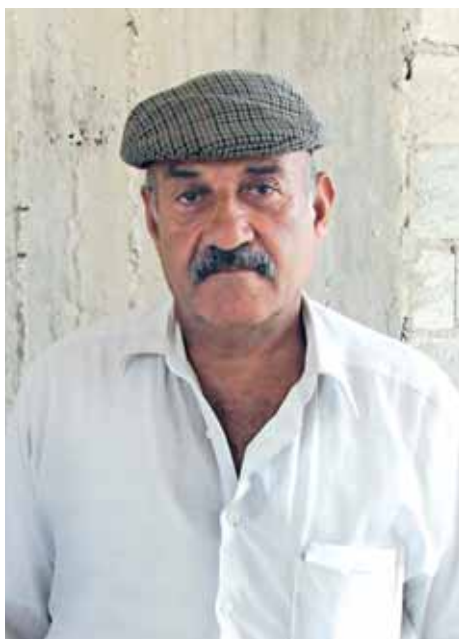


Dentist Muhammad Al-Shavah, died in a strike by the US coalition. Photograph: Jamal Mohammed Al-Isa



***Shaniz At-Tabi, 45, employee,
Raqqa city, Raqqa governorate***

US aircraft bombed an ambulance on the street from a low altitude.



***Ibrahim Ahmad Khalef
Al-Sayyid, commander of the fire
department of the city of Raqqa***

I ran away from the Raqqa, but my children called me.

The Americans bombed hospitals and a fire station.

My son worked as a firefighter and he died there.



A school in the village of Ghanim al-Ali, Raqqa governorate, destroyed in an air strike by the US coalition. Photographs: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



A school in the city of Maadan, Raqqa governorate, destroyed in an air strike by the US coalition. Photographs: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Hamd Al-Mhadi ibn Qweedli, 76, farmer, the city of Suwaida, Raqqa governorate

I have never seen fighters in Suwaida, there were no fighters They were far away and had gone long ago.

There were no fighters nearby.

The aircraft did not hit specific targets, it destroyed everything: hospitals, mosques, and houses.



Hakmat Mustafa Al-Mashhadani Abu Al-Abbas, Sheikh of the Al Mashhadah tribe, Deir ez-Zor governorate

In the village of Al Jafrah, the Americans destroyed everything step by step (hospitals, mosques, civilian houses and flats): in the city of Al-Mayadin, my neighbours, and opposite my house, Muhammad Abd al-Jabbar Saud. He was bombed, and his three children and he died there. They bombed the hospital, destroyed everything.

I do not know how many were there. They also bombed the Al-Mayadin Administration building. Over a hundred women and children were there. They were in the basement. Everyone was buried under the rubble.



The house of Aziza al-Sharif Ibrahim, 70, the city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate, destroyed in July 2017 by an American coalition air strike. Photograph: Aziza al-Sharif Ibrahim



Ahmad Al-Shmari, Sheikh of the Boolel tribe from Deir ez-Zor governorate

The Americans destroyed all the hospitals.

They destroyed four hospitals.



Rashid Anvar Arab, 35, builder, city of Raqqa

I saw the Americans bombing hospitals.

After that, they bombed the bank, the national bank.

They destroyed the maternity hospital.

There were no Daesh members, only women.

There were almost 150 people in the wards. I do not have exact figures how much people died. It was an American air strike.

I heard the bomb falling, and the plane flying.



*House of Wadha Al-Mustafa Al-Abd Al-Muhammad Al-Maasan Hadi, aged 40, city of Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, destroyed in a US-led Coalition air strike in July 2017.
Photo credit: Wadha Al-Mustafa Al-Abd Al-Muhammad Al-Maasan Hadi*



Hasan Gammaz, Sheikh of the Omeirat tribe, Raqqa:

Americans targeted hospitals and schools.

They bombed the National Hospital.

All people could see.



Abd Al-Hakim As-Saleh, 44, head of City Council, Maadan, Raqqa Governorate

The American Coalition repeatedly bombed the hospital in Maadan. Before the air strikes, it was a large research and medical center that provided assistance and medical services to people from Maadan and nearby settlements.

The air strikes continued in 2016 and 2017. In July 2017, eight missiles hit it. It's just an estimation, there could have been more.



*Hospital of the Raqqa Special Outpatient Clinic before US-led Coalition air strikes.
Photo credit: Jamal Muhammad Al-Isa*



*Hospital of the Raqqa Special Outpatient Clinic after US-led Coalition air strikes.
Photo credit: Jamal Muhammad Al-Isa*



***Hasan Taha Taha, 71,
farmer, Raqqa Governorate***

Coalition airplanes destroyed the hospital near our house, and the next day they hit our house.

There were no fighters in the hospital. I was a witness; there were no fighters present in the building.



***Mahmoud Al-Shadid ibn
Ubaid, 54, unemployed,
Maadan, Raqqa Governorate***

Americans came to destroy our country, destroy our cities, kill civilians, but definitely not to fight militants. The airplanes were hitting civilians' houses.

They got destroyed. The mosque, the culture centre were torn down, the outpatient clinic, and the hospital.



Raqqa National Hospital after US-led Coalition air strikes. Photo credit: Jamal Muhammad Al-Isa



House of Taga Al-Musa Halaf, 45, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, destroyed in a US-led coalition air strike in July 2017. Photo credit: Taga Al-Musa Halaf



Salha Al-Mahmoud, 39, housewife, Majawda village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

We heard the sound planes; we heard them bombing our neighborhood. The American Coalition targeted schools, mosques, medical facilities. The houses got damaged, destroyed. In the village next to ours, there are damaged schools and medical aid centres.

Coalition victims say that schools were targeted just as often as hospitals: “There was an air strike on the school near the cattle market. There were students inside. They killed 13, injured around 30”.

“They targeted my village, Al-Husseiniya. About 30 to 40 people died in the Coalition air strikes”. “In the Al-Hourbi district, Americans hit a mosque and Ommar Ibn Hattab School”.

“In Mayadin, the Coalition hit a mosque and a school. Ar-Rishadiya School. The hospital”. “People saw with their own eyes the airplanes dropping bombs on schools and mosques; when people tried to escape, they also targeted them”. “In my district, they hit a school”.

“In the village, they destroyed the school near my house”. “In our village, Ad-Jawada, there are schools and mosques destroyed by American air strikes”.

A significant number of eyewitnesses stress that American air and artillery strikes were indiscriminate, however, destruction of schools was not occasional but systematic: “Americans were hitting Raqqa. Americans destroyed schools and hospitals”.



***Saleh Abd Ar-Rashid, 55, retired,
Al-Husseiniya village, Deir ez-Zor
Governorate***

They were hitting my village, Al-Husseiniya. Many houses, around 40. They got damaged. Around 30 to 40 people died in the Coalition air strikes. About 500 injured.

The entire population is around 20 thousand. There were no rebels in the village.

They would only pass through the town. Americans destroyed many houses in Al-Husseiniya. They destroyed three schools.



***Muhammad Ahmad Al-Mesto, 44,
head of the educators' trade union,
Manbidj, Raqqa Governorate***

I personally witnessed the air strikes. The town was in a state of terror and chaos.

They hit large gatherings of peaceful people, marketplaces. There was an air strike on the school near the cattle market.

There were many victims; we rescued the wounded with our own hands. There were students

inside at the time of the strike. They killed 13, injured around 30. It was a functioning school.



Ali Muhammad Al-Waed, 40, sheikh of the Abu Saraya tribe, Raqqa Governorate

The majority of our tribe live near Abu Sarai between Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa. When Americans bombed, many houses were destroyed. 40 of my relatives died. In 2015, Americans attacked a mosque and Ommar Ibn Hattab School in Al-Hourbi District.

People saw with their own eyes the airplanes dropping bombs at schools and mosques; when people tried to escape, they targeted them too. There were civilians in the school building.

There were no Daesh, only children; [they also targeted] mosques where the elderly prayed. The school had around 700 students. My relatives told me how they had bombed the mosque and even a very old bridge. They targeted all bridges so that people would not flee the town. They hit the large National Hospital.



Muhammad Ahmad Al-Sheikh, 45, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate

I live in the city of Raqqa, in Al-Badu district. I witnessed Americans' air strikes. [Those were] chaotic bombing attacks.

They mostly struck at schools, government buildings, infrastructure. They razed it all to the ground.



*House of Ali Al-Hussein Muhammad, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, destroyed on 15 April 2017 in a US-led coalition air strike.
Photo credit: Ali Al-Hussein Muhammad*



Ahmad Al-Shmari, Sheikh of the Bulel tribe from Deir ez-Zor Governorate

Almost 50 thousand members of our tribe lived in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. Every one of them had to flee in 2016. Over a thousand got killed by the US-led Coalition and terrorists.

Americans were destroying all schools. They even destroyed higher education institutions. Dozens of

schools. I am a witness. People from my tribe continue witnessing it. They phone us when there are air strikes, American bombs.



***Hammud al-Zeyeytr, 50,
journalist, resident of Raqqa and
Qderan village***

In the village, they bombed the school near my house. Qderan al-Shariqi School. I saw with my own eyes my demolished house.

We are a family of nine. My wife, our seven children and I have lost our house, we have become refugees.



***Hasan Ali Muhammad
Al-Umeshad, Sheikh of the
Al-Umeshad tribe, the city of
Raqqa***

I came under fire when Americans struck the farm facilities.

They also targeted a school in my neighbourhood. The school named after Hussein Jahed.

They targeted other buildings nearby, including the building next to the wheat storage facility.



Ganem Al-Ali village school in Raqqa Governorate demolished in a US-led Coalition air strike. Photo by volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Bridge in Muqla Qabira village, Raqqa Governorate, demolished in a US-led Coalition air strike. Photo by volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Hasan Muhammad Shayb Al-Abdallah, 49, mechanic, Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, with his son Mouhammad Hassan Shayb, 13, schoolboy

Hassan Muhammad Shayb Al-Abdallah, 49, mechanic, Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

In Mayadin the Coalition bombed the mosque and a school. Ar-Rishadiya School. The hospital. The bridges. The air strikes killed two to three hundred people in our village. If I were to see the American pilot, I would have wished that he suffered the same that I had suffered. You struck peaceful people, you killed.



Jamal Al-Musa Shhada ibn Felaj, 60, auto parts seller, Maadan, Raqqa Governorate

Americans were hitting Raqqa. As a result, they demolished the Raqqa Hospital and all the culture facilities there. My two houses were demolished.

They were destroyed, razed to the ground. I had five retail outlets in Maadan, they were

also destroyed with all the goods. Americans destroyed both schools and hospitals.



Rawan Muhammed Ahmad Ad-Deiri, aged 7, Muhammed Ahmad Ad-Deiri, 30, farmer, Ad-Jawada village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

In our village, Ad-Jawada, there are schools and mosques destroyed by American air strikes. Neighbours from the next house — husband, wife and a child — were killed in an air strike. They were peaceful people. They were asleep at the time of the strike. There were a number of strikes on that day. In my sister's house too, three people got injured — Rawan Hamad Ad-Deiri, Hamid Hamad Ad-Deiri. Hamad Ad-Deiri, girl, aged 9. Shrapnel pieces got lodged in her legs. Tahani Hamad

Ad-Deiri, another girl, aged 7. Shrapnel in arm and stomach. Malaq Hamad Ad-Deiri, 5. Wounded on her shoulder.

Not only hospitals and schools were hit by the International Coalition, but also other places of mass gathering, resulting in significant casualties among Syrian civilians. Those were markets, tent camps and shops. Victims tell exactly how these air strikes occurred: “When we were at the market we saw missiles coming towards us. As a result, 15 were killed and over 60 injured”, “American aircraft hit a market in Raqqa”, “Many died in the American air assault. I remember there was an air strike on the market”, “In Qderan district, where the Al-Baas dam is, there was a shop. American aircraft hit the shop”, “They hit the area where the marketplace was. Many got injured in the air strike. Around 30 people”, “The Coalition air strike destroyed my shop, it got burned down. 12 people died, many got injured”, “There were peaceful

people in the tent camp. In a single air strike the Coalition killed 24 people and wounded many”.

The fact that the attacks systematically targeted markets, shops and pharmacies clearly indicates that they were deliberate. It is also obvious that an air strike against such targets will always result in victims among peaceful population.

Eyewitnesses specifically note the absence of fighters or terrorists near such facilities.

“There were no ISIS fighters, no command points whatsoever, it was a public market”, “there were no fighters nearby”.



Fadel Yunus Ad-Daher, 60, head of Hatla village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, talks about a missile strike to Mr Grigoriev, director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy

We were at the farmers’ market at around 11 o’clock. The marketplace was bustling with people. It was in April 2016. When we were there, we saw missiles coming towards us. As a result, 15 died and over 60 got injured. They aimed at the market, but they hit just beside it. It was an airplane and from what we could hear, the airplane was at a very high altitude. My brother was 26, his name was Yaser Yunus Ad-Daher. I also got seriously

wounded. Deep wounds to my shoulder and arm; I spent about three months at hospital. Those were Coalition airforces. Only Coalition aircraft were in these regions.



**Hussein Al-Butel, 42,
Ad-Daraya village, Raqqa
Governorate**

American aircraft hit a marketplace in Raqqa. [It occurred] in Al-Nayem Square, where the farmers' market is. There were no ISIS fighters, no command points, it was a public market.

In 2017, my uncle, my mother's brother Muhammed Al-Tamir, was killed there. He was 60. He went out with his wife to get some vegetables.



**Suriya Al-Isa, 60, housewife,
Onmahdjarah village, Aleppo
Governorate**

Many people died by American aircraft.

I remember there was an attack on the market, Ali Al-Ommash and a woman named Ftem Al-Ali, and other people got killed.



Imad Abd Al-Salmiya Abd Al-Rahman Al-Abdullah, 24, mechanic, victim of a Coalition air strike, and Ziyad I-ASalmiya Abd Al-Rahman Al-Abdullah, 23, mechanic, Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor

Ziyad Al-Salmiya Abd Al-Rahman Al-Abdullah, 23, mechanic, Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor

On 2 June 2017, Imad was at his uncles' house in Mayadin. He was about to go back home, but Western Coalition aircraft were flying there at the time.

They hit the area where the marketplace was, the house was near the market. Imad suffered a serious wound to his head.

They hit right on the house. Many people suffered in the explosion.

About 30 people. There were no fighters near the market, 100% [sure].

Our cousin died in another Coalition air strike on the same day.

On the same day, another air strike happened in a different place. Al-Balum. Near the roundabout. Our cousin's name was Mejem Abdallah Al-Muhtar.



HHammud Al-Zeyeytr, 50, journalist, resident of Raqqa and Qderan village

In Qderan district, where the Al-Baas dam is, there was a retail shop. There were civilians with children.

Almost [all of the] 20 people died. American aircraft hit the shop.

There was not a single fighter among those 20 people.

They were killed by the air strike. One of the victims was a relative of mine. The child was 10, his name was Muhammed Nasser Al-Zrayer.



*Ahmed Al-Matr Al-Hasan, 35,
general labourer, Al-Jaala, Deir
ez-Zor Governorate*

The air strike ruined my shop, it got burned down.

Many people suffered in that strike. 12 died, many were injured.

There were no militants anywhere near. The US-led Coalition aims to destroy our infrastructure.

What can I say? God is the judge for Americans.



*Muhammed Al-Musa Al-Jasem, 52,
Sheikh of the Bumana tribe, Sabha,
Raqqa Governorate*

The American Coalition came to destroy Syria. There were peaceful civilians in the tent camp.

Then in a single strike the American Coalition killed 24 people and injured many.

Wherever there was a camp like that they would go bomb it.

People fled [the towns] and many came under fire.

In another camp about 50 people got killed, 70 injured.

Ibrahim Shhada Al-Mola and his three children aged 17 to 22 died. Another entire family died.

Up to 7 people. Halil Al-Adja and his wife lost their children in the air strike. Their daughter was 16, son was 18.

He himself lost a leg, his wife lost an eye. Ibn Abu Qarmun died. Paramedic Bashir Hussein Al-Bashir died.

He went to treat people in a neighbour camp, which had been hit an hour earlier.

On his way there, a second air strike occurred and he was killed. Women and children were killed there. One woman's name was Rimmah Al-Adja. Those camps were next to each other.

However, most of the injured and killed by the Coalition at the time of the attacks were in their separate houses or blocks of flats.

Eyewitnesses and victims recount in detail how their own houses or the houses of their relatives were destroyed: "I lived in a three-storey house in Ibn-Haldoum district, Raqqa.

It was a well-known house, they completely destroyed it", "Two bombs hit my house", "On 10 August 2017 my house and the neighbouring houses came under fire from the American Coalition", "In April 2017 my house was destroyed. Razed to the ground".

On that day Americans bombed three times during the daytime", "My house was destroyed in a Coalition attack", "Our house was destroyed by aircraft, [it was located in] Saif Ad-Daoul Street next to Qweira bakery (Raqqa)", "My house in Mansur Street, Raqqa, was destroyed on 2 July 2017", "I lived in Raqqa. 80 percent of the town got wiped out", etc.

As in other cases, victims stress that there were no fighters' positions in the vicinity of their houses, and no fighters were present nearby: "There were no ISIS fighters. It was a false pretext", "There were no fighters nearby.

They would only drive past along the road. That day they were not there at all."



Abd Al-Aziz Al-Isa, 53, chair of the Raqqa City Bar Association, Raqqa

The Coalition strikes harmed the majority of Raqqa residents. Our family owned several houses; almost all of them were ruined by the US-led Coalition air strikes. They aimed to tear down the infrastructure in Raqqa, that is why all the damage.

For example, I lived in a three-storey house in Ibn Haldoum district. It was a well-known house, they completely destroyed it. We also had a four-storey house, our family owned three storeys. They were all destroyed. There were no ISIS fighters. It was a false pretext”.



Ahmad Ubaid Al-Halaf, 37, farmer, Bwaytiya village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate

In 2017, at the time of the strike we were in our gardens doing farm work. We heard the sound of airplanes. Then we head the air strikes. We rushed to see what had happened, found out that two bombs had hit my house. [It was] a single-storey house. The west side of the house was damaged not as badly, but the rest of the house was reduced to rubble.

The two bombs hit the roof of my house. There were no fighters nearby. They would only drive past along the road. That day, they were not there at all”.



Ali Mustafa As-Suleiman (31 years old), peasant, Buaytiya village, Deir ez-Zor province

On August 10, 2017, my house and the houses close to my house were hit by a US coalition airstrike. The neighborhood was completely destroyed. You can go there and see. 6 houses that were nearby were destroyed. The administrative building, where the militants appeared, was not damaged.



Ali Mahmoud Al-Hussein (48 years old), teacher, Raqqa city, Raqqa province

In April 2017, my house was destroyed. It was leveled to the ground.

The family of the neighbors was completely killed.

24 people were killed in the building.

On this day, the Americans bombed three times in the daytime.



Muhammad Ahmen Al-Hussein (49 years old), teacher, Musherfa Hullu Abed village, Raqqa province

I was in Raqqa province from 2013 to 2017. My house was destroyed by coalition bombing. In early April 2017, only coalition aircraft flew there. It is 15 km from the city of Raqqa.

There have never been militants in my village. They didn't even drive through. The school was destroyed. The pumping station and the well were also destroyed. As a result of the airstrike, about 10 houses were destroyed. 3 houses and 3 families were completely killed — 8 people, 10 children.



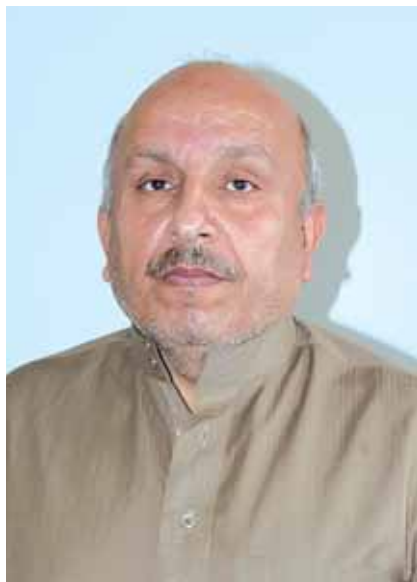
***The house of Muhammad Ahmen Al-Hussein destroyed by coalition airstrikes, Musherfa Hullu Abed village, Raqqa province.
Photograph: Muhammad Ahmen Al-Hussein***



Adla Musa Al-Abdallah (44 years old), housewife, Raqqa city, Raqqa province

Our house was destroyed by aircraft. There were no militants around then. The neighborhood was ordinary, there were ordinary people. Seif ad-Daulya street, next to the Qweir bakery. Only the US-led coalition aircraft flew. They've destroyed not only my house, but also the houses of my relatives. We can say that the houses were completely destroyed.

After the release of Raqqa, I went there. I only recognized my house by the circles where my house was. I was in Raqqa from 2013 to 2016. I tried to leave twice, but I couldn't. Finally I left, with difficulty, of course. I have 5 children.



Ali Ahmad Al-Ramadan (52 years old), employee, Raqqa city, Raqqa province

My house on Mansour Street was destroyed on July 2, 2017.

This American pilot must be tried.

The militants were far from my house.

I spent four years in Raqqa under the militants, and in 2017 I was able to escape.



Rasha Saleh Al-Damuk (34 years old), music teacher, Raqqa city

I am a teacher. I lived in the city of Raqqa, Al-Basef street. 80% of the city's buildings were destroyed. Those that remained undestroyed are few, rare, which remained intact. My grandmother's house in the Al-Tawassor area, where she lived, was destroyed by coalition strikes.



A destroyed house in the Al-Tawassor area. Photograph: Rasha Saleh Al-Damuk. Shooting 18.03.2019



*Abd Al-Hakim Al-Saleh (44 years old), head of the Maadan City Council, Raqqa province: “This hospital has been repeatedly hit by the American coalition airstrikes.”
A hospital in the city of Maadan destroyed by coalition aircraft.
Photograph: volunteers of the Democracy Research Foundation*

Almost every family has relatives killed by the attacks in many Syrian settlements in the territories bombed by the US-led coalition: “There was a massive hit. I ran out of the house and saw that my husband was lying dead on the ground”, “the brother was the youngest among us, 19 years old. Three more people died. He was the fourth”, “about 45 people died by a single coalition strike in East Tabiya in January 2016”, “we had relatives. They all died in the

bombing. Eleven children”, “one of them was on a motorcycle — Hasun Al-Ismail, an elderly man. He was killed, and he was not even buried, there were no traces of them”, “there was an airstrike in 2016. As a result, 52 people died. My uncle Ibrahim Khalil Al-Badram and his mother were killed. The whole family”, “almost 50 people were killed in a single building. Almost 10 families were killed in another building, from what I heard from relatives.”

The deaths of civilians affected almost all segments of the population and professional groups. For example, the chairman of the Raqqa Province Bar Chamber indicates: “Five judges and more than 20 lawyers from our Bar Chamber were killed by coalition strikes.”

The evidence of Raqqa doctors, who tell about the mass graves of thousands of civilians who died from coalition strikes, is eloquent.



Jamal Muhammad Al-Isa (49 years old), head of the Raqqa Province Medical Union

After the end of the international coalition bombing and the so-called liberation of the city from ISIS, the scope of the disaster became clear.

What a large number of families remained under the rubble.

Mass grave sites have been discovered —

cemeteries in several locations in the city of Raqqa.

Nearly 550 dead civilians killed by international coalition strikes were found at Al-Rashid Stadium. Near the old mosque, most of the houses turned into graves for their residents in the Al-Jamil quarter. About 150 people were killed.

The largest mass grave is situated in the garden, which is located at the western entrance to the city of Raqqa. This is the Panorama garden. 1,500 civilian bodies were found there.



*Hussein Aref Al-Khmedi (52 years old), head of the village of East Tabiya,
Deir ez-Zor province*

A single coalition strike in January 2016 killed about 45 people in East Tabiya. Most of them were children, one person lost three children. Old people and young men were killed; houses were completely destroyed. There were no militants; the strike was in the middle of the village. The large airstrike in the middle of the village, where there were houses. Twenty five to thirty missiles. There were one large plane and four small ones.

Many people in my village died. If you're interested — we made a common grave. You can take a look.

The next day, Saturday, another strike was delivered on the main street in a neighboring village. Strikes began to occur every day. Strikes began to occur every day. Strikes against Al-Husseiniya, Al-Mheda and other cities. Not a single ISIS person was hurt.

There used to be four thousand people in Eastern Tabiya, but now there are 400-500 people. The rest left the village.



*Hakmat Mustafa Al-Mashhadani Abu Al-Abbas, Sheikh of the Al-Mashahda tribe,
Deir ez-Zor province*

We have relatives — one family, the surname is Muhammad Ash-Shuaybi.

They all died in the bombing. 14-15 people died, including eleven children.



*Abd Al-Azis Al-Issa (53 years old),
Chairman of the Ar-Raqqa Province
Bar Chamber, Raqqa City*

5 judges and more than 20 lawyers from our Bar Chamber were killed by coalition strikes.

Ibrahim Al-Garaf was killed first. He was the president of the Raqqa Province Court. He was 62 years old. His body has not yet been found. This was my colleague Muhammad Turki Al-Husseini.

He was about 67 years old. Lawyer. Lawyer Adele Kakaji. His body has been found. He was killed along with two brothers. He was 54-55 years old.



*Hatem Al-Shuhna (28 years old),
gas station owner, Jaydad village,
Raqqa province*

The coalition aviation destroyed my gas station in 2016. In 2016, neighbors wanted to leave the village by car. They packed their things and turned on the light. Their car and house were hit. Everyone was killed: 3 children and 2 women. Civilians. There were a lot of such cases.

For example, another close relative of mine drives a pickup truck. The coalition hit the pickup truck and killed his wife.

He wanted to take his wife to the hospital. From the village to Raqqa. He is 65 years old and his wife was 55 years old. His name is Ali Al-Khabur.

His wife died and he was wounded.

It was an airstrike. The cultural center and the central post office were destroyed.



Ammuna Al-Barri Husein (50 years old), housewife, Onmahjara village, Aleppo province

I am from the Mesken area, the village of Onmahjara. The Americans began bombing in 2017. I will list young people who died as a result of airstrikes. Yousef Al-Hajj, Muhammad Al-Ahmed — son of Ahmed, Isa Al-Musa Ali, Hasan Ibrahim, Ahmed Al-Ahmed, Ahmed ibn Abdullah Ali Ibrahim, Abdel Khalid Al-Musa Al-Ahmed, Ali Ibrahim, Ibrahim Al-Eji, Yousef Al-Eji, Ibrahim Al-Shahud, Amad Al-Mustafa. They were young. They were killed in their homes in the village of Onmahjara.

One of them was on a motorcycle — Hasun Al-Ismail, an elderly man. He collected people to protect them from strikes. He was killed, and he was not even buried. There were no traces of them, nothing remained.



Hussein Al-Ali Butel (42 years old), Ad-Daraya village, Raqqa province

Many of my relatives were killed when the Americans and Kurds attacked our areas. In 2016, there was an airstrike. It was at 12 P.M. in the city of Raqqa. As a result, 52 people died. Street or Quarter Seif ad-Daulya, opposite the school named Balquis.

My uncle Ibrahim Khalil Al-Badram and his mother were killed. The whole family. His mother is Surya Al-Sahu. Suria was 55 years old. Ibrahim was 38 years old. The killed children were 5-7 years old.



Muhammad Ahmed Al-Sheikh (45 years old), Raqqa city

My house was completely destroyed in June 2017. Four-storey building — 8 apartments.

Only the first floor remained. We survived because we were sitting in the basement.

40 people lived in the basement for 38 days.

It was an aerial bombing.

There were no militants in this quarter at all. This is a residential area, there were no command posts. The street, almost one kilometer long, is a residential area.

Almost 10 buildings in our quarter were destroyed. Many people died. There were buildings that didn't have a basement.

Almost 50 people were killed in a single building. Almost 10 families were killed in another building, from what I heard from relatives.

Chapter IV US ARMED FORCES AND PRO-AMERICAN UNITS: KILLINGS, TORTURE AND RAPE

In the course of interviews with Syrian citizens conducted by the Democracy Research Foundation, witnesses and victims cite facts of how the armed forces of the coalition countries, mainly the US armed forces that illegally occupied a part of Syria, kill civilians with small arms, shoot them from helicopters, deprives them of freedom of movement and also organize torture of Syrian citizens: "...they shot people with machine guns from helicopters", "the Americans detained people and did not allow them to leave the city.

They shot at the unarmed residents of Raqqa, even those who were in their houses", "they shot at Faisal, a local resident... He had no weapons, nothing", "...when we raised the Syrian flags, the Americans closed the city for three days and did not allow anyone to go out", "I was beaten in prison... I was burned with a flame, a gas burner... My head was drowned in water...

I was hounded by a dog. And the American man sat at the table and asked questions."

The killings, torture and abductions of Syrian citizens, mainly children, were also carried out on a purposeful and systematic basis by pro-American groups of militants, who, according to witnesses, were trained, armed and paid for by the US.

These data are confirmed and supplemented by information from other non-governmental organizations such as Airwars and Amnesty

International. Here are just a few examples from the long list of crimes committed by the US-led coalition.

On February 17, 2019 (the case is registered in the Airwars database under the index CS1776a), the coalition shot with a burst of machine-gun fire a bread seller Abdul Razzaq Mohammed near the village of Abu Juba.

On April 13, 2019 (the case is registered in the Airwars database under the index CSCS1917), five people were killed between midnight and 5 a.m. during the operation of the US-led coalition near the village of Al Takini. The operation was carried out by several Apache helicopters and Hammer military vehicles.

On July 4, 2019 (the case is registered in the Airwars database under the index CSCS1922), one child was killed and another child was injured as a result of the collision with a US-led coalition vehicle. Halab TV channel reported today that a coalition patrol hit a motorcycle with children near the village of Shokum in Hasak. A 12-year-old child, Hani Al-Afin, was killed, and 15-year-old Yasser Abdul-Baqi got a concussion and various injuries and needs to have one of his fingers amputated.

On August 1, 2019 (the case is registered in the Airwars database under the index CS1926), Al-Khabour News reported that BYD-backed coalition forces organized a massacre in which six people, including children and women, were killed in Bekaa village in the Tal Khamis area in Haseka province.

On September 4, 2019 (the case is registered in the Airwars database under the index CS1930), a child Ali Al-Ahmad was killed during a coalition landing operation.

According to news agencies reports, the operation took place between the city of Muaziya and the village of Marat on the old road between Deir ez-Zor and Haseka provinces.

On September 4, 2019 (the case is registered in the Airwars database under the index CS1931), according to local residents, US helicopters landed near the dam at Al-Basel Lake in an easterly direction.

They reached Wadi El-Raml and the village of Al Haddai, causing panic and fear among the residents. The landing resulted in the death of two people.

On December 21, 2019 (the case is registered in the Airwars database under the index CS1941), a 27-year-old girl Manar Saqer died after being hit by a US-led coalition truck near Karmuti Square in Kamyshli. The collision occurred when she was returning from work. A truck run over resulted in the amputation of two legs at the hospital, where she later died.

On May 1, 2020 (the case is registered in the Airwars database under the index CS1944), a civilian was killed by a sniper of the US armed forces or YPG forces in an oil field in Deir ez-Zor province. The victim — Yasser Al-Asman — was a teacher in the city of Raqqa.

In the city of Al Zir on May 22, 2020 (the case is registered in the Airwars database under the index CS1947): “A civilian was killed by a sniper on the roof of his house in Al Zir when he watched the coalition troops enter the village of Al Shuhabl in Deir ez-Zor province. The Eye of the Euphrates wrote that “Muhammad Khelif Al-Hamra was killed on the roof of his house. He did not belong to any faction and was the owner of a grocery store in the city of Al Zir.”

Here are the stories of victims and witnesses collected by the Democracy Research Foundation.



Ismail Muhammad Al-Abud (34 years old), owner of a car wash station, Hneda village, Raqqa province

In 2018, Kurds took over the village. I opened my own car wash station and worked there. A month and a half later, the Kurds from the Khad formation came to me at 4 a.m. The Americans train them. Their uniforms are black with the word Khud on it. They stormed, attacked my house. My father came out to them. He is an elderly man — he is 80 years old.

They hit him with a gun. They took me away and blindfolded me. They put me in an armored Hummer. They took me to Al-Mansour. We stood there for almost 2 hours at the Al-Zeraa school in the village of Al-Mansour.

Then they took me to Hades prison in the city of At-Tabka. I spent a month and three days there. An American was present at the interrogation. I was beaten in prison. They beat me with hoses. They burned plastic and dripped plastic onto my back. There was an investigator named Abu Ghazali. He burned me with a flame, a gas burner. They tied my hands and feet. They had a barrel for water. My head was drowned in water. I was hounded by a dog. When I was summoned for interrogation, there were three investigators sitting there. Two of them are Arabs, and the third is a Kurd who was sitting on the floor. And the American man sat at the table and asked questions. There was a computer in front of him.

They asked me about the At-Tabka airfield, because our village is located not far from there. He asked me how many times I had been at the At Tabka airport when the Syrian army had been there and why our village had been loyal to the Syrian state. They asked me how old I was and who we wanted — Bashar al-Assad or the Syrian Democratic Forces. I said that we supported the one who ensured our security. Under Bashar al-Assad, everything was safe, 100% safe. And now there is no security. The Arab resented, he did not like the answer.



***Mahumud Issa Al-Muhammad, teacher,
An-Nafira village, Raqqa province***

The neighboring village of Ad-Dajah was bombed by the Americans. Two families were killed. The family of Abdullah Al-Muhammad Al-Issa — 14 people. Ten children from one to seven years old. There were no terrorists there. There was no war in the village, there were no troops. I was at the funeral. And once they shot people with machine guns from helicopters.



*Hasan Ali Muhammad
Al-Umeshad, Sheikh of the
Al-Umeshad tribe, Raqqa city*

Many people from my tribe lived in Raqqa. About a thousand were killed by American bombing or terrorists. Many left Raqqa. The Americans detained people and did not allow them to leave the city. They shot at the unarmed residents of Raqqa, even those who were in their houses. For example, this was the case in the Kem-Ar-

Rumania area. They gave to the Kurds those whom they detained so that they would fight along with the Kurds. There were American spies among us. Then the Americans arrived by helicopters and their troops detained people.



*Jamal Al-Mashi (34 years old),
Sheikh of the El-Bubanna tribe,
Manbij city, Aleppo province*

In the village of Al-Mashi, when we raised the Syrian flags, the Americans closed the city for three days and did not allow anyone to go out.

On February 8, 2020, four American wheeled armored vehicles appeared in the village of Harbat Hamo, Haseke province: two Oshkosh M-ATV and two International MaxxPro. Witnesses — local residents — say that American troops tried to drive along the road in the village.

Local residents gathered for a rally, refused to let them through and blocked the road. After the Americans had tried to drive by force, women and children began throwing stones at American cars. The American armed forces, which were part of the coalition, opened fire with large-caliber machine guns and small arms.

Their shots killed 22-year-old Faisal Khalid Muhammad, whose only fault was that he “had taken a stone in his hand to throw it at an American car.” Doctors who examined the murdered Faisal Khalid Muhammad testify that he was shot several times, and each wound was fatal: a wound in the neck that severed arteries, wounds in the kidney area, the groin area and the pelvis.

According to doctors, specially trained people shot at the young man with a clear intention to kill. When the director of the local school wanted to take him to the hospital for medical treatment, American soldiers fired at his car, thereby preventing the victim from being evacuated to the hospital.

Jamal Suleiman Al-Arab, a 26-year-old student, was also wounded. He talked about being hit twice. According to doctors, he may remain disabled and use crutches all his life because of the wounds he received. Following the murder of a local resident, several villagers took out their personal weapons and indiscriminate shooting began.

American forces drew air support, resulting in an F-16 aircraft hovering over the village of Harbat Hamo, demonstrating its readiness to carry out a missile and bomber strike against the village.

Despite the use of firearms and the demonstration of force in the form of aircraft, local residents did not allow American troops to pass through their village. Following the incident involving the murder and injuries, local residents found at the scene of the incident American bullets and casings from both M2 Browning heavy machine guns (12.7 mm caliber) and M4 machine guns (5.56 mm) mounted on armored vehicles.

Bullet marks were found not only in the bodies of those killed and injured, but also in various buildings and vehicles, and penetrations were observed on some walls of the buildings. This proves that not only an American machine gunner, but also several American soldiers shot to kill civilians.



Residents of the village of Harbat Hamo in Haseke province gather for a rally to keep American forces out of the village. Photograph: the villagers



Children and adolescents in the village of Harbat Hamo in Haseke province throw stones at American armored vehicles that want to drive through their village against the will of the residents. After that, American troops opened fire. Photograph: the villagers



Zayda Salyadj Al-Asmar (40 years old), mother of a young man, Faisal, killed by American troops, Harbat Hamo village, Haseke province, and Khalid Bari Muhammad (50 years old), father of a young man, Faisal, killed by American troops, Harbat Hamo village, province Haseke

At 8 a.m. on the 12th, it was Wednesday, my son was at home. He had breakfast. We heard that American vehicles were about to enter by force. We said, “Where are you going? There is no road here! What are you doing here?” They answered that they wanted to drive in the direction of Ramilian. We told them that there was no road they needed, everything was closed and they could not drive from here. We tried in every possible way to prevent their passage.

They didn’t listen to us. We had nothing but stones. We could only protect ourselves with stones. What can we do? They had armored vehicles with all kinds of weapons. We tried to defend our village using stones. They started shooting at us with small arms. When they opened fire, my son was killed before my eyes. He was next to me. A whole machine-gun burst was fired into him.

The first bullet hit him in the shin. Faisal fell. He shouted: “I am wounded.” The second bullet hit him in the thigh; he fell to the ground and could not move.

After that, the next machine gun burst. Three bullets hit him in the leg, chest and stomach. I didn’t even have the opportunity to help him. I wanted to, but I was under bullets.

I couldn't do anything to save him. We could do nothing against powerful American weapons. There were several machine gun bursts in our direction, from all the American vehicles that were there. We are poor people, we have nothing.

He was my oldest son. He is forever in my heart. He is a part of me. I loved him very much. I raised him in love. We didn't have any weapons. Only stones. No weapons, nothing else. We live very poorly. We make ends meet day by day. Local people are very poor, they live as they can.

I would say to the American soldier who shot my son, if I met him, that God will punish him.

I hope God will punish him severely. Americans are terrorists. They are cultivating terrorism. We are simple people. As soon as America appeared in our region, terrorists appeared.



US armed forces firing at civilians in the village of Harbat Hamo, Haseke province. This fire killed 22-year-old Faisal Khalid Muhammad and wounded 26-year-old Jamal Suleiman Al-Arab. Photograph: the villagers



Faisal Khalid Muhammad, 22, killed by US military, Harbat Hamo, Al-Hasakah governorate. The photo was taken at the funeral and provided by local residents.



Muhammad Mahmoud Muhammad (24), cousin of Faisal Khalid Muhammad, 22, killed by US forces, Harbat Hamo, Al-Hasakah governorate

I am Faisal's cousin, Mohammed Mahmoud Muhammad. Faisal went outside, where there was an American patrol. He picked up a stone to throw it at the American car. He was hit by a string of bullets fired from a machine gun mounted on the

car's armor. A bullet hit him in the hip, he fell and then was shot in the neck and chest.



Mohammed Mahmoud Muhammad showing US troops shooting 22-year-old Faisal Khalid Muhammad, who was unarmed. Photos by volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy.



Hassan Khalil Al-Uweid (53), eye-witness to the killing of Faisal Khalid Muhammad, 22, by US forces, Harbat Hamo, Al-Hasakah governorate

I live here, in Harbat Hamo. We came here, to the checkpoint, and witnessed an American convoy consisting of five armored cars being stopped. After being asked to leave, they said, “We will go where we want to go.” After the Americans decided to drive through the roadblock, we built a human shield in front of the US cars.

Not a single bullet was fired by Syrian citizens in the direction of the Americans. The Americans, however, opened fire on the Syrian citizens who were here. One of the local residents was killed. It was Faisal. Another one was wounded.

The local residents were indignant at seeing one of our people killed and another wounded. After Faisal died, people took their personal weapons

and the shooting started. You could see the holes left by the American bullets on the walls of our houses. The Americans asked for reinforcements and an American aircraft arrived.



The photo shows bullet holes left by a US heavy-caliber machine gun and US troops' small arms near the place where 22-year-old Faisal Khalid Muhammad, who was unarmed, was killed.



Zeinab Muhammad Hasan (39), a teacher, witness to the killing of 22-year-old Faisal Khalid Muhammad by US troops, Harbat Hamo, Al-Hasakah governorate

I am a teacher and work at Harbat Hamo School. When I was on my way to school for my shift, I saw an American convoy. The convoy was in front of me when I was on my way to school. I realized that the convoy was moving toward the entry to the settlement.

I phoned the headmaster. When I arrived, people were already gathering here...

The American convoy was stopped and the Americans were not allowed to move further into the village.

The first car from the American convoy made an attempt to drive through the checkpoint. People were already gathering, and this American car met resistance from our side.

The Americans opened fire on local residents. People started throwing stones at them. Here, they killed Faisal.

I saw several bullets — three bullets — hit him in the leg, stomach and neck.

The Americans began to transmit the coordinates of their location, calling in the US air force. An aircraft arrived.



***Tariq Japta Muhammad
(30), cousin of Faisal Khalid
Muhammad, 22, killed by US
forces, Harbat Hamo, Al-Hasakah
governorate***

We gathered here and started to take all possible actions to prevent the American convoy from driving through. We started throwing stones at them. The Americans shot at my cousin. When they opened fire, we started hiding behind houses. Later the reinforcements came. The Americans got out of the car and started shooting at us. After the Americans shot at my cousin, I poured some gasoline and sprayed it on the car. The Americans are our enemy, the invader.



The photo shows a Syrian soldier who witnessed the killing of 22-year-old Faisal Khalid Muhammad by US forces, Harbat Hamo, Al-Hasakah governorate. The interview is given on condition of anonymity.

That day I was at this checkpoint and saw all the developments. Local residents gathered to prevent the passage of the US convoy...

The Americans made an attempt to pass by force, but local residents lined up to form a human shield in front of the US cars.

People began throwing stones at one the cars that had driven through the checkpoint.

The shooting started and Faisal was killed. Then we heard the sound of an American aircraft, which meant our village came under attack.



American bullets and cartridges, presumably from a Browning M2 heavy machine gun and an M4 assault rifle, found at the scene of the murder of 22-year-old Faisal Khalid Muhammad by American troops, Harbat Hamo, Al-Hasakah governorate. Photos by local residents.



Fatih Allahu Al-Saleh, witness to the killing of Faisal Khalid Muhammad, 22, by US forces, Harbat Hamo, Al-Hasakah governorate

I was there. I saw my friend Faisal approaching.

Fire was opened on him and he fell down. He was hit by several bullets and fell to the ground. I ran over to him and saw blood.

I carried him toward the car to evacuate him.



Ahmad Al-Arab Al-Ab (39), headmaster of the school in Harbat Hamo, witness to the killing of 22-year-old Faisal Khalid Muhammad by US forces, Harbat Hamo, Al-Hasakah governorate

I am the headmaster of the school in Harbat Hamo. That day we tried to prevent an American convoy from entering the village. Everyone gathered here. Children, adults — young and old. Women. Everyone demanded that the Americans go away. For us, they are invaders. We talked to them. We tried by all means available to make them turn around, but they didn't want to. Women called them to turn around and leave. We started a rally, people were angry.

The Americans opened fire on women and children. They shot Faisal, a local resident, who was about 10–15 meters from the road near the building. He had no weapon, none whatsoever. After they hit Faisal, we wanted to evacuate him and help him. The Americans fired on my car so we could not evacuate Faisal to the hospital. He died.

Both door glasses in my car were broken, as was the windshield. Here is a trace of an American bullet. Here is where it hit. There is also a hole in there. There, you see? There is another one. On top. And next to it, and one more. When I was repairing my car, I found several American bullets in the passenger compartment, this is one of them. They wanted to kill me, but I got out of the car just in time.



The core of an American M4 Carbine bullet, found by headmaster Ahmad Al-Arab Al-Ab in his car. The US troops fired on him as he was trying to take 22-year-old Faisal Khalid Muhammad to hospital. Photo by local residents.



Mahmoud Turki Saad (30), doctor, Qamishli, Al-Hasakah governorate

I am a surgeon at the State Hospital of Qamishli.

Faisal Muhammad was admitted to hospital, he was already dead — he had several wounds.

There were several wounds. He had wounds in the neck, chest, knee, hip and pelvic area. The right leg was entirely broken.

Most of the wounds that the deceased received were fatal. It is clear that the

person who was shooting was a professional. The first wound was in the neck — they knew where to shoot. The bullet broke arteries in the neck... The second wound was in the side of the back; the bullet went through and through. They wanted to hit the kidneys. And the third wound was especially fatal, because it was right into the pelvic arteries. The wounds that were in his legs... if he had survived, we would have amputated his legs.



Jamal Suleiman Al-Arab (26), a student injured by US troops, witness to the killing of Faisal Khalid Muhammad, 22, by US troops

We heard that the Americans were trying to enter our village. All local residents took to the streets. We do not want the Americans to come into our village. We tried to stop them. The Americans opened fire on us and I was wounded. I was shot twice. Two bullets in my leg. We did not have any weapons. They opened fire on us.

Americans are invaders. They do not care whether that be soldiers or civilians.



Jamal Suleiman Al-Arab (26), a student injured by US troops, at the hospital in Qamishli, Al-Hasakah governorate. Photo by Mahmud Ahmad Hussein Al-Hajj Ali, orthopaedist at the State Hospital of Qamishli



Wound inflicted by US troops on Jamal Suleiman Al-Arab (26), witness to the killing of 22-year-old Faisal Khalid Muhammad by US troops. Photo by Mahmud Ahmad Hussein Al-Hajj Ali, orthopaedist at the State Hospital of Qamishli

However, the most serious human rights violations are committed by pro-American militant groups and in camps set up under US military control, where Syrian civilians are forcibly detained. The civilians who managed to escape from Rukban camp say it is under the full control of US forces stationed at the nearby Al-Tanf base. Syrian refugees testify that the US uses various groups of fighters to run the camp, recruiting, training and paying them salaries, providing them with weapons and ammunition, clothing and vehicles, and fully controlling them on an everyday basis. Not only do these groups prevent refugees from leaving, effectively turning Rukban into a concentration camp or prison and refugees into hostages, but they also commit murder, rape, torture, kidnapping and looting of refugees on a daily basis. Maghawir al-Thawra is the largest illegal armed group controlled by the US. Refugees provide numerous examples of killings and beatings of the camp's civilians by the fighters, as well as incidents of rape and harassment of women and children. One of the women interviewed described how a fighter tried to rape her daughter, who was nine years old. One of the sources of the fighters' income is the abduction of small children, whom they return to their parents only for a considerable ransom. Witnesses believe that the targeted, artificially created plight of camp residents compel single mothers deprived of livelihoods to engage in prostitution. This is in the interest of the fighters, who are the only ones who receive regular and large salaries from US officials in Rukban camp. Refugees say drug and alcohol use is widespread among the fighters, and when intoxicated, they regularly drive around Rukban in cars, shooting in the air and at the camp residents. Those interviewed talk with fear about the prisons in Rukban camp and with even greater fear about the prison at the US base of Al-Tanf.

Former camp residents, including former fighters, say that all armed units were trained at the US base. Refugees believe that the US personnel at the Al-Tanf base are well aware of the plight of camp residents and the abuses by fighters. Moreover, some of them are confident that the US is intentionally maintaining the dire situation in Rukban camp to make more refugees join the fighters to save their families from hunger.

Almost all those interviewed are convinced that Rukban camp is run by the Americans and all the militant groups report directly to them.

They cite numerous facts to support this suggestion, including daily meetings between US troops at the Al-Tanf base and the leadership of all militant groups, US military training, armaments, supplies, payment

of salaries to the fighters, etc. Refugees are especially indignant at the fact that they were forcibly held in the camp, virtually as hostages. They couldn't leave the camp without paying a considerable ransom. Some people who tried to escape from the camp were subjected to various punishments, including torture and beatings.



Mahmoud Ahmad Hussein Al-Hajj Ali (29), doctor, Qamishli, Al-Hasakah governorate

I work at the state hospital in Qamishli. I specialize in orthopedics. On 12 February, we admitted Jamal Suleiman Al-Arab. He was wounded. The bullet wound was in his left foot. Part of his foot was ripped off. It was a serious wound as if caused by explosion. We found pieces of bullets. We'll have to treat the wound for at least two months, then we will do another surgery. It is possible that he will have to use crutches for his entire life.



*Funeral of Faisal Khalid Muhammad, killed by coalition forces.
Photo by family of the deceased.*

The interviewed refugees talked in detail about the intimidation of camp residents that was used to keep them in Rukban camp. They say that those who have positive attitude toward the Syrian government are subjected to pressure, which includes beatings, torture, destruction of property, threats against family members, etc. Printed materials and false announcements are regularly distributed in Rukban camp, saying that former camp residents entering the territory controlled by the legitimate Syrian government will be facing torture and death.

Refugees from Rukban camp and their families say that after the violence committed by pro-American fighters the next most important problem they faced was hunger, the scarce and expensive drinking water and food. The interviewed families reported that their young children suffered from hunger and ate no more than once a day. For most of them, rice, lentils, or other cereals were the only food for many years. As a result, they did not receive the necessary nutrition, which caused irreversible consequences for their health. Former Rukban residents say they could eat chicken no more than once a month. They say that only the fighters or those associated with them had enough money to buy food and water.

The lack of medical care along with the forced detention of civilians in Rukban resulted in the deaths of many children and adults in the camp. The interviewed refugees provide numerous examples of the deaths of their own children and family members as a result of diseases that could have been successfully cured if medical care had been provided. The only medical facility in the camp had no trained medical staff or supply of medicines. Even in cases of serious illness, the fighters refused to allow refugees into the territory controlled by the Syrian government without a considerable ransom. All this led to a large number of deaths, especially among children and women. Refugees who have medical education estimate that about 20 to 30 people die each month in Rukban as a result of the lack of medical care.

Almost all the refugees interviewed were unanimous in identifying those responsible for the dire situation in Rukban. They have no doubt that the responsibility lies with the US and pro-American fighters who together created an atmosphere of terror, killing, beating and intimidation against refugees in the camp. They also stress the responsibility of the US for the starvation and death of their children and family members in the camp. Most of them straightforwardly say

that the US presence in Syria is illegal and believe that the camp exists only because refugees are being forcibly held there by the fighters, who release them only for a significant ransom.

Refugees provide detailed accounts of violence committed by fighters: numerous cases of killings and beatings. They say many of the killings were intentional — fighters could kill a refugee to intimidate the others, to seize their money, or simply to show discontent. This happened both inside and outside Rukban camp — first, fighters would take away some of the refugees and then kill them. But there were also accidental murders — in numerous shootings between fighters or during the shooting by fighters for entertainment or after the use of drugs. Beatings of refugees were also widespread. The reason could be an assumption that some refugee had a positive opinion about the legitimate government of Syria or said that he wanted to leave the camp for the territory controlled by the government. In case the fighters were not happy about something, they could destroy the property of suspects as an intimidation measure. Refugees say that in some cases the fighters could not only beat people but also took them to prisons. Those prisons were located both in Rukban and at the US base of Al-Tanf.



Fahd Daham Khmedee (27), former Maghawir al-Thawra fighter, spent three years in Rukban camp

I was with Maghawir al-Thawra fighters. They were under the command of Americans. Sometimes we wouldn't like someone, and we could beat them up. We didn't treat people well. We threatened them. We could destroy property to make them join us. We could kill chickens or sheep, destroy something to make them work

with us. Those who had no money were not allowed to leave Rukban and were brought back to the camp.



Khaled Abdulhan Abdullatif (40), farmer, spent four years in Rukban camp

Fighters could fire far and wide for no reason at all. They could start shooting for any reason. One killed for a garlic bulb. They started arguing about why it was so expensive. For example, in Rukban, one kilo costs about 1000 lire, and here in the government-controlled territory 200 lire. The fighters started to argue, then put up a fight, and then began to shoot.



Hafez Shkhada Al-Salzhan (43), spent four years in Rukban camp

My brother's son was killed in the camp, he was 16. Right at home. They also unlawfully took people, without any reason. They took them to Al-Tanf. Threats from fighters were frequent. They often shot in the air and killed, there were different cases. Sometimes they would surround a house, shoot and kill.



Fuaz Awad Al-Djazi (41), spent four years in Rukban camp

The fighters killed my cousin. Nuvaf was a good man. He went to the market to buy something, and fighters wanted to take his car. If a militant group knew that I had money, they would surround me, cover their faces and take the money. Another man, Khasan Letgim, was arrested and killed by the fighters. They hanged him. They knew he had money and wanted to take it. They took him somewhere, and 15 days later he was found dead. The fighters said they had hanged him.



Muhammed Ahmed Shah

My mother was sitting in the yard, fighters shot at her. She died immediately. Three bullets hit her. They shot on purpose, not by accident. We did not complain to anyone. We were afraid. All fighters are the same and they would not punish each other.



Turki Muhamad Najras (43), spent three and a half years in Rukban camp

The camp is dirty, life there is miserable and degrading.

Fighters would shoot at any moment, there was chaos in the camp. It is impossible to live there.



Faza Abdullah Al-Abdullah (34), spent four years in Rukban camp

There were cases of fighters killing people.

Sometimes they would kill at home, sometimes they would take someone and kill them outside the camp. Such cases were commonplace.



Ahmad Khussein Sheehan (22), meat seller, spent four years in Rukban camp

People were taken to Al-Tanf prison. The prison at the US base. From there they were sometimes sent to Jordan.



Yasser Ommar (39), electrician, spent four years in Rukban camp

There were cases of murder. I remember once there was a conflict between one of the refugees and a fighter. He shot and killed the man.



Ali Ahmed Muzaveh (40), general labourer, spent four years in Rukban camp

There were a lot of conflicts between fighters. They would shoot at each other, and civilians suffered from that... Fighters are linked to the Americans and act on their instructions.



Muhammad Abdurahman (40)

I did all sorts of work in the camp to provide for my family. I was approached by these people, the fighters. They told me that they knew that I spoke out in favour of the Syrian State. At first, I was intimidated and verbally threatened. Then I was captured. They wanted to make me go with them, work with them as a fighter. They took my documents, my phone and my watch. I was beaten up. I was hit, they said bad words to me, scolded me. They shot into the air first, then they shot at me. Then two men were killed — the first one's name was Ahmad and the second Islam — because they didn't want to work with them. Then they killed two more from Damascus.

Refugees said we should be careful in our interviews. Among them were spies reporting to fighters, who collected information about what other people say.



Ali Ahmad Khlef (23), medical student, spent four years in Rukban camp

Once I was arrested, blindfolded, threatened with death. They filmed a video to use it against me, so that I would stay in the camp, so that I would not try to leave it.

They said, "We will kill you if you try to leave the camp again, and we will tell the Americans."

I realized that they would put me in jail. They threatened with the Americans, they had a prison.

Refugees talk about cases of rape committed by fighters. It should be recalled that, according to Paulo Pinheiro, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, cases of sexual violence in Syria may be defined as crimes against humanity.

Extremely hard conditions in the camp and inability to provide food for their children also led to some women being forced to engage in prostitution. Quite often, pro-American fighters kidnapped children and then returned them to their parents after receiving a significant ransom.



Fatima Hussein Jmeid (24), spent four years in Rukban camp

Two years ago, I asked my daughter to bring bread from a shop. She went to the shop and a fighter saw her.

He asked her to go to the market with him to buy vegetables.

She went with him, but he changed the road, went the other way.

She asked where they were going, and she was told that it was a shortcut. He brought her outside the camp. He stopped there and started kissing her.

He was going to rape her, she was nine years old then. Before he could rape her, other fighters came, but he almost did it; if they had come a minute later, he would have raped her.

The fighters who rescued her from that man filmed a video of him trying to rape her and threatened him to show that video to everyone unless he paid them money.

They threatened my daughter with killing her parents if she told anyone. All fighters are the same, they are beasts.

My neighbours' son was captured, he is four years old, his name is Mahmud Hasha. They paid the money and got the boy back.

I heard a lot about the abduction of other children in the camp. Some fighters live in the camp, they have their own houses.

They capture children, keep them in their houses and demand money for them.

There were cases of women being forced into prostitution with fighters for money. They did it because of hunger and poverty. As a result, many children were born.



Ali Half Ali Shafa (35), spent four years in Rukban camp

There were many cases of rape. But our religion prescribes that we shouldn't talk about it, because it is not a good thing.

And those who experience it, with whom such a thing happens, don't tell everyone about it.

It is considered a shame. That is why they keep silent.

There were cases of women being forced to engage in prostitution.

Women were forced to do that because they needed money and food.

Many women had no husbands, they had to feed their children, to provide for them, so they had to do it.



Faza Abdullah Al-Abdullah (34), spent four years in Rukban camp.

Many women got pregnant by other men than their husbands.

This was caused by hunger and poverty.

They needed money to feed their families.



Khaled Hussein Al-Hussein (39), spent three years in Rukban camp.

Some women sold out to fighters due to hunger and hardship.

Prostitution, they were forced to it.

Those Syrian nationals who were held at Rukban camp confirm that US military forces used pro-American fighters to deny them freedom of movement and to actually hold them hostage. Those who were caught trying to escape were often subjected to threats, violence and torture.



Ali Half Ali Shafa (35), spent four years in Rukban camp.

It was impossible to leave freely. We got there thinking that was Syrian territory; this proved to be untrue, but we were not allowed to go. Many tried to leave the camp; some managed to succeed, but those who failed and got caught by fighters were put in jail. Some were caught and sometimes subjected to

violence and torture. When they got caught and promised not to do that again, they were released. But if such people started to argue, tried to get what they wanted, to leave the camp, they were punished and tortured. For example, they were hung from the ceiling by their feet.

Few wanted to escape because of the fear to be shot at.

If people wanted to leave, the price reached up to 100 thousand, depending on the situation. The majority could not afford that since they had nothing to live on.



Yasser Ommar (39), electrician, spent four years in Rukban camp.

It was very hard to leave. People were not allowed to. It costs a lot of money to get out of there. We were just told that it was forbidden to leave the camp, I don't know why. Fighters did not allow it.

Some managed to escape, while some failed. I didn't make any attempts. I was afraid. They could have beaten or killed me.

I paid 50 thousand to get out of there. You must pay, if you want to leave, otherwise they won't let you out.

You have to pay 700 thousand for a car. Sometimes, there are several families in one car; they take 50-70 thousand from each to obtain this sum.



Khaled Abdulhan Abdullatif (40), farmer, spent four years in Rukban camp.

We wanted to go to the territory of the government. They told we would get arrested there and demanded that we pay a lot of money so that they let us go. 500 thousand lire and more, but we didn't have that much. A bag of flour costed 30 thousand lire there. Even the price for a box of pills, it's written here, is 150 lire, and there it costs 1.5 thousand lire.



Abulalah Audi At-Taleb (45), farmer, spent four years in Rukban camp

Previously, we didn't try to return to the territory of the government because we couldn't afford to pay.

As soon as the roads were opened and we got the chance to get back, we did it.



Muhammad Abdurahman (40).

Fighters prevented refugees from returning to the territory under the Syrian State's control. They asked for a lot of money. They say, sometimes 300 thousand for a person. We tried to leave the camp twice, but we were caught and brought back to the camp.



Muhsen Al-Khali, his wife Leila Seil Al-Muhammad, and Maxim Grigoriev, Director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy

It was impossible to leave because we didn't have the money. They asked for 150 thousand for each person. We had to pay to get out of there. It's a very large sum. We had no money.



Mahmoud Khaled Al-Saleh (38), labourer, was in Rukban camp since its creation.

Previously, there had been no opportunity to leave. Fighters would not let us out. We were forced to pay a lot of money, which had been impossible for us before. We left as soon as we got the chance.

Fighters were outside the camp and they frequently travelled with Americans to their base. The base is used by Americans, and Al-Tanf is under their control.



Ali Ahmad Khlef (23), medical student, spent four years in Rukban camp.

Three or four times we tried to escape from the camp and return to the territory controlled by the Syrian authorities. But fighters and armed groups would stand in our way; they prevented us from leaving the camp.

The first time we tried to get out of there was together with my family — my family and I. My father got ill. We tried to get out by car, but they asked for a lot of money. We didn't get the opportunity, fighters would not let us out. My father eventually died.

Another time, my family and I tried to leave in the evening, at night. There are two fences in the camp, the internal and external ones; we failed to reach the external fence, as we heard shooting. They started shooting, we heard it and came back.

Several times we tried to get out secretly, but we were caught and returned to the camp. Fighters prevented us from leaving the camp also because I'm a medic. They wanted me to stay.

They told us to abandon our attempts to leave and that they would not let us leave the camp.

In the context of forcible detention of refugees at Rukban camp, the dire situation with the lack of medical care was in fact a form of killing of Syrian citizens by pro-American fighters controlled by the US.

Civilians tell about deaths of children and adults in the camp due to the de facto absence of medical care.

They give numerous examples when their own children and relatives died of diseases that could have been successfully treated if it wasn't for the absence of medical care.

The camp's residents say that the only infirmary had no trained staff or stock of medicines.

The only available means of treatment was to buy medicines supplied to the camp at a price 10-15 times higher than the usual one.

Refugees say that in severe cases they tried to seek medical care at the infirmaries in Jordan situated near the border.

Yet, they were often refused or put on the waiting list, and they could wait for their turn for more than a year.

Even in cases of severe diseases fighters refused to let refugees into the territory controlled by the Syrian government without a large ransom.

All this led to a great number of deaths, notably among children and women. According to refugees, from 20 to 30 people die in Rukban every month.



Fuaz Awad Al-Djazi (41), spent four years in Rukban camp

My baby and nephew died due to the lack of medical care.

My baby was eight months and nephew three years old.



Mahmoud Khaled Al-Saleh (38), labourer, was in Rukban camp since its creation

People died. Notably children. Many children died. There were no doctors in Rukban. Three-four children died among my relatives. One of them was seven months, another one two years, and third 12 days old.

There were many deaths. As soon as we left the camp, we spent a whole month getting treatment for various diseases, dirt, and polluted air of Rukban.



Ali Ahmed Muzaveh (40), labourer, spent four years in Rukban camp

It had no doctors.

You can get treatment or buy medicines only at your own expense.

My wife had a uterine bleeding when she was nine-month pregnant and her baby was stillborn.



Khaled Hussein Al-Hussein (39), spent three years in Rukban camp

Our neighbours' son got ill and died.

He was three years old.

His mother was pregnant, and when she learnt about her son's death, she had a miscarriage.



***Amjad Nader Sheehan (37), student,
spent four years in Rukban camp***

The conditions are very difficult there.

People live in tents.

As regards medical care, there are only headache pills.



***Khaled Abdulhan Abdullatif (40), farmer,
spent four years in Rukban camp***

My mother died in Rukban. She got ill, but there were no polyclinics, no medical care. Nobody would consult us. There is an infirmary in Jordan. We went there. They refused to see us. Americans help only those people who work with them, they don't care about anyone else. They take fighters there.



***Muhammad Abu Al-Hamid Suod (45),
spent four years in Rukban camp***

Hamid Hari's mother died in Rukban.

We sought medical care, but there was a long waiting list.

We put her name on it, but we never got a chance after waiting for about a year.

They needed money to go to the territory of the government, but

they didn't have it. 350 thousand lire per family. Even if a person is ill, it doesn't matter...

Fighters once killed a man. Shot him in the head. Everyone saw it.



Turki Muhamad Najras (43), spent three and a half years in Rukban camp

My relative lost his seven-month baby in the camp. His father's name was Farhad. There was no opportunity to transport the baby to the hospital. They went to the infirmary. But it was useless. They don't provide medical care there. They tried to transport the baby to the territory of the government but failed. They couldn't afford to pay.



Mahmud Muhamad Ashahud (51), farmer, spent four years in Rukban camp

My brother and grandson died in the camp.



Abulalah Audi At-Taleb (45), farmer, spent four years in the camp

My two cousins, Muhammed Hashi At-Tali and Muhammed Trad At-Tali, died in the camp.

The first one died of internal bleeding.

The other one was killed by a landmine. There are minefields there.



Pharez Ali Al-Hariri (51), spent four years in Rukban

My uncle died in Rukban. He had been in good health before the camp.

There is no medical care in Rukban, and nobody to turn to. There is an infirmary, but in name only, they don't provide medical care there.

We wanted to cross to the Syrian territory many times, but we couldn't do that as we didn't have money. We couldn't afford to pay a lot. And they told us that the roads were closed and it was dangerous there.



Qasem Muhammad Hammud (44), spent three and a half years in Rukban

My brother's wife died there. Her name was Nurf Al-Mat. There is no medical care in the camp.

They tried to leave the camp for treatment in the territory of the Syrian government. But they were asked to pay a lot of money for that. 200 thousand per person.



Faza Abdullah Al-Abdullah (34), spent four years in Rukban camp

The healthcare situation in the camp is very bad. It so happened that a car hit me. I spent a whole year in bed. It was prohibited to leave, prohibited to leave the territory of the camp. If somebody wanted to leave, he/she had to pay a lot of money... many died as there were no medicines or treatment available.



Ali Half Ali Shafa (35). Wife — Fatima Ali Abdallah, daughters — Nasrin, Hanin, Khaliyaf and Jasmine

There is an infirmary but it is not enough to provide medical help to those who live in Rukban camp. If people were ill, they had to wait for their turn. Unless it was their turn, they died. May Allah rest his soul. I know there was a man whose name was Wahit, he had a heart condition and he died before his turn came. We healed ourselves drawing on the experience of our fathers, mothers and grandfathers.



Yasser Ommar (39), electrician, spent four years in Rukban camp

There were some nurses in the camp, very inexperienced, sometimes without doctors. Health service was very bad. Many people had skin diseases, sore throat, asthma, cough. They didn't give anything for free, we had to buy medicines ourselves, and they cost a lot there. My mother had been suffering from a skin disease, she didn't get treatment as we could not afford it, we had money problems and couldn't transport her here.



Ahmad Khussein Sheehan (22), meat seller, spent four years in Rukban camp

My relative died, she needed to go for treatment. Her name was Khadija Ibrahim Najla, she was my uncle's wife. It was prohibited to leave for the territory of the Syrian government to get medical help, prohibited by fighters. We wanted to transport her to Jordan to get treatment, but they refused to admit her. She died.



Walid Hamud Shihan (29), farmer, spent four and a half years in Rukban camp

My mother died in the camp. If she had managed to get to the hospital, she would have been alive.

We were not allowed to leave.

It is Americans to blame for the fact that we were held there with no opportunity to leave.

The problem of hunger, shortage and high cost of drinking water and food, is particularly acute in the context of forcible detention of

refugees. Many families report that their young children starved and ate no more than once a day. Rice or lentil was the only food that many of them would eat for many years. In the long run, they did not receive the necessary nutrition which resulted in irreversible consequences for their health. Many refugees say they had an opportunity to eat meat no more than once a month. They also report that fighters or those associated with them had enough money to buy food and water. They were supplied to the camp and sold at extremely high prices.

Muhammad Ali Hammad (36), shepherd, spent over two years in Rukban camp



Children were starving. Sometimes they ate once a day. It was very hard to live there.

One day there was bread, the next day there was no bread.

Even when there were vegetables, they were extremely expensive. It was hard for us to afford such things.



Muhsen Al-Khali, Leila Seil Al-Muhammad, his wife, spent three years in Rukban

We were malnourished. We ate meat very rarely and very little. We hadn't had chicken even once in three years. It was very expensive. They sold water in a car, but we couldn't afford to buy it. We had no money for it. I had to bring it myself in jerrycans. They put up some taps on the border with Jordan to pour water. We had to go there to load water. We had to do it with our own hands. Life was very hard there.



Ali Half Ali Shafa (35), spent over three years in Rukban camp

My wife sold water to earn money. Together, we made about 30-35 thousand. It was enough only for food, and we often ate only once a day. There was no free food at all, even for children. We ate only lentil and rice. Sometimes, when I managed to save some money, I bought potatoes. Not every day. It was very, very, very bad in Rukban camp.



Sheila Hammoud Al-Nasa (47), spent three years in Rukban camp

Life was very hard for us there. There is no medicine.

Products are expensive. Only those who had money could afford them.

Life was hard there.



Mahmoud Khaled Al-Saleh (38), labourer, was in Rukban camp since its creation

Life was very hard in Rukban. I have a big family, sometimes we ate bread once a month. We normally ate steamed rice, sometimes even without salt. I have eight children, five girls and three boys. One daughter was born in Rukban, she's three now. It was very hard to find food. Our life was very hard there. We didn't have anything to cook on, we even had to

burn old wheels to cook on fire.

Sometimes people died of high temperature or hunger. There was shortage of food. Many times we sent our children to ask rich people for food.

Civilians give a vivid portrait of pro-American fighters. Refugees believe that the aim of the US and US-controlled fighters was to prevent any of them from returning to the territory controlled by the Syrian government. They are also telling what kind of intimidation and propaganda pro-American fighters use to retain refugees in the camp.



Ali Half Ali Shafa (35), spent over three years in Rukban camp.

The camp was guarded by fighters and terrorists. Some camp residents decided to join them because of hard and bad conditions and because of the money they were paid, 500-600 dollars. It's big money.

Fighters drink and take drugs, some pills. Fighters often shoot and drive around in cars. If a refugee breaks their rules, they just take

him/her away and start beating him/her almost to death. There were cases of them beating up elderly people. For example, there was some group supported by the Afghans. It attacked that person, wanted to show to everyone that they were strong, that they did not rebel against fighters without reason, and began to beat him.

There is a prison on the edge of the camp. Refugees try to behave in a way that does not cause any problems, so that they are not put in there. There are many such buildings which refugees are not allowed access to.



Qasem Muhammad Hammud (44), spent three and a half years in Rukban camp

It was announced among refugees that those who would escape from Rukban to the territory of the Syrian government, would be arrested and put in jail.

That's why many people shied away from leaving. Fences were put up to prevent anybody from getting out.



Fahd Daham Khmedee (27), former Magavir As-Saura fighter, spent three years in Rukban camp

I was with Magavir As-Saura fighters.

They obeyed Americans.

Those who had no money were not allowed out of Rukban or were returned to the camp.



Fuaz Awad Al-Djazi (41), spent four years in Rukban camp.

In addition to Magavir As-Saura, there are fighters under the command of Raka Al-Budeine (around 70 people), there are fighters under the command of Glis Abu Hamud (around 100 people), there are fighters of lieutenant Abu Huss (around 100 people), there are fighters of Abu Hara Rabis (300 people), there are fighters of Saeed Al-Qadur (around 60 people; he is considered to be the head of Rukban police), and others. All the groups are controlled by Americans.



Muhammad Abdurahman (40)

They handed out leaflets which told us not to make any attempts to leave the camp to get to the territory of the State, that we would be killed, arrested or punished there.



Muhammad Ali Hammad (36), shepherd, spent over two years in Rukban camp

Naturally, there were propaganda, news and announcements that if we went to the territory of the government, we could be arrested, we would be killed.



Pharez Ali Al-Hariri (51), spent four years in Rukban camp

They would intimidate us into not leaving the camp. They would say we would be arrested and killed in the Syrian territory.



Muhammad Ali Hammad (36), shepherd, spent over two years in Rukban camp

Some fighters are under the command of Muhamed Talla (Magavir As-Saura). I saw him in a vehicle with Americans. We saw from the barracks a column of 10-15 vehicles moving along the road, half of which were American ones. Fighters are controlled by Americans. The US supported them, helped them, gave them weapons and money, spied for them. Fighters carried American weapons, especially those who were driving pickup trucks.



Khaled Hussein Al-Hussein (39), spent three years in Rukban camp.

Fighters' aim was to prevent anybody from returning to the territory of the Syrian government. That is why they did not like it when someone spoke well about the Syrian State. There were different groups, units, and they would often engage in violent argument with each other, and they would often shoot at each other, making civilians suffer.

Fighters frequented the Americans' base. We often saw columns of Americans and fighters. Americans are to blame for everything. They bear full responsibility. Not only did they not help us, they scared us

through fighters into not returning to the Syrian territory. They would say that as soon as we arrived in Syria, we would be killed; they would rape our women; put us in jail. They would say that by order of Americans.

Refugees say that the US military at the Al-Tanf base had full knowledge of the killings, beatings, rape of women and other human rights violations that took place in the Rukban camp. According to them, a case in point is that an American drone is used to constantly patrol the camp and transmit information about what is going on. They believe the US had full control over the situation in the camp with the help of subordinate fighters, who travelled to the US base every day and reported to them on their activities. Former members of pro-American illegal armed groups and refugees describe how they were trained at Al-Tanf, Americans' military base, received weapons and salary from them. A refugee details how some Americans arrest camp residents, transport them to the prison at Al-Tanf base, and later release them in exchange for a bribe. He also accuses Americans for organizing illegal archaeological excavations. Some refugees are convinced that Americans deliberately maintained a dire situation in Rukban camp so that "people were in need and joined the fighters".



Fahd Daham Khmedee (27), former Magavir As-Saura fighter, spent three years in Rukban camp

I was with the fighters because I was starving. I joined Magavir Al-Saura four months after I came to the camp.

They were controlled by Americans. We were brought straight to Al-Tanf base, a group of about 35 people. We underwent military training in how to use a machine gun and how to shoot.

There were M-16 rifles. Then they paid us 300 a month. We were in security. We guarded Rukban camp.



Amjad Nader Sheehan (37), student, spent four years in Rukban camp

The conditions are very difficult there. People live in tents. Headache pills are the only medication we have. There were very hungry days. Sometimes we ate twice a day, sometimes once. I believe that Americans are to blame, they closed the roads to the camp, and prices went up right away.



Yasser Ommar (39), electrician, spent four years in Rukban camp

The plight of some refugees forced them to work with the fighters. They joined them just for money. Such people were gathered there and taken to Al-Tanf. They received military training. They were paid 400 dollars a month.



Ahmad Khussein Sheehan (22), meat seller, spent four years in Rukban camp

The majority of those who joined the fighters did so because of hunger and to earn money, to feed their children and provide for their families. They were trained at Al-Tanf base. Not all of them were recruited; some were recruited, but some were brought back, maybe because they were unfit.



Qasim Muhammad Shahud (39), labourer, spent three and a half years in Rukban camp

Fighters had American weapons and machine guns on pickup trucks at their disposal. They had M-16s, American weapons. Fighters were paid 400 dollars a month and they were trained at Al-Tanf base.

Fighters are controlled by Americans, who provide them with weapons and funding. They get everything from Americans. They are controlled and paid by them; Americans give them weapons and support.



Pharez Ali Al-Hariri (51), spent four years in Rukban.

The US control the area, including the fighters, of course. Americans pay the fighters salaries. They drive American cars and carry American weapons.



Muhammad Abdurahman Al-Khleif (36), driver, spent four years in the camp

Fighters carried American assault rifles; they had been trained at the Al-Tanf base.

The Americans support fighters, they gave them weapons and money, and therefore they bear all the responsibility.



Fuaz Awad Al-Djazi (41), spent four years in Rukban camp

There was nothing to live on, that is why people joined different groups. All the groups take instructions from Americans.

They were trained at the Al-Tanf base and in Jordan. They are armed with American weapons.

They held regular meetings with group commanders at the Americans' base.

Every evening, local commanders met with Americans. An interpreter would call and say that they were coming. They would slaughter a sheep and eat it together with Americans.

Americans used a drone, it was in the air all the time. They came to the camp in Hammers. I saw Americans in those cars.

Sometimes Americans would come accompanied by fighters and take someone away, demanding afterwards 10 thousand dollars for their release. They put them in prison and would not let them out until they got paid. Once, Americans caught Hussein Al-Ali, deputy to Muhamad Abdul, in possession of 190 kg of drugs. They held him in prison for seven days and took 23 thousand dollars. Muhamad Abdul is the highest-ranking militant there, involved in drugs. He is a lieutenant colonel; he fled the 4th Division. There are also those who dig in the ground and look for items of historical significance for Americans. They go by car and search, giving what they find to Americans.



Qasem Muhammad Hammud (44); spent three and a half years in Rukban camp At some point, Americans closed the roads

They even shut the water off. They did everything to make people desperate so they would join the fighters.



Ali Ahmad Khlef (23), medical student, spent four years in Rukban camp

From 20 to 30 people died every month. Diseases, starvation, lack of medical care.

If decent medical aid had been provided, more than half of the dead could have survived...

There were many cases of malnutrition, especially among children—almost 40–50 per cent.

Only those who worked with fighters were more or less better off. They could eat and live well.

In some cases, they knew that people had serious illnesses and had to get out to receive proper treatment. But they wouldn't let them out.

The United States bear the full responsibility for the appalling living conditions in the camp. Their presence is illegal.

They control the whole area and therefore have to be held accountable for everything.

In 2018, Amnesty International in its report “War of annihilation”: devastating toll on civilians, Raqqa — Syria”¹ looked into the legal aspects of responsibility of states participating in the coalition.

The report emphasizes that «[International humanitarian law] requires all states to respect and ensure respect for its provisions under Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions.

This includes both positive and negative obligations on states providing assistance to another state which is then used to commit a violation of international humanitarian law. The negative obligation is not to encourage, aid or assist in violations of international humanitarian law by parties to a conflict.

The positive obligation includes the prevention of violations where there is a foreseeable risk they will be committed and prevention of further violations where they have already occurred.

The USA, UK, France, and other states involved in military operations ... therefore may be legally responsible for unlawful acts carried out by Coalition members.

The involvement of senior military officers from Britain and France states in the upper echelons of the [operation]’s command structure further underlines the potential for shared responsibility for internationally wrongful acts.

By way of example, the Deputy Commander for Operational Inherent Resolve during the Raqqa operation — Major General Rupert Jones — was British.

Military officers representing France and Australia also held senior positions within the Coalition.

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/8367/2018/en/>

The orders and decisions of these officers engage the responsibility of their respective states for acts and omissions in relation to any unlawful acts committed by their own aircraft or military forces, or by others they control, direct or assist.»

In light of the above, participants in the coalition bear responsibility for actions of other participants, including for war crimes committed by the US armed forces.

This also means that, under international humanitarian law, the United States bears the full responsibility not only for civilian casualties in Syria that resulted from their use of small arms and helicopter gunfire but also for actions of pro-American fighters who have been trained, armed and sponsored by the United States and perpetrate crimes, rapes, tortures, kidnappings and robberies against Syrian citizens on a daily basis.

Chapter V

CIVILIANS IN THE CROSS-HAIRS OF ISIS AND THE US-LED INTERNATIONAL COALITION

The article titled “They’re Still Pulling Bodies out of ISIS’ Capital” by The Daily Beast starts with an interview with a tearful woman named Ayat: “The planes were bombing and rockets were falling 24 hours a day. There were ISIS snipers everywhere. In all directions, buildings had been destroyed, and it was hard to tell where one structure began and another ended. My children are still there, buried under the rubble.”

The publication cites the official data indicating that the forces “almost entirely consist[ed] of American military aircraft and ground artillery units, with limited support from British and French planes,” as well as the data by the Airwars organization according to which “at least 95 per cent of strikes in Raqqa and all artillery strikes were American. At least 21,000 munitions—and possibly thousands more—struck the city.”

Hundreds of victims among Syrians, their relatives and direct witnesses both from Raqqa and many other settlements told the volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy that residents of the areas controlled by ISIS (Daesh) and other terrorist groups and illegal armed formations found themselves under double threat coming from terrorists and the US-led coalition. They faced the threat of killings, beatings and tortures at the hands of terrorists, as well as regular missile strikes and bombings, artillery and small

arms fire and imprisonment by the US-led coalition's military, and rapes, robberies and extortion by the pro-American militant groups: "...were afraid of ISIS terrorists and, at the same time, of American bombings," "the population was trapped between ISIS snipers on one side and strikes by the international coalition on the other... those who managed to escape... were arrested and interrogated in prisons by the coalition armed forces," "ISIS fighters did not let anyone head towards the river.

We fled from air strikes of the coalition," "Daesh killed people and cut their heads off. And strikes by the US coalition killed hundreds of our men," "it was very bad after the militants came. Every time I left the house I said goodbye to my parents not knowing if I was ever going to see them again.

I witnessed bombings. In June 2015, ten of my relatives died as a result of an air strike by the coalition.

When Kurds attacked Raqqa, the air strikes destroyed our shop, killing ten people," "it was very difficult in Raqqa under the fighters' rule, very difficult...

Americans destroyed my house with an air strike," "when fighters were in the city, it was dangerous to leave the house. People were killed, tortured. Strikes by the coalition went on and on, fear was everywhere...

We decided to flee from the air strikes."



Djamal Muhammad Al-Isa (49), head of the Doctors' Union of the Raqqa governorate

In 2013, fighters attempted to kill me.

They asked me to come to a private clinic saying there was an oncology patient requiring medical help.

Two fighters were waiting on me outside of the clinic and opened fire as soon as they saw me.

I have undergone 7 surgeries. I had very serious wounds.

Civilians were used as human shields. About 100 hundred people lived in the city at the time, and they were not allowed to leave.

The militants closed all humanitarian corridors. They did not let us leave. Thus, the population was trapped by ISIS snipers on one side and strikes of the international coalition on the other.

Those who managed to escape were arrested under the pretext that they were suspected to be ISIS members. They were arrested and interrogated in prisons by the coalition armed forces.



***Ammuna Al-Barri Hussein
(50), housewife, village of
Onmahdjarah,
Aleppo governorate***

I saw how many people were killed between Maskanah and Onmahdjarah.

They were afraid of ISIS and, at the same time, of American bombings.

We saw planes carrying out air raids, and we could not even help those people. Even children...

About 15 people from our village got killed. And that number does not

include children and women, of whom nothing was left. Not a single trace was found. They were simply doing their daily work. Some were working in the field, others at the marketplace or elsewhere.

For instance, people were picking caraway or something else on their own lands, gathering their harvest, and suddenly they were hit with gunfire from a plane, an American plane.



*House of Ahmad Al-Khamad Jasem (53), destroyed by an air strike of the US coalition in May 2017, city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate.
Photograph: Ahmad Al-Khamad Jasem*



*House of Abta Al-Hasan Mustafa (58), destroyed by an air strike of the US coalition in July 2017, city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate.
Photograph: Abta Al-Hasan Mustafa*



Riadh Al-Abdalla Al-Adjeri (43), sheikh of the Omeyrad tribe, village of Kharbed-Faraj, Raqqa governorate

Fighters thought us to be government supporters. We had to flee. Most of our tribesmen live on the banks of the Euphrates between the Raqqa governorate and Aleppo. I lived near the Tishrin dam in the Kharbed-Faraj village.

We had our first strikes in 2016 or 2017, when American aircraft hit the house of Abdalla Al-Khaled and his brother. As a result, a family of 13 members died, including children 1 to 10 years of age. This was in the Dakket Ibn Al-Sheikh village. Of this family, only one

woman survived — she lost her arm in the attack. Abdalla Al-Khaled was around 40 years old. His brother Muhammad Al-Isa Al-Khaled was two years younger.



Muhammad Ahmed Al-Sheikh (45), city of Raqqa

ISIS fighters did not let anyone head towards the river. We fled from air strikes of the coalition. It was hard to leave the house. The worst part was when there were bombings, incessant bombings. The distance to the river is almost 3 kilometres. The bombings were going on all the time. Air strikes hit ferries carrying civilians over

the river, hit the boats. 24 of those civilians crossing the river on the boats died.

When Americans destroyed our building, we were left with nothing, with no water, no food — for three days. And the situation was getting worse, much worse. That is why, in the evening, we decided to leave — me and my family, my kids. I have six kids. We had walked about a kilometre when they started bombing the block we were in. We got scared, had to make a stop for almost one hour. In the Al-Saa block. Then we stopped by the station, waiting for the aviation to go away as it was still in the air. Besides, we were tired, it was difficult to move ahead. By midnight, we finally reached the river.



Jamal Al-Mashi (34), sheikh of the El-Bubanna tribe, city of Manbij, Aleppo governorate

We lived there in about 70 villages, there were 180 thousand people. Most of us fled. Daesh killed people and cut their heads off. And strikes by the US coalition killed hundreds of our men. They bombed the Khaled village, killed seven people. We were told that Daesh was there. That this was the reason, that the Kurds would come later.

That the plan was to create refugee centres there. It all looked like a sham.



Asma Muhammad Al-Ali (13), Mariam Said Khaji Hodr (53), housewife, city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate

We stayed in Raqqa for six months in 2017. It was terrifying. Daesh killed people. They closed the school and forbade teaching by the standards of the state curriculum. Over these six months, we had lived through American bombings. They destroyed our house. Razed it to the ground, with all our possessions. Militants were far from our house. I do not know why they bombed it. ISIS was very far, in the neighbouring district.

Every time Asma heard the sound of bombing by the coalition air force, she got really scared. When bombings started, she ran to her mother and tried to hide in the bathroom or somewhere else. She always ran to her mother calling, “mama, where are you?” When she gets like that she looks like an insane person. She has some kind of illness. Stress-related. Her legs are twisted. She has already had three surgeries to get her legs fixed.



**Omar Ahmed Al-Khalyaf Al-Said (43),
merchant, city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate**

I lived in Raqqa till July 2016. It was very bad after the militants came. Every time I left the house I said goodbye to my parents not knowing if I was ever going to see them again. Every day was filled with fear. It was dangerous. You could not feel safe anywhere. It was difficult to get out of Raqqa. They demanded money. We had to leave secretly. We said that we were going to visit our relatives in a neighbouring village. We left at 8 o'clock in the morning and walked by foot for about 35 kilometres. We had to spend the night sleeping on the ground. Then we finally reached the border, where the Free Syrian Army was. They gave us a ride — for money, of course.

I witnessed bombings. In June 2015, ten of my relatives died as a result of an air strike by the coalition. When Kurds attacked Raqqa, the air strikes destroyed our shop, killing ten people. Among them were 4 children and their mother. It was in the Hisham bin Abd Al-Maliq district, near the northern Sukeyna School. There were no fighters there, not a single one. All residents in the district were civilian.



***Muhammad Nur Al-Ahmed (48),
civil servant, city of Manbij, Raqqa
governorate***

Fighters came into Manbij in July 2012. Three months later, there came the Ahrar Ash-Sham group. They captured my house, stole \$6000 and then set the building on fire. I had to rebuild my home.

In Manbij, I was the director of the Ash-Shahid Ahmed Aqir Bayram School. The school building was levelled to the ground by an air strike of the international coalition of western states. At the time, only

the air force of the international anti-terrorism coalition was there. The strikes killed about 15 people.



***Ahmad Al-Qenu ibn Saleh (56),
teacher, city of Raqqa, Raqqa
governorate***

I lived in Raqqa under the fighters' rule for about 7 months. Then I got out. They were against education, they fought against teachers who taught by the state standards, arrested and killed them. I fled in 2016.

My relatives who lived in the city and in the country suffered a lot from the strikes of the coalition.

Thus, in early 2017, two of my brothers got killed. They were working in the field. They grew cotton and wheat, in the north of the Raqqa city. The coalition's air force bombed them while they were working on their own lands. They died.

There were no fighters, only workers and farmers.



Abd Ar-Razak Al-Algam (24), a man who was seriously injured and physically impaired in a strike by the US coalition in July 2017 in the village of War Shama, Sabha district, Raqqa governorate.

Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Waha Mosleh Al-Hussein Al-Jwara (36), civil servant, city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate

I fled from Raqqa in August 2018. I spent four years in the city under the fighters' rule. My husband was killed in an air strike by Americans in May 2017. My parents and I escaped, but he stayed there. Fighters were shooting at us. He could not get out. He had to go back to the house. He received a shrapnel wound to the head in an air strike by the coalition. He died.

Americans were striking indiscriminately on purpose — to force Raqqa's residents to leave their homes so that ISIS could take their places.



Sulima Al-Abed Ali (65), lost her son Fofez (37) in an air strike of the US coalition in July 2017, city of Maadan, Raqqa governorate. Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Abir Walid Al-Kartah showing the site of death of her daughter, who was killed by an air strike of the US coalition, town of Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor governorate. Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy

Abir Walid Al-Kartah: "...there was an air strike by the US coalition. I lost my arm, and my whole body was in shrapnel wounds, it hurt really bad. My daughter Amal Abd Ar-Rahman Al-Gabush died. She was 6. A piece of shrapnel struck her in the head."



Ibrahim Al-Usman Ibn Hammud (56), farmer, village of Maasada, Raqqa governorate

Life under the ISIS rule was extremely hard. They forbade education. Their primary goal was to bring up an illiterate generation that would be involved in crimes. They sought to distort Islam. Once, near the Al-Qaim circle in Raqqa, I saw four dead bodies of military men dressed in the uniform of the Syrian army, their heads cut off and stuck

on spears. They did very bad things, imposed exorbitant taxes, closed the schools.

ISIS killed my son. My daughter studied at the Aleppo University. They took my son, saying that his sister is taught by a disbeliever, and killed him. Al-Alia was hit by an air strike of the coalition.



Widad Ahmad Musa Al-Mukhtar (66), retired, city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate

It was very difficult in Raqqa under the fighters' rule, very difficult. The prices skyrocketed. Bread was hard to get. I had to stay up all night waiting to get bread, even though the bakery is right by my house. My home was destroyed by an American strike. We were not there when it happened. Thank God, we stayed

alive. Fighters were far away, about 500 meters from the building.



Khazim Khnedi Haji (14), wounded in his left foot in an air strike by the US coalition on 29 January 2017, city of Maadan, Raqqa governorate. Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



***Khint Muhammad Al-Yusuf (39),
housewife***

We lived in Raqqa under the fighters' rule from 2013 till late 2016. Then we secretly left the city. We rode in a cattle truck, had to pay 100 thousand for each person. We fled with our two children, and there were 25 other people.

My uncle was wounded in air strikes of the coalition, and his wife as well. In February 2016, she lost her arm and received a shrapnel wound to her face. They were hit by the coalition's air strike in the night, while they were asleep. It was in the Dawar Al-Naim district. The house was destroyed and all property lost. 13 people died, neighbours suffered injuries. Among the casualties were 7 children, 4 women. The fighters were at the time on the outskirts of the district, about 700 meters away.



***Hadizha Muhlef Al-Musa (41), housewife,
city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate***

I lived in Raqqa throughout 2013–2017. When the city was controlled by the fighters, it was dangerous to go outside. People were killed, tortured. Strikes by the coalition went on and on, fear was everywhere. I have three kids. On 15 August 2017, there was another air strike by the coalition. It destroyed my house, which is in the Hareb Al-Babu district. As a result, I lost

my hearing. My kids — Alya Al-Musa, 18, Bara Al-Musa, 14, and Ilaf Al-Musa, 10 — suffered injuries. The house was razed to the ground. We lost 14 relatives, all of them died — they lived in the same area nearby.

ISIS's position was far away — about 800 meters from the house. We decided to flee from the air strikes. It was problematic to leave, fighters demanded money; we paid 500 thousand lire for each person. In total, we paid 2.5 million for all.



Kuhlya Muhamad Damil (52), wounded in her left foot and lost her toes as a result of a strike by the US coalition in July 2017, Muklah district, city of Maadan, Raqqa governorate.

Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy

Witnesses emphasize that, in many cases, the international coalition carried out strikes long after terrorists left the populated

areas, of which the US troops were well aware. As indicated in media publications, such as the investigation by BBC called “Raqqa’s dirty secret”¹, the coalition let at least 4 thousand remaining fighters and their family members escape from Raqqa after the assault was over. According to this information, a convoy of almost 50 trucks, 13 buses and more than 100 of vehicles was observed by US aircraft flying overhead.

The city’s civilian residents testify that the coalition’s strikes hit the city when it had already been freed from fighters: “The building was destroyed by massive strikes of the coalition way after ISIS left the area...

After Raqqa was freed from ISIS, there were no hostilities in the block. It was only later that some of the buildings were destroyed,” “shelling and bombing continued after ISIS left the city... When ISIS left, the bombings continued and became more massive,” “after the victory was won in Raqqa, strikes by the US alliance occurred all over the city.

Many people were buried and died under the rubble,” “all ISIS fighters left the city. Yet, as we could see from rooftops in Al-Sukhle, the aircraft of the international coalition kept striking Raqqa with all kinds of weapons,” “the bridge was destroyed on 21 May 2017, while ISIS left on 20 May. Why were these infrastructures wiped out? So we would be needing help from the new invader.”

Witnesses underline that the US practice of hitting peaceful cities and villages with air strikes after ISIS had left them was observed not only in case of the Raqqa city but everywhere: “When US planes struck our village Ad-Dzhawada, it had been long cleared, it had been free for six months by then.

Fighters had left six months before,” “there were no fighters in Sabkha. Fighters left, and the city was empty... We fell victim to the US air force, which started its air strikes after ISIS had left,” “ISIS left our village...

The international coalition struck our village Kderan on 22 May, which was after they had left.”

¹ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/raqqas_dirty_secret



Yasin Muhammad Gattawi (59), civil servant, village of Hatla, Deir ez-Zor governorate, and his son Ziyad Yasin Gattawi (14), injured in a strike by the US-led coalition. Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



***Jasem Ali Al-Musa (68),
agricultural engineer, city of Raqqa***

I used to live in a building in the al-Daraya district in Raqqa. These houses were built for laborers working at the Euphrates Dam. The building I used to live in was destroyed in 2017. The building was destroyed by coalition's massive strikes after the ISIS fighters had left the area. After

the city of Raqqa was liberated from the ISIS fighters, there had been no fighting in the district, as the Kurds had already moved on. After that some of the buildings were destroyed in the al-Daraya district — a missile hit the building. It was only American aircraft that were operating. Neither Russian nor Syrian aircraft were.



***Hammud Al-Zeeiter (50),
journalist, resident of Raqqa and
village of Kderan***

ISIS fighters left our village on May 20, 2017. Strikes against our village of Kderan were carried out by the international coalition on May 22, after they had already left. To our surprise, the international coalition carried out air and missile

attacks against our village. As a result, my house, as well as 15 others, were destroyed. I remember Mohammed Ahmed Al-Hussein, a civilian, was killed there.

Two or three days before the coalition strike, all the militants crossed the river moving in the other direction.



Destroyed house of Hammud Al-Zeeiter. Photograph: Hammud Al-Zeeiter



*Jamal Mohammed Al-Issa (49),
Head of the Doctors Union of
Raqqa governorate*

Shelling and bombardment continued after ISIS fighters had left the city. 20 days before this campaign was over, they had made a deal with ISIS that they would leave town. And they left on trucks. Of course, they transported them themselves in order to use them in other locations.

After ISIS had left, the bombings continued at a high rate. Artillery strikes were carried out by aircraft and artillery. And the city was destroyed during this period. In those 20 days, at least 20 attacks and raids were carried out daily. Even though ISIS fighters were already gone.



Muhhamed Al-Musa Al-Jasem, (52), Sheikh of Buman tribe, town of Sabkha, Raqqa governorate

We used to live in the town of Sabkha, Raqqa governorate. Many of our relatives suffered from the strikes of American coalition. They lost their homes and their lives. There were no militants in Sabkha. Militants had left and the city was empty. We suffered from the American aircraft who started conducting strikes after ISIS fighters had left. These strikes caused damage.

Several houses were destroyed, and these houses were empty.

My neighbour's name is Abdulla Al-Haled — his house was destroyed by a missile. House of Waheed Al-Ali Al-Hamed, a three-storey building was completely destroyed. An agricultural Bank and other government institutions were also demolished. They destroyed private and public enterprises. Schools were also destroyed. Several schools. Al-Basem School, Ahmed Az-Zawi School. All of it — destroyed by US military strike.



Hassan Gammaz, Sheikh of Omeirad tribe, city of Raqqa

There are almost 250,000 people in our tribe. More than half of them used to live in Raqqa. There are very few people left there, those who could not flee. Thers left for different countries. There are no schools there; everything there got destroyed. After having already gained victory in the city of Raqqa, the American alliance attacked every part of the city. Many

people died under the rubble. Those were not just people from my, those were different people. More than 20,000 people were killed.



*A house destroyed by US-led coalition strikes, city of Madan, Deir ez-Zor governorate.
Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy*



A house destroyed by US-led coalition strikes in the town of Hatlah, Deir ez-Zor governorate. Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Mahmoud Saleh Al-Jarah (50), farmer, village of Al-Jawada, Deir ez-Zor governorate

During the US air strike, our village of Al-Jawada was militant-free for six months. The fighters had left six months before that. We heard aircraft flying. A lot of strikes were carried out, and a lot of people suffered from them. Only God knows why the Americans conducted air strikes against civilians. If I could speak to them, I would show them my child's arm. I hope they die, I

hope God punishes them.



Hammoud Al-Zeitir (50), journalist, resident of Kderan village, Raqqa governorate.

Bridges over canals, irrigation canals and others were also destroyed. Coalition did not do this by mistake, it was a rather intentional destruction of social facilities and infrastructure. That's exactly what happened. The majority of the irrigation channels had also been destroyed. Even though there were no ISIS militants there at the time.

On May 21, 2017, the bridge was destroyed. While ISIS militants had left on May 20. Why were these facilities destroyed? It was done so that we would need help of the new occupant, that's what I think.



Latifah Khalaf Abed (40), who was wounded in her left forearm in a US coalition strike in July 2017, which resulted in broken bones, a tissue defect; her mother-in-law was killed, town of Sabkha, Raqqa governorate. Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Civil servant, the village of Al-Sukhl, Raqqa governorate, was interviewed anonymously as he fears for the lives of his relatives who live on the militant-controlled territory

I fled Raqqa in 2018. All ISIS fighters left the city.

However, we watched from the rooftops in Al-Sukhl as the international coalition air forces continued their aerial bombardment of the city of Raqqa. While leaving their shelters, civilians told us that the coalition was actually targeting civilians.

Both my apartments located in different districts of Raqqa have been destroyed.

Syrian citizens say that the situation of international coalition negotiating with and providing assistance to ISIS, as well as letting terrorists leave Raqqa, was no exception, "...coalition airforces, military helicopters were used for transporting or redeploying ISIS leaders", "Americans misinformed the international community when they said they were fighting ISIS.

When the fighting was over, the Americans facilitated the withdrawal of militants from the city", "US helicopters brought ISIS and the Nusra Front terrorists", "When people from our tribe go to the desert, they see the Americans using helicopters to bring Daesh fighters", "We saw US helicopters transporting Daesh fighters."



***Jasem Ali Al-Musa (68),
agricultural engineer, city of
Raqqa***

In 2012, the Free Syrian Army kidnapped my son and was looking for me. We were able to find out where my son was. They demanded ransom from us: 150 automatic rifles and 15 million Syrian lira. If I did not fulfill that condition, they said they would return

my son's body for 5 million lira. We managed to set him free another way.

Then the coalition aircraft, military helicopters were used to transport or redeploy ISIS leaders. They land in a certain area and transport, redeploy ISIS leaders.



***Mohammed Ahmed Al-Sheikh
(45), city of Raqqa***

ISIS fighters attacked the Kurds from Raqqa, so the Kurds, in order to revenge against the residents of Raqqa, accused all the city residents of joining ISIS. The Americans misinformed the international community when they said they were fighting ISIS. And also,

when they told the whole world that all the people in Raqqa, as they were told by the Kurds, either fight for or support ISIS. When the fighting was over, Americans facilitated the withdrawal of militants from the city.

Cases of ISIS fighters getting actual help with evacuation and assistance in transportation of their leaders were not the only forms of interaction between the US-led coalition forces and terrorists. In many cases, witnesses bring examples of US armed forces clearly supporting ISIS in their attacks against the Syrian authorities: “When the fighters were advancing on Al-Jafra village, they were supported by the American troops”, “When the Syrian troops wanted to liberate this city, they supplied Daesh with weapons”, “When the Syrian troops or my tribe tried to resist Daesh and the Nusrah Front, they were assisted by US aircraft.”

Syrian refugees who were forcibly held in the Rukban camp by pro-American militants say that the camp is under the control of the Al-Tanf US military base, and that the US base supplies ISIS with weapons: “Mofad Al-Mukhtar trades weapons, missiles and ammunition with ISIS. He picks them up from the Al-Tanf base.

Another man, his name is Kakha Mukda, works for ISIS intelligence. The Americans control him”, “I saw ISIS fighters in the camp, they came there often.”



Ahmad Al-Shmari, Sheikh of Boolel tribe, Deir ez-Zor governorate

When the Syrian troops or my tribe tried to resist Daesh and the Nusrah Front, the American aircraft supported them. If the American aircraft and American aggressors had not helped them, they could not have won in our country.

American helicopters brought ISIS and the Nusrah Front terrorists. This happened in various cities. Americans help terrorists.

When people from our tribe go to the desert, they see Americans use helicopters and bring Daesh fighters, and then they start to attack the Syrian authorities.



Ubayd Ali al-Zubayd (29), Sheikh of Shammar tribe, Abu Kamal city, Deir ez-Zor governorate

We saw the US helicopters transporting Daesh fighters. There were a lot of witnesses. The Americans kept people from fleeing Abu Kamal. When the Syrian troops wanted to liberate the city, they supplied Daesh with weapons. They bombed the Farez Al-Mansour School, they also bombed the National Hospital and also the Red Crescent Center. It's the US coalition aircraft that did it.



Hakmat Mustafa Al-Mashhadani Abu al-Abbas, Sheikh of Al-Mashhadani tribe, Deir ez-Zor governorate

When the militants were attacking the village of Al-Jafra, American troops assisted them. They started bombing. The village was completely destroyed. It is all because of the American bombings. The terrorists could not capture it because all the civilians there were defending the village themselves. Near the city of Al-Mayadeen, US aircraft were bombing all the roads and civilians so they would not escape.



Abd Al-Karim Ali Hussein (37), who was wounded to his right shin in July 2017 as a result of an American coalition strike, leading to osteomyelitis and amputation of the leg, town of Ma'adan, Raqqa governorate. Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Jamal Al-Mashi (34), Sheikh of El-Bubanna tribe, town of Manbij, Aleppo governorate

Everyone knew that this was a performance that the Americans were staging with Daesh.

When the “Daesh” series was over, the “Kurds” series began.



Fuaz Awad Al-Jazi (41), spent four years in Rukban camp

In addition to Magavir As-Saura, there are militants under the command of Raka Al-Budeine, around 70 people, there are militants under the command of Glis Abu Hamud, around 100 people, there are militants of lieutenant Abu Huss, around 100 people, there are militants of Abu Hara Rabis, 300 people, there are militants of Saeed Al-Qadur, around 60 people, he is considered to be the head of Rukban police, and others. All the groups are controlled by the Americans. The Americans have strongholds. They allow to transport weapons for ISIS from these strongholds. For instance, Mofad Al-Muhtar trades in weapons, missiles and munitions with ISIS. He takes them from Al-Tanf base. Another man, Kaha Mukda, works for ISIS intelligence. He is controlled by the Americans. These people supply ISIS. They are all in Rukban camp. There are groups and they have a lot of weapons. They buy from them and resell.



Ali Half Ali Shafa (35), spent more than three years in Rukban camp.

Ali Half Ali Shafa (35), spent four years in Rukban camp.

There were ISIS militants in the camp. People pointed at a house and said that ISIS militants lived there or that there were people there who were helping ISIS militants. These are the kind of conversations people had.



Mohammed Hassan Al-Hales (60), Head of the village of Khsham, Deir ez-Zor governorate, and Maxim Grigoriev, Director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy.

Muhammad Hassan Al-Hales (60), Head of the village of Khsham, Deir ez-Zor governorate: “We suffered air strikes carried out by the coalition, around 60 people died. Those were civilians. About 10 women, 15-20 children. Civilian homes, as well as stores were destroyed. The coalition attacked civil objects to frighten people and cause panic. Then people started supporting ISIS.”



Muhammad Abdurahman (40), Rukban camp refugee

There were different militants and their different units.

They came from the desert together.

I saw ISIS fighters in the camp, they came there often.

The affected civilians believe that the coalition strikes made Syrians begin supporting ISIS: “The coalition attacked civil facilities.

Then people started to support ISIS. Witnesses describe coalition strikes leading to civilians fleeing and ISIS invading their homes: “...they bombed the village so that the residents would leave their homes. ISIS fighters invaded their homes.

The Americans deliberately targeted civilians”, “people leave and then ISIS occupies our homes.



Muhammad Abd Al-Wahab Al-Ani (57), agronomist, village of Huneida, Raqqa province

They were carrying out bombings to force civilians out of their homes. ISIS fighters invaded their homes.

The Americans deliberately targeted the civilians. America did it to protect the militants. They saw the militants were three kilometers away from the village.

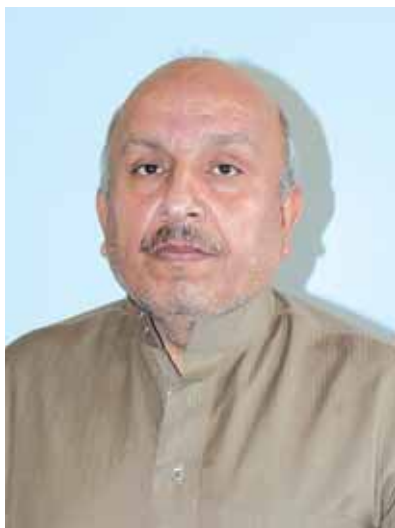


Ahmad al-Kenu Ibn Saleh (56), teacher, city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate

The coalition’s aim was not to bomb ISIS.

They know where ISIS militants live, they know their locations.

These air strikes were carried out to force the people of Raqqa out of the city.



*Ali Ahmad Ar-Ramadan (52),
civil servant, city of Raqqa, Raqqa
governorate*

*The Americans were randomly
conducting air strikes.*

*People leave, and then ISIS
occupies our homes.*

According to civilians, the coalition delivered missile and bomb strikes after ISIS had already left with the intention to destroy Syria's civil infrastructure in order to inflict the most damage to the country.

That is why many of the strikes were targeted at the country's infrastructure rather than facilities of the militants; and witnesses note that in some cases the strikes were launched before the Syrian army liberated those areas: "The strikes that caused the most damage are the ones targeted at the stations irrigating farmers' lands, thousands of farmers work on this territory", "American aircraft struck the floodgate, which separates the lake from the station.

They knew that the Syrian army would liberate this area", "The coalition did not care who to destroy. They destroyed the entire city of Raqqa, but they paid special attention to destroying civilian infrastructure," "The American coalition is bombing civilians to tear down our country, to demolish my village, to destroy the infrastructure of our contry, our village," "The coalition came here to destroy the infrastructure of our country.

They were destroying all important objects of the country — bridges, factories, etc."



Abdel-Azis Al-Issa (53), Chairman of the Chamber of Advocates of the Raqqa governorate, city of Raqqa

It didn't make much difference for the coalition who to destroy. They destroyed the entire city of Raqqa, but they paid special attention to destroying civilian infrastructure. All the people of Raqqa suffered from these strikes. Syria used Raqqa as the entire country's grain warehouse. Destroying it was one of the coalition's goals when it came to the destruction of Raqqa. They destroyed all the agricultural projects and water supply infrastructure. The coalition destroyed main bridges and main buildings, as well as government buildings. The infrastructure was destroyed before our eyes.



Jasem Ali Al-Musa (68), agricultural engineer, city of Raqqa

I have seen the consequences of the coalition air strikes in Raqqa governorate. I come from the village of Debsi Afnan. This village is located near the border of Aleppo governorate, between Raqqa and Aleppo. I've been to the area. One could see the consequences of the coalition strikes there. The strikes that caused great damage were the ones targeted at the irrigation stations that irrigate farmers' lands. They struck the pumping station of the Mesken Sharq district, which irrigates 17,800 hectares. Thousands of farmers work in this area.

American aircraft bombed the floodgate that separates the lake from the station. As a result, the station was flooded. All the enterprises were

no longer operational. They knew that the Syrian army would liberate the area. Americans carried out this air strike in 2017, and the village was liberated by the Syrian army in June 2017. The repairs lasted two years. The second irrigation station, also destroyed by American air strikes, is the station irrigating 21,000 hectares. And it is still not operational.

They also hit the floodgate and flooded the fields in March 2017. The areas getting their water from this station had been deprived of potable water as a result of that same attack. This water was not only used for watering, but also for drinking. Up to 25,000 people were left with no access to potable water because of the destruction of these facilities.

The Americans destroyed the bridges. There are bridges built for passing over canals, irrigation canals. They have destroyed all bridges over these canals. One of these bridges is located on the Aleppo-Raqqa road in the Saib Al-Dakar area. They also destroyed the road in the Al-Debsi area. They also destroyed the bridges in the villages of Angus and Al-Qadissiyah. I am, of course, talking about my neighbourhood. A cultural center, a house of culture, has also been destroyed in the village of Debsi Afnan. All of this was destroyed by air strikes. This is a simple village and this building was a symbol of civilization there.



Muhammad Jasim Ar-Raqad
(55), Head of Marrat village, Deir
ez-Zor governorate.

We had several demonstrations against the American and Turkish presence on our land. There is an oil field located 5 kilometers away from the village — the Americans are there, there is an American base.

They are one kilometer away from the village border, from us. The coalition came here to destroy our country's infrastructure. They were destroying all our country's vital facilities — bridges, factories, etc.

Witnesses say that a coalition led by the US destroyed bridges near the town of Raqqa. Given that the coalition let the ISIS terrorists out of the city and took no action to prevent them from moving to other areas, such actions are completely pointless from a military point of view and are due to the desire to do the most damage to Syria's infrastructure.



Jamal Muhammad Al-Isa (49), head of the Raqqa governorate Medical Union

That alleged operation to free the city of Raqqa from ISIS fighters lasted several months. During that period of time, they struck at infrastructure sites. The infrastructure was completely destroyed. They struck at bridges in the city of Raqqa. That was done by the illegal international coalition of Western countries, which began their aggression against our country.



*Ar-Rashid bridge, Raqqa governorate, after an American coalition air strike.
Photograph: Jamal Muhammad Al-Isa*

The affected civilians also mention that settlements that supported the legitimate Syrian government were hit hardest by the US-led coalition: “The Americans knew that our village Hatla supported the Syrian authorities... We were under blockade... Over the years, about 600 men, women, children and older persons died from American air strikes.” “The Americans bombed because they knew that our village was national... All the residents supported the Syrian authorities.”



Fadel Eunice Al-Daher (60), head of the village of Hatla, Deir ez-Zor governorate, and Mikhail Grigoriev, director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy

Fadel Eunice Al-Daher (60), head of the village of Hatla, Deir ez-Zor governorate: They knew that our village Hatla supported the Syrian authorities. We have a national spirit. The village was inhabited by doctors, engineers, civil servants, you could say they were highly educated. We were under blockade. There were about 50,000 people living in the village.

Over the years, about 600 men, women, children and older persons died from American air strikes, and we have documented all this. The ISIS fighters just cut off heads, all that was from air strikes. Only civilians, women and children were killed as a result of air strikes. There were about 50,000 of us then, and as a result, people left. I will show you the schools —

as a result of air strikes, all of them have been completely destroyed. They always hit schools. Four schools have been destroyed.



Muhammad Jasim Al-Rakad (55), head of the village of Marrat, Deir ez-Zor governorate

Bridges and two water treatment stations were destroyed near the village. About 70 civilians were killed. We know that those were coalition aircraft. During the coalition bombings, the Daesh training centre was never destroyed.

The coalition did not hit ISIS fighters, but peaceful people. There were approximately 30-40 strikes at the village.

They bombed because they knew that our village was national, national spirit. The residents love their homeland, they do not sell their homeland. All the residents support the Syrian authorities.

Against the backdrop of the heavy bombing by the US-led coalition of settlements whose population supported the legitimate Syrian authorities, a significant number of witnesses say that the coalition strikes only rarely hurt ISIS terrorists, but often hit locations where there were no fighters at all or very few: “It is a paradox, by the way, where ISIS fighters live, the coalition does not strike.” “However, strikes were made on locations where there were very few fighters. They did not strike at places where there were foreign ISIS fighters at all.” “...there were no strikes on the fighters. There were only strikes against civilians. And it was visible that civilians were living there.” “About five per cent of the killed were fighters and 95 per cent of the casualties were among civilians.”

Even though ordinary citizens do not have complete information about coalition strikes, they are clearly confident that these strikes have only slightly affected fighters and to a large extent civilians. Undoubtedly, this confidence is based on the multiple facts well-known to them about the deaths and injuries of relatives, neighbours

and acquaintances, on the fact that they have seen with their own eyes the homes of civilians destroyed by the US-led coalition air strikes, rather than the terrorist positions or buildings under their control: “I have never heard of any fighters killed by air strikes.

Their command post was not damaged at all and my house was destroyed.” “We do not understand why the American aviation strikes where there are no fighters.

The fighters are on the other side.”

Syrian citizens are confident that civilian targets are deliberately hit by the US-led coalition: “The Americans know where Daesh fighters are located. They do not bomb the sites where Daesh fighters are present. They bomb only civilian objects.”



*Hussein Galph Al-Ali, Ali Hussein Al-Ali (17), Shibli Hussein Al-Ali (12)
who lost his hand in a coalition strike.*

Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy

“There have been no aircraft here except the coalition’s. My daughter, Loyal Hussein Al-Ali, was less than a year old when she was killed. She had just started saying the words “mum” and “dad”. When the missile that killed them came, she was in the arms of her mother.”



Jamal Muhammad Al-Isa (49), head of the Raqqa governorate Medical Union

In the city of Raqqa, almost 80 per cent of houses and infrastructure were destroyed. My private clinic was completely destroyed, as well as my brother's clinic, he is also a doctor, an ophthalmologist. And my brother's and younger brother's houses. It is a paradox, by the way, where ISIS fighters live, the coalition does not strike. That is why my house was not destroyed. The ISIS fighters had taken over my house and lived there for two years. This is a paradox.



Muhammad Ahmed Al-Sheikh (45), the city of Raqqa

The fighters were in Raqqa. However, strikes were made on locations where there were very few fighters.

They did not strike at places where there were foreign ISIS fighters at all.



Ismail Muhammad Al-Aboud (34), owner of a car wash station in the village of Hneida in the Raqqa governorate

In the village of Hneida, three or four houses were destroyed as a result of the coalition strikes. And a mosque. There were no fighters in the village at all. Houses were destroyed.

My sister Maryam Muhammad Al-Aboud was killed. She was 50 years old, she had six children. The children survived because they were in another room. The bomb hit the neighbouring house and the neighbours' houses. The entire family was killed in the neighbours' house. Only a little girl survived. The man's

name was Talal Al-Hammed. Talal Al-Hamed's house was destroyed. All of them were civilians. There were no fighters. The fighters were in other locations. They were in the house of the Craftsmen Union, 700 metres away from that house. But there were no strikes on the fighters. There were only strikes against civilians. And it was visible that civilians were living there.



Muhammad Mustafa Al-Suleiman (46), civil servant, the village of Buaytiya, Deir ez-Zor governorate

The American coalition is bombing civilians to destroy our country, to annihilate my village, to destroy the infrastructure of our country, our village. About five per cent of the killed were fighters and 95 per cent of the casualties were among civilians. The village is large, I remember 15 people, my loved ones, who died. A lot of people died in the village, strikes were constantly made against the village.



Hassan Muhammad Shaib Al-Abdallah (49), mechanic, Muhammad Hassan Shaib (13), schoolchild, the town of Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor governorate

The buildings where the fighters were located were not damaged at all. I have never heard of any fighters killed by air strikes. Their command post was not damaged at all and my house was destroyed.



Adel Ali Aisha (67), retired, town of Al-Gina, Aleppo governorate

We do not understand why the American aviation strikes where there are no fighters.

The fighters are on the other side.



Ali Hammud Al-Fawaz (53), farmer, the city of As-Suwayda, Raqqa governorate

The Americans did not work against fighters, but against civilians.

An aircraft arrives, drops its missiles, its bombs, and there have been absolutely no fighters there, no one came, no one left, and so they bomb civilians.

Given the US-led coalition's intentional missile and bomb strikes against Syrian civil infrastructure facilities, civilians, especially against those settlements without fighters whose residents support the Syrian government, most witnesses are confident that those strikes have been carried out deliberately and purposefully. Some of them believe that one of the tasks of the US military was to test new munitions and weapons on Syrian citizens: "I do not know why they were bombing civilians. Maybe they wanted to test their weapons. The strikes rarely killed fighters." "The residents of Raqqa told us that the ISIS fighters had numbered the buildings before they left and the international coalition had tested different types of ammunition."



Khadija Muhlef Al-Mousa (41), housewife, the town of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate

They bomb in order to drive people into backwardness, so that the future generation is illiterate.

I do not know why they were bombing civilians. Maybe they wanted to test their weapons.

The strikes rarely killed fighters.



Hassan Gammaz, sheikh of the Omeirad tribe, the city of Raqqa

The Americans are aggressive, they used all kinds of weapons.

They tried everything they had to devastate and destroy Raqqa.



Civil servant, the village of Al-Sukhl, Raqqa governorate. The interview is conducted anonymously because he is afraid for the lives of his relatives who are in the territory under the control of the fighters

The residents of Raqqa told us that the ISIS fighters had numbered the buildings before they left and the international coalition had tested different types of ammunition. The degree of damage to the buildings was different. Some of them were completely razed to the ground. Some

walls fell down. Through some of them holes were made. The international coalition destroyed all State institutions. Completely, in fact. Their goal must have been to completely destroy the infrastructure.

The witnesses interviewed emphasize that the strikes against civilians are intentional, as the US military has sufficient information about exactly where the fighters are, and if necessary, they can launch isolated strikes that do not harm nearby buildings: “The Americans know where Daesh fighters are located. They do not bomb the sites where Daesh fighters are present. They only bomb civilian objects.” “We noticed a missile trace, my brother Rahad Musa Ali was killed... He was at the entrance to the house. 5-10 minutes later, a strike was made. He was the only one killed”.



Saleh Musa Al-Ali, the village of Al-Rashidiya, Al-Hasakah governorate

We noticed a missile trace, my brother Rahad Musa Ali was killed. He was 42 years old. He was at the entrance to the house. The Iraqis came, he sold them a sheep. 5-10 minutes later, a strike was made. He was the only one killed. Ten children and a wife were left without a father.



Rashid Anwar Arab (35), construction worker, the city of Raqqa

I was in Raqqa until 2017. The American coalition bombs schools and all hospitals and kindergartens. The Americans know where Daesh fighters are located. They do not bomb the sites where Daesh fighters are present. They only bomb civilian objects... especially hospitals where civilians are treated... They wanted to destroy the entire city.



Fragments of US-led coalition ammunition that killed Rahad Musa Ali, the village of Al-Rashidiya, Al-Hasakah governorate. Photograph: Saleh Musa Al-Ali



Location hit by the US-led coalition ammunition. Photograph: Saleh Musa Al-Ali

The Syrians are talking about the goals of the US and the US-led international coalition in Syria. In their opinion, its real purpose, as opposed to what had been declared, was “to drive Syria backwards, into the past. They destroyed the city of Raqqa. The entire infrastructure was bombed. And they stole everything. They even stole oil.” “There were no fighters in Al-Tawatha. The Americans destroyed the school, destroyed the mosque, what was the purpose? The Americans are bombing in order to bring our people back to ancient times, to destroy the infrastructure of our country.” “The international coalition’s aircraft made air strikes on civilians. There were air strikes on schools in order to deprive children of the opportunity to go to these schools and receive education — in order to destroy the entire generation.”



Hassan Ali Muhammad Al-Umeshad, sheikh of the tribe of Al-Umeshad in the city of Raqqa

The Americans bombed in order to drive Syria backwards, into the past. They destroyed the city of Raqqa. The entire infrastructure was bombed. And they stole everything. They even stole oil.



Muhammad Ali Al-Mufrij (33), disabled, cashier, Al-Tawatha village, Deir ez-Zor governorate

There were no fighters in Al-Tawatha. There were no positions, no point, no one. They passed by in pickup trucks, but they did not live there, they had nothing in the village. The Americans destroyed the school, destroyed the mosque, what was the purpose? The Americans are bombing in order to bring our people back to ancient times, to destroy the infrastructure of our country.

In Al-Tawatha, 25-35 per cent of houses were destroyed by strikes. Some burned down, others were destroyed. Houses of civilians, there was nothing against them. Most of them experienced a financial situation below zero. My brother was a driver, working on the Deir ez-Zor — Damascus route. He went missing. People said that the American aviation bombed that route. What did they destroy it for?



Muhammad Ahmed Al-Mesto (44), head of the Education Workers' Union, the city of Manbij, Raqqa governorate

The international coalition's aircraft made air strikes on civilians. There were air strikes on schools in order to deprive children of the opportunity to go to these schools and receive education — in order to destroy the entire generation. The aim was to destroy the infrastructure, including water and power supply facilities.

They did that and blamed the Syrian government for that. The coalition was involved in financing terrorist gangs. Money was also coming from the Arab Gulf and all of that went through Turkey.

It is not surprising that mass missile and bomb attacks of the US-led international coalition on civilians with tens of thousands killed, mainly women and children, destruction of civil infrastructure — hospitals, schools, mosques, irrigation stations, factories, houses of civilians — led to a sharply negative attitude to the coalition and the Americans: “The Americans are like beasts.” “The Americans are enemies of humankind.” “The mentality of America is to bomb civilians.

This enemy does not care who gets hurt, civilians or not.” “I would tell the Americans that they are terrorists, they have no signs of humans.” “The Americans wanted to destroy our country... because of you our country is completely destroyed.” “If I saw an American, I

would tell I wish they were dead. Because of them I have nothing left.” “The Americans have come to Syria to kill people.” “The Americans know exactly where the residents live and where the fighters are. Why exactly did they strike at civilians? To support the fighters who cut heads, raped women and robbed us.” “American pilots must be killed because we saw pieces of meat of the people they killed and how blood flows.” “The Americans are destroyers, they are people who destroy everything around them... They work exclusively against civilians in order to steal afterwards.”



Fadel Eunice Al-Daher (60), head of the village of Hatla, Deir ez-Zor governorate, and Mikhail Grigoriev, director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy

The Americans are like beasts, they are not afraid of God. They have only one goal, they destroy people, peoples of other countries.



Saleh Abd Al-Rashid (55), pensioner, the village of Al-Husseiniya, Deir ez-Zor governorate

*The Americans have no morals.
The Americans are enemies of humankind.*



Abu Salam Muhammad Al-Mahmoud (55), civil servant, the village of At-Tabni, Deir ez-Zor governorate

I am already 55 years old. I have known since childhood that America is an adversary of the Arab world and Syria. The mentality of America is to bomb civilians. This enemy does not care who gets hurt, civilians or not. It knows itself, it destroys civilians to get what it wants.



Muhammad Mustafa Al-Suleiman (46), civil servant, the village of Buaytiya, Deir ez-Zor governorate

Americans deserve to be punished. They have destroyed our country, destroyed the entire village.



Ahmad Ubeid Al-Khalaf (37), farmer, the village of Buaytiya, Deir ez-Zor governorate

If I had a chance, I would tell the Americans that they are terrorists, they have no signs of humans. They are our enemy.



Shadiyah Al-Abbas As-Salama (17), Abdullah Mahmoud Al-Abbas As-Salama (60), farmer, the village of Al-Masrab, Deir ez-Zor governorate

The Americans wanted to destroy our country. America supported the fighters who were on this territory. I am telling the Americans that they supported the fighters, because of them our country is completely destroyed.



Waed Hamdan Al-Abd (16), the village of Al-Abbas, Deir ez-Zor governorate

If I met the Americans in person, I would tell them that I lost my leg, I lost my father, my sister was injured.



***Ravan Muhammad Ahmad Ad-Deiri (7),
Muhammad Ahmad Ad-Deiri (30), farmer, the
village of Ad-Jawada, Deir ez-Zor governorate***

If I saw an American, I would tell I wish they were dead.

Because of them I have nothing left, no house, my daughter is still suffering.

May God punish them.



***Muhammad Abd Al-Wahab Al-Ani (57),
agronomist, the village of Huneida, Raqqqa
governorate***

On 7 April 2017 at 11 PM, a US-led coalition air strike destroyed my house in the village of Huneida and killed 13 people from my family. All the young people were killed. If I met that American pilot, I would drink all the blood out of him. There were no fighters in the village at all. They bombed the village on purpose.



***Hussein Trad (40), disabled, the city of Hadjin,
Aleppo governorate***

The Americans have come to Syria to kill people.

They do not care if it is a fighter or a simple person.

The coalition has come to kill everyone. Not just fighters, but civilians, not just kill, but burn them.

To the American pilot who killed my brother, I would say that I hope he will also burn like our people burned.



Azam Al-Din Abeid (8) who lost his eye as a result of an American coalition strike, got a leg injury, which made his leg shorter, lost his genitals.

Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy



Jamal Al-Dan Mustafa Al-Hodj Saleh (54), civil servant, the city of Raqqa, Raqqa governorate

If I saw the American pilot, I would ask why this house was bombed. Can you imagine yourself instead of me, how would you feel? They have become my enemies, I will never make peace with them.

Everyone knows that the Americans have new modern equipment. The Americans know exactly where the residents live and where the fighters are. Why exactly did they strike at civilians? Why?

To support the fighters who cut heads, raped women and robbed us. The Americans are accomplices to these criminals.



***Hint Muhammad Al-Yusuf (39),
housewife***

The Americans strike at random.

American pilots must be killed because we saw pieces of meat of the people they killed and how blood flows.

Of course, that pilot must be killed.

It is necessary to investigate his actions, investigate the actions of his command, which gave the order to bomb civilians. They must be prosecuted.



***Mariam Al-Ghaher Al-Shadid (53), housewife, the city of Maadan,
Raqqa governorate***

We only want one thing — we want peace, stability, we do not need anything else.

The Americans have only brought destruction to Syria.

God forbid that Allah would forgive them for that.



*Jamal Al-Musa Shhadah Ibn Felaj (60), spare parts dealer, the city of Maadan,
Raqqah governorate*

The Americans are destroyers, they are people who destroy everything around them, they have destroyed Raqqah. Everyone knows that their artillery stood on the mountain and bombed Raqqah. In the same way, our city was destroyed with the help of aviation. They work exclusively against civilians in order to steal afterwards. What they are doing right now, they are stealing our oil and also continue to destroy our cities.



Usana Al-Halfa Abd (17) who suffered multiple shrapnel wounds and was disabled as a result of an American coalition strike in July 2017, the village of Sharida, Sabha district, Raqqa governorate.

Photograph: volunteers of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy

Chapter VI

WESTERN DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN

In the previous chapters of the book, the victims' testimonies were cited that prove the facts of massacres of the Syrian population, including women and children, the destruction of hospitals, schools and civilians' homes, and other war crimes committed by the U.S.-led international coalition.

These crimes were covered up, while the attention of the international community and media was diverted by a disinformation campaign against the Syrian government.

It was unprecedented in both scale and scope in the use of false information. Below are just a few examples of the large-scale disinformation campaign conducted by Western countries and media outlets.

One of the clearest examples of this kind of disinformation was the accusation of the Syrian government that it had organized a chemical attack in the town of Douma. An unprecedented large-scale disinformation campaign with thousands of stories was launched by Western media on this topic. In the first phase, it was based on a fully staged video footage of a hospital in Douma allegedly showing the victims of the chemical attack.

The video was actively distributed by the White Helmets funded by the governments of the United States, Great Britain and several other countries.

The book *The White Helmets: Terrorist Accomplices and a Source of Disinformation* describes in detail how this structure worked in the territories occupied by terrorists, assisted them, took part in hostilities on their side and specialized in the preparation and distribution of fake news.

It was the video footage staged and distributed by them that was used as the main justification for the attack — the missile strike launched against Syria by the United States, France and Great Britain on 14 April 2018.

After both those who personally participated in this video footage and the doctors of the hospital had proven that the video was fake, Western media switched to the distribution of a video footage showing a chemical attack in one of the block of flats in Douma, providing no refutation of their previously published materials.

This footage depicted the bodies of the killed people that were presented as the victims of the chemical attack conducted by the Syrian government forces. A cylinder on the balcony of the house was claimed as a gas source.

The Foundation for the Study of Democracy conducted an independent investigation into the incident and interviewed witnesses to the staging of the chemical attack organized by the terrorists together with the White Helmets: doctors at the hospital where the victims of the chemical attack were allegedly brought in; permanent residents of the house where the White Helmets photographed killed women and children; and residents of the district where the incident took place.

Below are our interviews with the witnesses whose testimony is unequivocal evidence of the fact that the chemical attack in the block of flats in Douma was also staged.

In the hospital in Douma we interviewed direct witnesses of the scenes that were shown in the White Helmets video footages. Here are the testimonies of two qualified doctors.



On the photo: a still shot from the video recording taken at the hospital in Douma. This recording was actively distributed by the White Helmets and a number of Western media outlets falsely claiming that it showed chemical attack victims



On the photo: Director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy M. Grigoriev and Dr. Hassan, who personally received those whom the White Helmets tried to present as victims of the chemical attack, and testified to the absence of any poisoning. Our conversation with Dr. Hassan takes place at the same location where the video showing the alleged victims was shot

Doctor Hassan from the Douma Hospital says:

“On 7 April 2018, about 15 persons were admitted with suffocation symptoms, those were women and children. After the medical examination, we diagnosed them with bronchial asthma. While those who brought these people to us said that they had chemical poisoning. However, the medical examination revealed no signs of chemical poisoning. We provided these people with first medical care and let them go home.”

Another doctor from the same hospital in Douma, Seif ad-Din Hubia, also confirmed these words: “I saw a family brought by the White Helmets saying they were victims of a chemical attack. These people did not show any signs of chemical poisoning.”



On the photo: a still shot from the video recording of the murdered people whom the White Helmets tried to present as victims of the chemical attack

We also met with the permanent residents of the block of flats where the bodies of women and children who were used to stage a chemical attack were found. They tell us that neither they, nor their parents or



On the photo: Director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy M. Grigoriev after the interviews with the permanent residents of the house where the militants and the White Helmets brought the bodies of the killed people to stage a chemical attack

children who were present in the apartments of this building on the day of the incident were in any way affected by the chemical attack that the White Helmets claimed was carried out. This fact in itself already proves that there was no chemical attack at all. Moreover, witnesses unequivocally claim that the bodies in the entrance hall were neither residents of this section of the block of flats, nor residents of the house or nearby houses. Hence, the bodies of the killed people were brought specifically to stage a chemical attack. Below are the questions to the witnesses and their answers in full.

Maxim Grigoriev: Please, tell me how old you are and how long you have been living in this building?

Imam Kraim: I am 20 years old; I have lived in this building for a long time already.



On the photo: Imam Kraim — resident of the block of flats where terrorists and the White Helmets brought the bodies of people in order to stage a chemical attack

Maxim Grigoriev: More than 5 years?

Imam Kraim: More than 5 years.

Maxim Grigoriev: Last year, on the 7th of April, were you and your family here?

Imam Kraim: Yes.

Maxim Grigoriev: Did you and your parents spend every night in this building?

Imam Kraim: Yes. My parents are always here, they rarely go out.

Maxim Grigoriev: This is a photo of the bodies that were in this section of the block of flats on April 7 last year. It is taken from the report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The report states that people who were in this building died from this chemical attack, from chlorine contained in the cylinder on the top. If you and your parents were in this building that day, then you all should have died, too. What do you think about it? Did anything happen to you?

Imam Kraim: We stayed here every day. Me, my father and my mother. We did not feel anything. If there had been anything, they would have fallen ill.

Maxim Grigoriev: Please, take a close look at these photos. These are the photos of the bodies that were found in this section of the block of flats according to the video footage taken from the Internet. Do you recognize anyone?

Imam Kraim: No.

Maxim Grigoriev: I will show you a video footage. Please, watch attentively and say if you know any of these people? Did any of them live in this building?

Imam Kraim: No.



On the photo: Mahmud Mehbal — resident of the block of flats where terrorists and the White Helmets brought the bodies of people in order to stage a chemical attack

Maxim Grigoriev: Please, tell me how old you are and how long you have been living in this building?

Mahmud Mehbal: I am 57 years old and I have lived in this house for five years.

Maxim Grigoriev: Do you live here on a permanent basis, I mean do you stay here every night, morning and evening? Including April 7 last year?

Mahmud Mehbai: Yes.

Maxim Grigoriev: Who do you live with?

Mahmud Mehbai: My wife and children.

Maxim Grigoriev: How many children do you have?

Mahmud Mehbai: Four.

Maxim Grigoriev: And did they also spend every day in this building?

Mahmud Mehbai: Yes.

Maxim Grigoriev: Last year, videos showing the bodies of dead people in this house appeared on the Internet. The video footage claims that they died from a chemical attack in your block of flats. How can you explain that you were not injured in any way?

Mahmud Mehbai: There was no chemical attack whatsoever.

Maxim Grigoriev: Did either you, or your wife or your children who stayed here all the time experience any harm to your health?

Mahmud Mehbai: No.

Maxim Grigoriev: I will show you the photos of the bodies that were found in this section of the block of flats. Please, take a close look at them. Do you recognize anyone? Have they ever lived in this building? Look attentively. Do you recognize any of them?

Mahmud Mehbai: No, I do not recognize any of them. These are not the residents of this building.



On the photo: Seham Hayti — resident of the block of flats where terrorists and the White Helmets brought the bodies of people in order to stage a chemical attack

Maxim Grigoriev: How many years have you lived in this building?

Seham Hayti: 5 years.

Maxim Grigoriev: Have you been living here all this time without going anywhere?

Seham Hayti: Yes.

Maxim Grigoriev: Did you spend every night with your family in your apartment?

Seham Hayti: Yes.

Maxim Grigoriev: Who do you live with? Your husband and children? How old are your children?

Seham Hayti: Yes. 5 children aged 19, 18, 12, 21 and 7.

Maxim Grigoriev: Did they also spend all their nights here without leaving anywhere?

Seham Hayti: Yes.

Maxim Grigoriev: Were you at home on April 7 last year as well?

Seham Hayti: Yes, we were here.

Maxim Grigoriev: Some videos showing the bodies of dead people in this house appeared on the Internet. Those people were allegedly killed by chlorine from the cylinder. Had this been the case, would it have killed all your family as well?

Seham Hayti: Yes.

Maxim Grigoriev: And what happened to you?

Seham Hayti: Nothing. They brought the bodies here to stage it all. Before they had left.

Maxim Grigoriev: Did you or any of your children feel sick?

Seham Hayti: No.

Maxim Grigoriev: Please, look attentively. These are the photos of the people from the video that had appeared on the Internet. Do you recognize any of them? There are both adults and children here.

Seham Hayti: No, I do not know any of them.

Maxim Grigoriev: Take a close look.

Seham Hayti: No, I have never seen them.

Maxim Grigoriev: I will also show you a video. Watch it attentively. Is this your staircase?

Seham Hayti: Yes.

Maxim Grigoriev: Do you recognize any of these people? Have they ever lived here?

Seham Hayti: They brought them here from the medical center.

Maxim Grigoriev: So, you are absolutely sure that these people have never lived here?

Seham Hayti: Yes. I do not know anyone.

The residents of the building describe in detail how the terrorists and the White Helmets brought the bodies of murdered women and children for staging and shooting a chemical attack.



On the photo: employee of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy E. Ridetsky interviews Mohamed Shkhader Abdulkader, resident of the house and witness to the militants bringing the bodies of dead people to stage an attack

Edward Ridetsky: A video recording of the bodies of those who died in this building in April 2019 has been published on the Internet. Tell us what happened back then.

Mohamed Shkhader Abdulkader: The militants did not allow us to watch, they were shooting at the windows. We could not even turn the light on...I peeped trying not to be caught. I had already been arrested and tortured by the militants earlier...The militants brought dead bodies by cars. Two columns, many cars.

Edward Ridetsky: Please, look attentively at the photos of the dead. Do you know any of them?

Mohamed Shkhader Abdulkader: I do not know any of them. I know all local people. We have lived together, we all know each other. But these people are strangers to me.



On the photo: E. Ridetsky, employee of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy, interviews Faez Omar Fattum, resident of the house who says that the bodies of the killed people were brought by militants from Al-Thoba prison to stage an attack

Edward Ridetsky: How long have you lived in this building?

Faez Omar Fattum: I have lived my whole life here. We have never left Douma.

Edward Ridetsky: A video recording of the bodies of those who died in this building in April 2019 has been published on the Internet. Tell us what happened back then.

Faez Omar Fattum: We lived on the second floor. We were attacked by the militants. They were armed, their faces were covered and they were shooting in the air. We were forced to go out... The White Helmets were there, too... The militants brought dead bodies by cars. We saw dead bodies.

Edward Ridetsky: Where did these bodies come from?

Faez Omar Fattum: The militants brought the bodies of dead people from Al-Thoba prison.



On the photo: Kamal Ali Fustukim, witness, whose brother's body the militants laid down in the street trying to present it as a victim of a chemical attack

Maxim Grigoriev: Please, tell me your age and profession.

Kamal Ali Fustukim: I am 24 years old, I'm a baker.

Maxim Grigoriev: In 2018, when Douma was controlled by the militants, did you stay in the town for the whole year?

Kamal Ali Fustukim: Yes.

Maxim Grigoriev: What happened to your brother?

Kamal Ali Fustukim: My brother was killed in an artillery shelling... They brought his body here from the hospital, took a picture of it and said that he had died due to a chemical attack. Then they shot a video and took the body away.

Maxim Grigoriev: Could you show me where exactly the body of your brother lay?

Kamal Ali Fustukim: Right over there.

Maxim Grigoriev: What happened next to your brother's body?

Kamal Ali Fustukim: We came up to the militants to take the body, but they refused to give it to us. All bodies were taken away and buried. I do not know where.



On the photo: Foundation for the Study of Democracy volunteers conduct a sociological survey of 300 residents of the houses situated near the site of the staged chemical attack in Douma

In July 2019, the Foundation for the Study of Democracy conducted in the town of Douma a survey of more than 300 residents of the neighbourhood where the house with dead bodies was located. None of more than 300 respondents could recognize from the photos those who were allegedly victims of the chemical attack. Taking into consideration the fact that in Arab towns neighbours communicate with each other very closely, it also clearly shows that the killed people were not residents of this neighbourhood and were brought there from somewhere else. We also note that the bodies of the people that were brought by the militants had no signs of injury or damage. This fact indicates that these women and children were killed deliberately in order to stage an attack.

Despite unambiguous testimonies of direct witnesses who pointed to the falsification of the chemical attack, Western media and their correspondents in Syria refused to conduct a truthful investigation or at least question the residents of the block of flats in which the incident took place, and chose to participate in a campaign of disinformation and accusations against the Syrian authorities.

For example, the BBC report of 8 April 2018 entitled Syria war: Trump condemns Syria for ‘chemical attack’ on Douma¹ said:

“Medical sources say dozens of people were killed in an attack on the rebel-held town of Douma on Saturday... Footage shows young children crying as they are treated in a makeshift medical unit...

The Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations, which runs medical facilities in the Eastern Ghouta, told BBC News that 70 deaths had been confirmed. According to the US-based Syrian American Medical Society, at least 48 people died, showing “symptoms indicative of exposure to a chemical agent”. More than 500 people were brought to medical centres with such symptoms, it said, quoting emergency services in Douma. A doctor at an overwhelmed hospital in the rebel-controlled town told the BBC’s Joel Gunter he had panicked as his own children coughed from gas seeping into the basement where they were hiding. A medical student described in horrifying detail how he had treated a dying man.”

The BBC report of July 10 entitled Syria war: What do we know about Douma ‘chemical attack’² read the following:

It cited “a member of the Syria Civil Defence, whose rescue workers are widely known as the White Helmets, as saying he smelt chlorine in the air after the strike, but that he could not determine its source...At 19:45, more than 500 patients — most of them women and children — were brought to medical facilities with symptoms indicative of exposure to a chemical agent, according to the Syria Civil Defence and the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)... The patients showed signs of “respiratory distress, central cyanosis [blue skin or lips], excessive oral foaming, corneal burns, and the emission of chlorine-like odour”, a joint statement issued on Sunday said. One woman who died had convulsions and pinpoint pupils.”... The Syria Civil Defence and SAMS said rescue workers found 42 people dead in their homes. One person was declared dead on arrival at a hospital, and another six died while receiving treatment, they added. An earlier, now deleted tweet by the Syria Civil Defence put the number dead at more than 150...The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based monitoring group, said air strikes on 6 and 7 April killed almost 100 people.”

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43691291>

² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43697084>

Syria war: Trump condemns Syria for 'chemical attack' on Douma

8 April 2018

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Syrian civil war



US President Donald Trump has lashed out at Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his allies Russia and Iran over a suspected chemical attack, saying there will be a "big price to pay".

Medical sources say dozens of people were killed in an attack on the rebel-held town of Douma on Saturday.

On the photo: a copy of the BBC report accusing the Syrian president and Russia and showing a staged video with the alleged victims in the hospital in Douma. The video shows the direct participant in the staged video — the Syrian boy, Hassan Diab, who told us together with his parents how this staged video was shot

The Guardian published the article entitled Syria attack: nerve agent experts race to smuggle bodies out of Douma.¹ “Corpses could provide vital clues for US technicians trying to establish which chemicals were used in the deadly bombing.” “Foaming at the mouth and struggling to breathe, their eyes burning, the patients overwhelmed medics in the Syrian town of Douma in the hours after 7:30pm last Saturday. By the following day, an estimated 500 people had gone to Syrian health facilities with “signs and symptoms consistent with exposure to toxic chemicals.”

According to numerous testimonies, including those of doctors from the hospital, information published by these media was completely false, there were no 500 people rushing to the hospital, the people who were brought to the hospital had no signs of chemical attack whatsoever, no six people (men or women) died in the hospital, the killed people were not people “killed in their homes” but strangers who were brought from outside. As for the White Helmets, the Syrian-American Medical Society and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights mentioned in the materials, these organizations are known for their constant falsification of information about the situation in Syria.

As already mentioned above, during the first phase of the Western disinformation campaign aimed at accusing the Syrian government of the chemical attack that had never occurred, the staged video footage from the hospital in Douma was actively circulated.

The unequivocal testimonies of doctors and even direct participants of this video recording, for example the boy named Hassan Diab, who totally denied the presence of any victims of a chemical attack in the hospital, did not stop the wave of false information in Western media. Hassan Diab tells the story: “We were in the basement. My mother told me that there was nothing to eat that day and that we would eat only the following day. We heard someone shouting in the street “Go to the hospital.” We ran to the hospital and as soon as I came in they grabbed me and started to pour water on me. After that we were put on the bed with other people.” His father tells us how this staged video was recorded: “When I found out that my child was at hospital, I asked permission to leave work and ran there. There were no chemical weapons. I smoked in

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/12/syria-attack-experts-check-signs-nerve-agent>

the street and did not feel anything. I entered the hospital and saw my family. For taking part in this shooting militants gave us dates, cookies, rice, and then let everyone go home. My child felt great.”

After falsified materials about the non-attack of April 7 were published, there followed a number of official accusations on the part of Western countries’ leaders, followed by an attack on Syria — missile strike against its territory.

Thus, on 8 April 2018 U.S. President Donald Trump wrote in his twitter: “Many dead, including women and children, in mindless CHEMICAL attack in Syria... President Putin, Russia and Iran are responsible for backing Animal Assad. Big price...”



On the photo above Hassan Diab is on a staged photo at the hospital, on the photo below — journalist Yevgeny Poddubny interviews Hassan Diab and his father

On April 13, the U.S. State Department issued the following official statement¹: “The United States assesses with confidence that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons in the eastern Damascus suburb of Duma on April 7, 2018, killing dozens of men, women, and children, and severely injuring hundreds more. This conclusion is based on descriptions of the attack in multiple media sources, the reported symptoms experienced by victims, videos and images showing two assessed barrel bombs from the attack, and reliable information indicating coordination between Syrian military officials before the attack. A significant body of information points to the regime using chlorine in its bombardment of Duma, while some additional information points to the regime also using the nerve agent sarin... A large body of information indicates that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons in the Duma area of East Ghutah, near Damascus, on April 7, 2018. Our information is consistent and corroborated by multiple sources. These chemical weapons were used as part of a weeks-long offensive against this densely populated opposition-held enclave. This assault has killed and wounded thousands of innocent civilians.”



This is a BBC Syria producer Riam Dalati Twitter entry: “After almost 6 months of investigations, I can prove without a doubt that the Douma Hospital scene was staged. No fatalities occurred in the hospital.”

Similarly, the leaders of other states that took part in the missile attack against Syria — French President Emmanuelle Macron and

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/united-states-government-assessment-assad-regimes-chemical-weapons-use/>

British Prime Minister Theresa Mae — made their statements without showing any evidence, referring only to the fake videos produced by the White Helmets.

For example, the Deutsche Welle, a German state media outlet that took an active part in the disinformation campaign against Syria, cited the following statement by Emmanuel Macron¹: “We have proof that chemical weapons were used last week, at least chlorine, and that they were used by the regime of Bashar Assad.”

British Prime Minister Theresa May also made statements containing false facts in order to justify the British attack on Syria. The Guardian published the text of her speech²: “Last Saturday up to 75 people, including young children, were killed in a despicable and barbaric attack in Douma, with as many as 500 further casualties. We have worked with our allies to establish what happened. And all the indications are that this was a chemical weapons attack. We have seen the harrowing images of men, women and children lying dead with foam in their mouths... First-hand accounts from NGOs and aid workers have detailed the most horrific suffering, including burns to the eyes, suffocation and skin discolouration, with a chlorine-like odour surrounding the victims...”

The abovementioned facts and results of the survey of the hospital doctors and district residents irrefutably testify that these statements of the State Department, U.S. President, French President and British Prime-Minister about the killed and injured were lies.

Only in February 2019, BBC Syria producer Riam Dalati wrote on his personal Twitter that “after almost 6 months of investigations, I can prove without a doubt that the Douma Hospital scene was staged. No fatalities occurred in the hospital.” However, even despite all the evidence of the falsification of this video, neither the BBC nor other Western media, let alone the leaders of the United States, Britain and France, have published any refutation of their own materials and statements.

¹ <https://www.dw.com/en/macron-assad-regime-used-chemical-weapons-on-syrias-douma/a-43359542>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/14/theresa-may-speech-military-strikes-syria-full-text>

In order to give weight to the statements of the Western leaders and spread the thesis about a large number of victims, the Western media massively quoted the distorted statements by the World Health Organization (WHO). The majority of western mass media quoted WHO in such a way that the readers had confidence that they confirmed the fact of the attack and the number of victims. For example, without any clarification, Deutsche Welle reported¹: “The World Health Organization (WHO) has said 500 patients were treated for symptoms of exposure to toxic chemicals.”

The same was true for the Reuters news agency which published the article² entitled WHO: 500 Syrian patients show symptoms pointing to toxic weapons exposure where it was written, inter alia, that “the WHO condemned the incident and said over 500 people from Douma had been treated for symptoms of gas poisoning.”

Similarly, the American CNN channel published the material³ entitled Suspected Syria chemical attack may have affected 500 people, WHO says.

In fact, the statement of the World Health Organization⁴ stated that the data were based on the “reports from Health Cluster partners” and also specified that “WHO has no formal role in the forensic investigation of the use of chemical weapons.”

The official partners of the Health Cluster program are a wide range of organizations from governments to an unknown circle of public organizations and donors of the organization.

Bearing this in mind, the partners of the World Health Organization who reported false information could have been the governments of the USA, France and Great Britain which accused the Syrian government, as well as unknown public organizations, such as the White Helmets, which participated in the disinformation campaign.

¹ <https://www.dw.com/en/macron-assad-regime-used-chemical-weapons-on-syrias-douma/a-43359542>

² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta-who/who-500-syrian-patients-show-symptoms-pointing-to-toxic-weaponsexposure-idUSKBN1H118D>

³ <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/04/11/middleeast/syria-chemical-attack-500-affected-who-intl/index.html>

⁴ <https://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2018/chemicalattacks-syria/en/>

Suspected Syria chemical attack may have affected 500 people, WHO says

By Sheena McKenzie, CNN

🕒 Updated 22:01 GMT (16:01 HKT) April 11, 2018



A report by CNN, the American news channel, which distorts a statement by the World Health Organization and attributes to it an announcement never made by the Organization on 500 victims who were never real

Following doubts arose concerning a video from a hospital circulated by the White Helmets, which captured the alleged victims of the chemical attack, it was found that with the widespread declarations by the White Helmets, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), Bellingcat that up to 500 persons were killed or injured, it is not possible not only to present any victim or their relatives, but also to find their bodies. After that, the disinformation campaign moved to its next stage and began to focus on another falsified video of the bodies of those who allegedly died at a residential building's entrance in Douma as a result of the use of chlorine.

The above findings of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy, including testimonies from permanent residents of a residential building, in the entrance of which the incident took place, unequivocally prove that it was also completely falsified by the White Helmets and fighters.

But even without this evidence, any sane person would have to wonder what was the point of the attack by the Syrian armed forces against civilians, if it had taken place. On the day of the incident, it was obvious to both the Syrian government, fighters or Western countries that the area would soon be occupied by the government troops. At the same time, the authorities had already reached agreement with a number of fighters on their relocation to Idlib. The use of chemicals in the area occupied by troops for the Syrian government would be meaningless, would not bring any benefits, but only negative consequences. And vice versa, this falsification was only in the interests of fighters and the Western States that used it as a justification for their air strike against Syria. However, these concerns did not stop either the Western States' leaders or Western media who actively disseminated this misinformation.

The “evidence” of the use of chlorine, which was falsified by fighters, lacked credibility as well. For example, a chlorine cylinder was placed on the building's roof having holes from artillery or mortar shelling, and the hole itself was presented as a result of the cylinder breaching the roof after it was dropped from a helicopter or plane.



Photograph from the report of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons showing cylinders with no damage observed, which, according to the Organisation, were dropped by the Syrian Air Force at a height of more than 2000 metres

The fact is that the Syrian air forces fly at a height of more than 2000 metres for fear of man-portable air defence system. Under these initial conditions, the final velocity of falling cylinders would result in greater damage to both the cylinders and the buildings — the alleged impact sites. This picture would be significantly different from what was found in the buildings. For example, in one of the buildings, a cylinder with no damage observed was discovered. It was allegedly dropped from a height of 2000 meters, but was found in an undamaged bed.

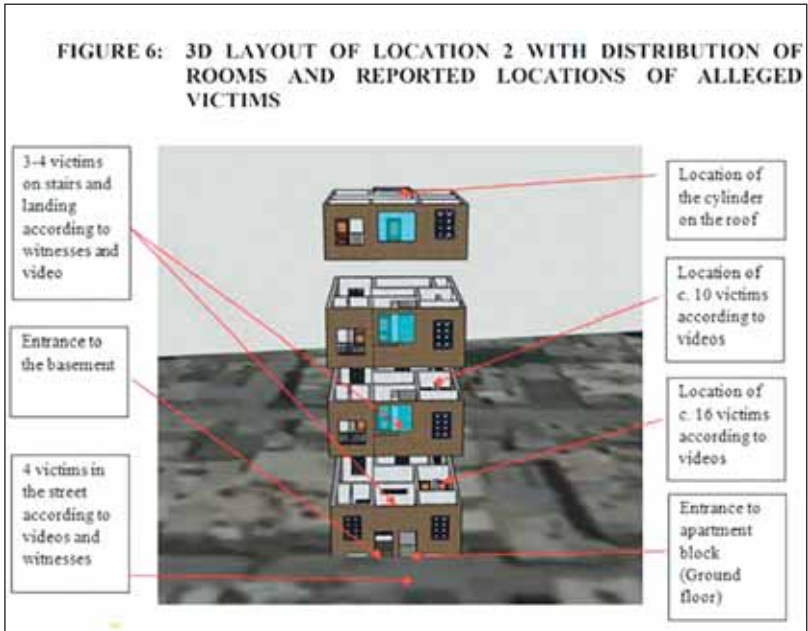
These are the conclusions the OPCW expert, Ian Henderson, came to. He was responsible for the relevant research in Douma, but was later excluded from the investigation by the OPCW that found him undesirable.

The position of bodies of women and children in the videos, the alleged victims of a chemical attack, leads to the conclusion that a chemical killed these people almost instantly, and the dead were not able to escape from the area in question. At the same time, it is well known chlorine cannot cause an instant death, so people manage to evacuate. The opposite situation is possible only in case of large chlorine releases over a wide area, as was the case during World War I.

In this case it is obvious that one chlorine cylinder is not enough. Moreover, chlorine appears as a gas with a pungent suffocating odour, which would force parents with children to leave the building immediately. Besides, in case of chlorine poisoning, the number of injured significantly exceeds the number of casualties.

The opposite situation — a significant number of allegedly dead with no injured at all — could not but pose a significant challenge for the media that would crave for investigating the accident.

The above testimonies of people with no injuries who were permanent residents of the apartments and entrances to the building, including the day of the incident, unequivocally confirm the fact that the bodies were brought from other places to stage the attack. Also, it was not difficult to find witnesses of how the falsification was organised, as was done by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy. International organisations, Western journalists and governments ignored it and preferred testimonies of anonymous witnesses affiliated with fighters.



Page from the OPCW Mission report showing a building plan with positions of the bodies. Although it was easy and necessary to conduct a mass survey of the residents of the district to identify the victims, as well as to collect testimonies from the building's residents, the OPCW Mission refused to do so

Here are some examples of Western media materials describing how this stage of the disinformation campaign was organised.

For example, the above mentioned BBC article of 8 April 2018 “Syria war: Trump condemns Syria for ‘chemical attack’ on Douma” says: “a video recorded by rescue workers known as the White Helmets shows a number of men, women and children lying lifeless inside a house, many with foam at their mouths¹». The article proceeds to clearly suggest that the attack was carried out by the Syrian forces.

Bellingcat, an organisation funded by the UK government, was also involved in spreading false information by making a statement: «Based on the available evidence, it is highly likely the 34+ victims killed in the 19:30 attack on the apartment building near al-Shuhada Square were

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43691291>

killed as a result of a gas cylinder filled with what is most likely chlorine gas being dropped from a Hip helicopter originating from Dumayr Airbase.»

The New York Times also spread false information without any proof¹. For example, the beginning of the article «One building, one bomb: how Assad gassed his own people» says: «Syrian officials say there wasn't a chemical attack. What really happened?»² And without any evidence the article asserts: «On April 7, a chemical bomb was dropped onto the balcony of a multistory building in Douma, a neighbourhood near Damascus, Syria. At least 34 people were killed».

To make the false claims more credible the New York Times even created a virtual crime scene on its website that allows you to see from different sides the bomb, which was intentionally placed there by militants to stage the attack³.

It is noteworthy that although there were no real investigation, evidence, or testimonies, the newspaper claims that its «investigation found that the Syrian government dropped a chlorine bomb on this apartment in Douma, Syria».

CBS journalists visited the entrance where the incident took place, but they refused to talk to residents and preferred to interview unknown people, probably associated with fighters. They subsequently spread obvious lies that contradicted the information received from doctors at the hospital and building' residents:

«On Monday, CBS News made it to the house where the suspected chemical attack took place..Nasr Hanan's brother Hamzeh is seen in that activist video lifeless and foaming at the mouth. In the kitchen, he told us how his brother had tried to wash-off the chemicals..»All of a sudden some gas spread around us. We couldn't breathe, it smelled like chlorine»⁴.

¹ One Building, One Bomb: How Assad Gassed His Own People. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/06/25/world/middleeast/syria-chemical-attack-douma.html>

² Syrian officials say there wasn't a chemical attack. What really happened?

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/06/24/world/middleeast/douma-syria-chemical-attack-augmented-reality-ar-ur.html>

⁴ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-inside-douma-the-site-of-apparent-chemical-attack-2018-04-16/>

Despite lots of unsubstantiated allegations by the Western media, the available information continued to be questionable, and the next stage of the misinformation campaign used the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to further accuse the Syrian government.

At the same time, the Western countries put the organisation under unprecedented pressure forcing it to falsify its reports, replace experts who refused to unjustly accuse the Syrian government, to interview pseudo-witnesses not at the scene of the incident, but in other countries, to use false information and remove those employees who tried to uncover the truth about the investigation of the incident in Douma, as well as to destroy documents and facts that did not support the politicised conclusions of the Organisation.

The first OPCW experts' group examining the situation in Douma questioned the very fact of the chemical attack.

The head of the engineering sub-team of the mission who worked for 12 years as an OPCW expert, Ian Henderson, later (during his speech at the «Arria-formula» meeting of the UN Security Council members in January 2020) said: «the findings in the final FFM report were contradictory, were a complete turnaround with what the team had understood collectively during and after the Douma deployments».

Our understanding was that we had serious misgivings that a chemical attack had occurred. I had followed up with the further six months of engineering and ballistic studies into these cylinders, the results of which had provided further support for the view that there had not been a chemical attack.

It should be noted that the United States made efforts to prevent Ian Henderson from entering American soil to speak in person at a UN event, so he had to speak via video conference.

According to him, after examining the situation in Douma, the group of the OPCW experts almost unanimously concluded that, in fact, there was no chemical attack, and there is a high probability that both chlorine-containing cylinders «were manually placed at those two locations rather than being delivered from aircraft.¹»

¹ <https://wikileaks.org/opcw-douma/document/20190227-Engineering-assessment-of-two-cylinders-observed-at-the-Douma-incident/page-8/#pagination>

Engineering Assessment of Two Cylinders Observed at the Douma Incident

- Executive Summary

DRAFT FOR INTERNAL REVIEW

Expanded Rev 1 - 27 February 2019

Introduction

1. This note relates to the incident of alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Douma on 7 April 2018 in the Syrian Arab Republic.
2. As part of the fact-finding mission, information was gathered and assessed on two chlorine cylinders, observed at two separate locations in Douma. The FFM team visited both these locations:
 - Location 2, where it observed the presence of an industrial gas cylinder on a top floor patio/terrace of an apartment block, next to a crater-like opening in the reinforced concrete roof leading to a room below.
 - Location 4, where it observed the presence of a similar cylinder lying on a bed in a top floor room of an apartment, with a crater-like opening in the reinforced concrete roof above the room.
3. An engineering assessment has been conducted, using all available information, to evaluate the possible means by which these two cylinders arrived at their respective locations as observed. This report summarises the findings of the engineering sub-team.

Approach

4. The studies on the two cylinders were conducted using sources of information available to the FFM team, which included: open-source material (images and videos); observations and measurements taken by the FFM team at both locations; photographs taken by the FFM team at both locations; and engineering data from open-source information relating to the dimensions, design code, specifications, materials of construction and mechanical properties of the cylinders, sourced from the manufacturer's stamps and country of manufacture.
5. Samples were taken by the FFM team at both locations. Whilst the results of analysis are obviously relevant for the overall investigation of the alleged incident, they were not the central focus in the scope of this element of the fact-finding mission. It was necessary, however, to make some assumptions; for example, about the likely contents of the cylinders, in order to provide inputs for the engineering assessment. These were necessarily defined as scenarios to be used in the development of hypotheses, as described below.

Hypotheses

6. To derive the inputs for an engineering assessment, it was necessary to develop hypotheses for what was thought (i.e. alleged) to have occurred. This needed to be done in a way that did not pre-judge the situation or lead prematurely to a mistaken interpretation of the facts. The situation was also complicated by the many sources of information and opinion about what was alleged to have

Assessment

32. At this stage the FFM engineering sub-team cannot be certain that the cylinders at either location arrived there as a result of being dropped from an aircraft. The dimensions, characteristics and appearance of the cylinders and the surrounding scene of the incidents, were inconsistent with what would have been expected in the case of either cylinder having been delivered from an aircraft. In each case the alternative hypothesis produced the only plausible explanation for observations at the scene.
33. In summary, observations at the scene of the two locations, together with subsequent analysis, suggest that there is a higher probability that both cylinders were manually placed at those two locations rather than being delivered from aircraft.

Ian Henderson

Excerpts from a report by an OPCW engineering team led by Ian Henderson, which concluded that there is a high probability that both chlorine-containing cylinders “were manually placed at those locations rather than being delivered from aircraft”¹»

¹ <https://wikileaks.org/opcw-douma/document/20190227-Engineering-assessment-of-two-cylinders-observed-at-the-Douma-incident/page-1/>



*The Arria-formula meeting of the UN Security Council members
on 20 January 2020. At the podium:*

Vladimir Safronkov (Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations and at the UN Security Council on political issues), Maksim Grigoriev (Director of the Foundation for the study of Democracy), Vassily Nebenzia (Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation at the United Nations and the UN Security Council), Aleksandr Shulgin (Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OPCW), Bashar Ja'afari (Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic at the UN). Also, former OPCW expert Ian Henderson participated in the meeting via video conference.

Mail

From: Marc-Michael Blum
Sent: 28 August 2018 20:21
To:
Subject: Re: minutes of meeting with Forensic Toxicologists

Dear

Sorry for a late reply on this. My comments:

- Non-OPCW participants: these were not forensic toxicologists but three toxicologists who are also clinical pharmacologists with a professional background in medical CW protection. Also a fourth participant was present who is a bioanalytical and toxicological chemist.
- I find the summary in minutes misleading that the other side in the end offered a conclusion with two possibilities: real chemical attack or staged. All we "gave" the experts where open-source videos and photos – so their insight was (and had to remain) limited. That the possibility of a staged attack was raised is part of required scientific skepticism but was in my opinion mainly fueled by the fact that the circumstances of bleach for the victims do not match chlorine rather than corpses arranged for propaganda purposes. Regarding the observed symptoms I would write that they were not matching the chemicals listed by you but would remove "other known toxic gases" and rather put that no obvious candidate chemical causing the symptoms could be identified.

Cheers
MMB

Von: [@opcw.org](mailto:marc.blum@opcw.org)
Datum: Dienstag, 21. August 2018 um 10:17
An: Soumik Paul <soumik.naul@opcw.org>, Sami Barrek <sami.barrek@opcw.org>, Marc-Michael Blum <marc.blum@opcw.org>
Betreff: FW: minutes of meeting with Forensic Toxicologists

Dear Sami/Marc, could I ask you to cast an eye over the minutes and let me know if there is anything amiss. Thanks Soumik for your comments.

Regards

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
Johan de Wittlaan 32 ,2517 JR The Hague , Netherlands

Tel.: +31 (0) 70 416

Email: [@opcw.org](mailto:opcw@opcw.org)



Working Together for a World Free of Chemical Weapons

From: Soumik Paul
Sent: 21 August 2018 09:12
To: [@opcw.org](mailto:marc.blum@opcw.org)
Subject: RE: minutes of meeting with Forensic Toxicologists

M

000001

2/3

An e-mail exchange between OPCW members discussing experts who concluded that publicly unveiled videos demonstrated bodies with traces that do not correspond to chlorine but rather to corpses placed in for propaganda purposes

After that, the OPCW leadership replaced almost all the team members and the new team was instructed to stop investigating and interviewing witnesses at the scene. Instead of this, they began interviewing unknown people, possibly associated with fighters, in country X.

The findings of the first group of experts were removed by the OPCW management from the reports, and the final conclusions of the Organisation's report changed significantly and were prepared by members who had not operated at the scene at all.

The OPCW team members after discussions with specialists in chemical weapons (“three toxicologists/clinical pharmacologists, one bioanalytical and toxicological chemist”) concluded that publicly unveiled videos and photographs demonstrated bodies with traces that do not correspond to chlorine but rather to corpses placed in for propaganda purposes¹. The OPCW leadership decided to completely omit the findings of its experts.

After examining the falsifications by the OPCW First Director General Jose Bustani said: «The convincing evidence of irregular behaviour in the OPCW investigation of the alleged Douma chemical attack confirms doubts and suspicions I already had.

I could make no sense of what I was reading in the international press. Even official reports of investigations seemed incoherent at best. The picture is certainly clearer now, although very disturbing.»

Hiding the experts' findings, substituting facts, replacing its own team, which became undesirable, with a team of persons who operated in country X (probably in Turkey), the OPCW falsified a report about what happened in Douma.

It is interesting to note that the first thing the White Helmets did even before the arrival of the OPCW Mission is that they removed and disposed of the bodies of the alleged victims of the chemical attack. Obviously, the examination of bodies could make chlorine poisoning as the cause of death more valid. Avoiding this can only mean that bodies did not contain chlorine at all. It is noteworthy that, despite the OPCW mandate to examine the bodies, the

¹ https://wikileaks.org/opcw Douma/document/correctly_redacted_emails_re_toxicology_minutes/page-2/#pagination

Organisation even refused to make some effort to find and autopsy the remains.

S/1731/2019
page 6

- where possible, and deemed necessary, carry out medical examinations, including autopsies, and collect biomedical samples of those alleged to have been affected;

Although the examination of bodies could make chlorine poisoning as the cause of death more valid, the first thing the White Helmets did was to conceal and destroy the bodies. Besides, despite the S/1731/2019 OPCW mandate to carry out examinations of bodies, the Organisation made no attempts even to trace the remains.

It is obvious that if the OPCW had a clear intention to investigate the incident, it would start its work in attempts to identify victims. Given the fact that the Western governments and media promoted a version with a chlorine cylinder on the roof, it would have been easy, first of all, to question local residents showing them videos and photographs of the victims. The OPCW report took almost a year to prepare. Despite this long period of time, the OPCW failed to question local residents, as well as to collect testimonies from the building' residents.

It should be reminded that while interviewing these people and taking evidence the Foundation for the Study of Democracy established the direct witnesses of the events and confirmed that none of those whose bodies had been demonstrated by the White Helmets had lived either in this house or the block around it. This proves once again that the bodies portrayed in the house were brought into it and refutes the Western theory that the deceased lived in the house.

It should be reminded that in the beginning of this chapter, we have already cited the testimony of the residents of the house where the incident occurred stating that the bodies of women and children were brought in by terrorists and the White Helmets to film a staged chemical attack. Taking this in consideration, the steps taken by OPCW represent more than an attempt to justify missile attack, an act of aggression committed by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France against Syria. In fact, they shield those who actually killed women and

children in order to produce the footage intended to implicate Syrian government.

Interestingly, OPCW's report relies almost completely on the evidence provided by the White Helmets (which are mentioned more than 20 times in the report).

It is well known that the White Helmets had filmed a number of other staged events in other countries. In December 2016 the Ministry of the Interior of Egypt issued the following statement: "The Information Centre of the General Directorate of Security of the Suez Canal in coordination with the competent administrative bodies of the Suez Canal arrested the following persons:

1. Sahar M.A., born 1972, residing in Port Said,
2. Sayar A.A., born 1994, residing in Port Said,
3. Muhammad H.M., born 1994, residing in Port Said,
4. Mustafa A.M., 25, residing in Port Said,
5. Mustafa A., photographer.

He was accompanied by two children: Rahat A.A., 12, and Seif A.A., 8, both children of Sahar M.A.

The arrested intended to shoot staged photos of a girl in white clothes stained with paint that looked like blood. The girl was holding "blood-stained" bandages and a toy that was also stained with paint. The photographs were taken by a ruined building for which a demolition warrant had been issued. During the questioning they stated that intended to publish the shots in social media as footage of events in Aleppo, Syria. The detained had a photo camera and mobile phones with them, and a plastic box with red substance they wanted to use to fake blood on the girl's dress. The following measures were taken: The arrested were handed to the prosecutor's office. The photographer was detained for four days, while others were let out on bail. The girl aged 12 was handed over to her mother, and the boy aged 8 was taken by custodian who pledged to take proper care of him."

During the investigation conducted in Syria the Foundation for the Study of Democracy heard the detailed statements of numerous operatives of the White Helmets, and those who either took part in or witnessed the filming of their fake news and staged scenes. The members of the White Helmets say that special units and groups were established

within this organization to fabricate fake news and stage alleged Syrian air strikes and bombings.

For example, Abdul Jabar Bodaqa, an operative of the White Helmets says that in the White Helmets' centre in Aleppo there was a task force that went to the shooting location in advance and made preparations, bringing the bodies, the wounded from the hospitals, setting fire on car wheels and debris and subsequently using quadcopters for filming.

Abdul Kareem Said Ahmed, an operative of the White Helmets in Kafr Batna also says that the White Helmets had a special team of about 20 people for similar purposes in Eastern Ghouta. White Helmets' operative Souleyman Mohammed Darweesh says that the directorate of the White Helmets for Eastern Ghouta asked for a fabricated piece of news once in two days and had a special information team to prepare fake news headed by Abdul Karim Al-Hafi, a fighter of the Nusra Front. An operative of the White Helmets directorate for Eastern Douma Houssein Talal Hajiko tells the Foundation that he witnessed a scene when the head of the information bureau of the White Helmets directorate for Eastern Ghouta instructed children to accuse Syrian government promising to give them enough food. Omar Al-Mustafa ibn-Muhammed says that the White Helmets usually edit their footage and sent it to some center to provide it with soundtracks recorded specially after the events.

Both Abdul Jabar Bodaqa and Souleyman Mohammed Darweesh, and many other operatives of the White Helmets say that they were not merely constantly tasked with staging events and paying money to those who arranged these stagings, but indicate that the White Helmets virtually created a pattern in which the operatives and heads of centers depended financially on their work to fabricate events. For example, "unless there was shelling they could get no fuel for the cars and use the cars, so they had to fabricate the shelling". What is more, the leadership of the White Helmets made it clear to their staff that the funding of the organization depended on that work.

White Helmets operative Mohammed Baha Al-Shihadi recalls that when one of the heads of the organization visited Aleppo he openly told the operatives that they had to "work well on this so that the funding continued".

Abdul Jabar Bodaqa, member of the White Helmets in Aleppo, says that fabrications were intended to attract more sponsors and more financial support. It is important to note that volunteers were not driven by moral principles or any other suitable motives, but merely the desire to secure funding. Thus, the White Helmets were more concerned with publicizing their activities than with helping the affected people. The witnesses describe in great detail numerous cases when members of the White Helmets shot the footage first and only then helped the injured, and cases when they left after shooting footage without attending to the injured at all.

Zakarya Mustafa says, “The White Helmets arrived and started filming. I came and saw them filming rather than helping. I tried to drive them off. A fighter called Hassan Jader detained me. They bat me and kept me for four or five hours”. Mohammed Al-Mustafa ibn-Hassun recalls: “When a house by the fountain near Qassarah descent in Aleppo was destroyed, [the White Helmets] came and helped no one”. He concludes that “All they want is showy footage. All they want is money and footage.”

The White Helmets regularly portrayed Syrian Army’s strikes against terrorist groups’ and illegal armed formations’ headquarters and bases as attacks against civilians.

Ali Muhammad al-Mardini, former member of Jaysh Al-Islam says that in summer 2016 in Douma Syrian Army launched a strike against Jaysh Al-Islam headquarters, and the White Helmets “represented it as an attack against civilian settlement. The headquarters were in the basement of a house. The house was destroyed, and the basement remained. The White Helmets said that there were women and children under the rumble of the house.”

In the areas occupied by terrorist groups and illegal armed formations, fighting and shooting between the groups often occurred. The White Helmets usually represented such shooting as Syrian Army attacks. This is discussed in great detail by both former operatives of the organization and the residents of the affected neighbourhoods. Abdul Jabar Bodaqa, the White Helmets’ operative in Aleppo says that the staff of the centre he worked in remembered at least ten such cases.

A witness Mohammed Said Huri ibn-Mohammed Baraqash mentions specifically the case when the Nusrah Front fighters fired at a

group of people trying to get to the areas controlled by the government through the safe corridor, and the White Helmets presented this attack as a strike launched by Syrian Army. The witnesses also give a number of examples of the White Helmets arriving before the shelling, or announcing the shelling in advance and arriving after that. In some cases such announcements were followed by shelling, which cannot but cause suspicions that the shelling was arranged by the White Helmets.

Omar Al-Alyush ibn-Mohammed says «Everyone saw the White Helmets making their performances. They came and told people that there would be a strike in an hour. Then they came to the spot of the supposed strike, put their cars, and shot their footage. They were guarded by fighters.» Abdul Razak Nassan ibn-Nuaman provides the following description of what happened in Aleppo: «I had been part of the Ahrar al Sham for three months before Syrian Army entered the eastern part of the city of Aleppo. When we worked with that units, they warned us through the radio that a strike would be launched against certain areas and listed them: Salahin, Al-Fardus. That was true, some time later those areas were indeed shelled. That was done so that the White Helmets could work.»

Taking advantage of certain natural developments and representing them as consequences of strikes launched by the Syrian Army became a hallmark of the White Helmets.

Muhammad Heir Daqneesh, father of Omran Daqneesh, whose photos were published by mass media all over the world, tells the Foundation about it. Despite his protests, the White Helmets presented the destruction of his house as a consequence of Syrian Army's air strike and threatened him when he refused to confirm this. Abdul Kareem Said Ahmed, an operative of the White Helmets in Kafr Batna says that ordinary fires were often portrayed as the effect of bombing. An operative of the White Helmets directorate for Eastern Douma Houssein Talal Hajiko confirms this information citing as an example the fire at timber storage facility between Hammuriyah and Hazzah caused by electric short circuit, which the White Helmets declared to be the consequence of Syrian air strike. Said Ibrahim al-Masri recalls a fire at medical warehouse. "It was the wiring that brought about the fire. And they told it was bombing. Other unit went to a plant that produced explosives. There was an explosion due to some handling mistake,

and they told everybody the fire started because of the bombing by the Syrian Army.”



Mohammed Saber, an operative of the White Helmets in Saqba tells the Foundation about a video shot by the organization, in which a burning fire engine appeared and Syrian Army was accused of the fire. He states that «The fire engine was burning, and Mohammed Masarwi let no one extinguish the fire, he wanted to take pictures of it and then say that it was destroyed by the Syrian Army». He also cites a case when the White Helmets declared the crash of two ambulances to be the result of Syrian troops' attack

The White Helmets also used another model propaganda technique, organizing what they called safety training for civilians. The footage of these alleged training activities was subsequently edited and declared to be the footage of real events, the results of shelling and attacks of the Syrian Army. Omar Al-Mustafa ibn-Muhammed told the Foundation

that the White Helmets “had brought the children from the villages and engaged them in filming, and in a couple of days people saw the footage on TV and in mass media as a footage of a real shelling”. An operative of the White Helmets Souleyman Mohammed Darweesh from Saqba recalls «trainings in Zamalka and Hammuriyah which the White Helmets later on declared to be real events. I was one of the operatives of the White Helmets who were trained. In two or three days I was astonished to see that the footage was used as a footage of a real fire after the shelling, in which people were injured».

The witnesses also mention the White Helmets’ mechanism for preparing and making such fabrication and cite numerous examples of cases in which they were involved or which they observed personally. An operative of the White Helmets Abdul Jabar Bodaqa describes in great detail the fabrications he took part in, including those in Jisr Al-Haj, Al-Shoor, Al-Hilwaniyah and Tariq al-Bab in Aleppo. Zakarya Mustafa says he eye-witnessed the fabrication in Sakhur, Duar Nafoorah in Aleppo: “They gathered many children and a lot of car tires and set fire on the tires. Fire engines were standing nearby and they started extinguishing the fire, as if there had been a strike, they were carrying some people away as if they were injured and they made it look as if some people had been killed”.

Radwan Hoseirah ibn-Houssein could observe another fabrication from the balcony of his house in Tall al-Zarazir in the vicinity of the Tariq ibn Ziyad mosque: “They made it look like the Syrian Army had just shelled the area and the White Helmets were evacuating people and rescuing women and children from under a collapsed building. They chose a building that had had no roof, and pulled down one of the walls in addition”. Amran Maqiah, an operative of the White Helmets, Douma, tells the Foundation that he personally was employed in the fabrication and gives a following detailed description: “they saw a woman with a child on the Al-Gharan square and told her, “May we have your child for a minute?”, made the child look as if he was wounded and as if they were attending to him. They were taking pictures and saying that the child was injured”.

Photos and videos of fabricated events and imitations can be seen in many materials provided by both the White Helmets themselves and the media that support them. For instance, some footage included

no doubt, by mistake in the film *Last Men in Aleppo* celebrating the White Helmets, one can still clearly see a man throwing car tires into the fires to produce more smoke, which the White Helmets represented as the result of Syrian Army's strikes and bombings. In another of their videos, the White Helmets rescue the same woman and child twice.

According to the operatives of the White Helmets, fabricating chemical weapons attacks allegedly committed by the Syrian Army was an important part of the organization's work. The leaders of the organization made it clear to their staff that these activities were funded specially and that often money was paid to those involved in the performances. The residents of the neighbourhoods where these alleged chemical weapons attacks took place describe the fabrication process in great detail. Omar Al-Mustafa ibn-Muhammed says that he saw the White Helmets imitating chemical weapons attack: "They would bring children, put them on the floor and pretend that chemical weapons had been used. They put on gas masks, pushed the local residents away, and poured water on the dead bodies that were lying before them. I mean supposed dead bodies. They pretended that the children had been killed by chemical weapons". Souleyman Mohammed Darweesh, an operative of the White Helmets in Saqba tells the Foundation how he arrived with an ambulance team on the site where the fabrication took place and saw a cylinder handled by the White Helmets, some of whom were wearing gas masks and some cloth face masks. We were told that the cylinder was dropped from a helicopter. But in that case it should have been deformed, which it wasn't. The cylinder was intact». Mohammed Bahar Al-Sheehadi ibn-Fronzi, an operative of the White Helmets says that «fabricated footage was filmed in Sakhur. They brought 10 children to the hospital in Sakhur, laid them on the floor and started spraying them with water. They were filming that on camera as consequences of an alleged use of chemical weapons».

Ahmed Buwaydhani, an operative of the White Helmets, Douma, says that he was personally present in Al-Hajariyah where the doctors concluded that people had food poisoning, and an operative of the White Helmets "who had camera said it was due to chemical weapons attack". Ahmed Zeinu Mohammed from Aleppo says he saw with his own eyes how the White Helmets arranged a performance in Sukkari announcing that chemical weapons would be used there, and «pouring

water on the streets and washing the streets the following day. They laid the people on the ground and started pouring water on them. In reality no chlorine was used». The White Helmets often announced in advance that Syrian government would use chemical weapons in certain neighbourhood and later staged a scene and filmed videos there. Nihad Damerdji ibn Muhammad says that the day before the accident in Al-Badi street the White Helmets' operatives came and said that the following day Syrian government would use chemical weapons and the following day «let off some liquid with pungent smell, but it wasn't real chlorine, because they were not wearing any gloves or gas masks. Then they started showering people with water and filming. All those who took part in this were paid 1500-2000 Syrian pounds». Abdul Razaq Nassan ibn Nuaman says that he personally witnessed how the White Helmets performed their fabrication in Al-Maadi neighbourhood by the greengrocery market and tells the Foundation that «the White Helmets had no gas masks on, they brought there children from the neighbourhood, poured water on them and started crying that the regime had used chemical weapons». The same imitation of a chemical attack was witnessed by Omar AL-Alyush ibn-Mohammed.



Souleyman Mohammed Darweesh, 35, White Helmets, Saqba

In our center there was a special team, which specialized in such fake news, it was headed by Abdul Karim Al-Hafi. He was a fighter of the Nusra Front, I saw him with a gun. We knew that he fabricated data.

The White Helmets spread lies on many occasions. They would report shellings of neighbourhoods on websites, while in reality nothing happened. We were in the centre and nobody told us there had been shelling, and we didn't go there, and later we read that there had been shelling. The White Helmets' directorate for Eastern Ghouta asked to provide them with fake news once in two days.

There were times when such attacks were imitated in order to get fuel for the cars. They could not use the cars unless there was a strike, so they fabricated it.

On 7 March 2018 the head of the centre was informed of a helicopter bringing gas. Some time later, in about 40-50 minutes I heard on the radio there was a gas cylinder by the Osman mosque in Hammuriyah. They ordered us to send ambulances and people.

And our ambulance went to the place where they found the cylinder. Its valve was broken. I myself was about 20-50 m away from the cylinder. It was handled by other people from the White Helmets, some were wearing gas masks and others cloth face covers. There was gas was leaking, but slowly. We were told that the cylinder was dropped from a helicopter. But in that case it should have been deformed, which it wasn't.

The cylinder was intact. Only the valve was broken. Then two operatives from the White Helmets tied the cylinder and took it to a deserted place. They were not wearing special protective suits, because they knew it was not dangerous.

The White Helmets' activities to produce fake news included another permanent component, which was imitating chemical weapons attacks. The operatives of the White Helmets and people who were present on the spots where such attacks were imitated give detailed description of what happened.



Ahmed Zeinu Mohammed, 43, blacksmith, Aleppo

I was at home when some fighters warned that chemical weapons would be used in our street. The following day we went out during this alleged chemical weapons attack. The spot where the attack took place, as they said, is located 50-60 m away from my house. We saw the fighters block the place and the White Helmets pour water and wash the street. We could smell nothing in the

house. Outside there was a smell of chlorine, but it was that of a household detergent or something. They would not let us come nearer the spot. There was evacuation, they spilled water and there was white foam. They laid the people on the ground and started pouring water on them.

In reality there was no chlorine. Those who were evacuating people were wearing gas masks, and the fighters and other White Helmets were not.



Mohammed Bahar Al-Sheehadi ibn-Fronzi, 23, White Helmets

My fellow White Helmets' operatives told me how they filmed staged footage in 2016 in Sakhur. They brought 10 children to Sakhur hospital, told them to lie down on the floor and sprayed them with water, while filming this on a camera as consequences of a chemical weapons attack. I was told this story by the operatives of our centre, five brothers: Mohammed Ibrahim, Mustafa Ibrahim,

Adullah Ibrahim, Mahmoud Ibrahim and Houssein Badejki. The filming was organized by Al-Najar.



Zakarya Mustafa, 42, shop assistant, Aleppo

The White Helmets spread fake news. Once Ali Hesham Farhoodi brought hundreds of children on a wide street in Sakhur. There were many fire engines and ambulances with the emblems of the White Helmets.

I saw that with my own eyes, as it happened near the house I live in. That was some day in June 2015, at about 4 p.m. The children were aged between 6 and 12. The youngest ones were accompanied by parents. The children

came back very happy as they were given money, and they were telling what had happened. They showed the money, each of them was paid 50 dollars for taking part in this staged chemical attack. The White Helmets organized these imitations because they were paid lots of money for it.



***Nihad Damerджи ibn Muhammad, 57,
construction worker, Aleppo***

The White Helmets performed an imitation in Al-Wadi street, I can show you the place. You can find a lot of witnesses living in this neighbourhood. The day before the accident some people came and told that the following day Syrian government would use chemical weapons in this neighbourhood.

They prepared fire engines and brought a water truck, mass media and came the next day. They released some liquid with pungent smell, but it wasn't real chlorine, because they were not wearing any gloves or gas masks. Then they started showering people with water and filming. The evacuation was also filmed in the presence of journalists and photographers.

All those who took part in this were paid 1500-2000 Syrian pounds depending on their age. This imitation was performed mainly by the fighters' relatives. There were three or four cameras.



***Radwan Hoseirah ibn-Houssein, 39,
construction worker***

Once in Al-Amiriyah I saw video cameras and water trucks. We were told that Syrian authorities used chemical weapons there. There were 20-25 White Helmets' operatives and guards. They pretended to be rescuing people, poured water on children, yet one could see that they were not wearing gloves and had no gas masks

on, and there was not a slightest smell of chlorine. We stood close by and could see that it was all a fake. Some White Helmets' operatives who prevented us from approaching the scene were also armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles.



Ahmed Buwaydhani, 24, operative of the White Helmets, Douma

In 2017, during the month of Ramadan, we were told that here in Douma there was a locality called Al-Hajariyah and that there were people affected by a chemical weapons attack. We came there and took them to the hospital, where a doctor examined them and concluded that they had eaten something that caused food poisoning. At hospital the doctors asked what had happened, and one of our operatives who had camera told them it was a result of chemical weapons attack, and it turned out that they had food poisoning caused by rice.



Mohammed Al-Mustafa ibn-Hassun, 48, shop assistant, Aleppo

The White Helmets have always said that the government were using chemical weapons. That was not true, as we live in this neighbourhood and we have never seen or heard any child to be affected by chemical weapons attack. I work in a grocery store, lots of people come there and talk, and I have heard a lot of different things. I heard them talk to each other, I mean the people who worked for the White Helmets and dealt with fighters. They said that they received support from the United States, talked about Mustafa Al-Bataihi who recruited people

for the imitations to get money. Mustafa Al-Bataihi had an arrangement with someone so that he could organize these performances. He received money, and his task was to bring children and create conditions for the performance.



Amran Maqiah, 21, an operative of the White Helmets in Douma since 2013

There were times when someone called us and told us that some people had suffered from chemical weapons attack, and that we should go to certain place [to take them].

We came and saw that everything was okay, there was nothing special, it was just a fire, and they were filming and saying that that were consequences of a chemical weapons attack. I remember, that happened in 2018 in Al-Shuhada square.



Omar Al-Mustafa ibn-Muhammed, 41, small business owner, Aleppo

They imitated a chemical weapons attack in the following way. They would bring children, put them on the floor and pretend that chemical weapons had been used. They put on gas masks, push the local residents away, and poured water on the dead bodies lying before them.

I mean supposed dead bodies. They pretended that the children had died as a result of a chemical weapons attack. I saw that with my own eyes.



Ahmed Buwaydhani, 24, operative of the White Helmets

The White Helmets said that a child had been killed by chemical weapons attack, but they lied. The child and the family lived in an old house in Al-Shayfuniah, next to the fighters' headquarters.

When the headquarters was shelled, the family's house was destroyed. When we came, there was no sign that chlorine had been used.

I was the one who found the child under the rumble of the house, I took him out, carried it to the ambulance and went to the hospital, but he could hardly breathe and was dead on arrival.

Later on the White Helmets came to the hospital and started filming that dead child saying that he had been killed by a chemical attack in which chlorine had been used.

In 2018 the operatives of our centre were sent to the heighbourhood where the stadium was located. There were enight children playing in the street. They were given some sweets and invited to play with us. Then they were covered with white powder, and taken to hospital in a van.

There they were filmed as children affected by the use of chemical weapons. There were four of us from the White Helmets, a camera man and four men from Jaysh al-Islam and one camera man. The footage was broadcasted by Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya and Orient.

In 2018 there was an explosion at the fighters' headquarters. There was a house nextdoor where some people lived. Their baby was killed and the White Helmets filmed it and later said that it was killed by chemical weapons, which wasn't true. I was there as White Helmets operative.



*Said Ibrahim al-Masri, 27,
White Helmets operative*

On 7 March 2018 we were at the White Helmets' centre. Bashir Al-Hafi told us that some helicopters will be overflying Ghouta spraying some liquid.

I asked what kind of liquid was that and was chlorine.

Some time later Bashir Al-Hafi and Hasan Al-Houseini came and told us that there is a fire in Hamriyah. There was

a phone call so that we would go and fight the fire. We were told that a cylinder was dropped from the helicopter, but the cylinder was intact.

We came there and saw that some people were wrapping the cylinder. They had no protective gear on.



*Abdul Razak Nassan ibn-
Nuaman, 45, Aleppo*

At the time I was hiding from the Ahrar al Sham at another armed group called the First Army. Its headquarters was located in a school by the Abdul Aziz Hospital in Al-Maadi.

The place where Syrian government allegedly used chemical weapons is not far from the place where I was hiding in the vicinity

of greengrocery market in Al-Maadi. That fabricated incident involved 10-15 operatives of the White Helmets, 2 or 3 fire engines, and two journalists and people from opposition media. They brought people from the neighbourhood, showered them with water and started crying that the regime had used chemical weapons.

But that wasn't true. There was only a smell of household chlorine substance, and people stood there watching. The White Helmets were not wearing any gas masks or gloves. There were many civilians around, and if the White Helmets had cared about the safety of that people, they would have told them to go away, but the people stood there watching.



***Professor Rakan Barhoum,
Dean of the Faculty of Science,
specializes in chemistry***

As a professional in the subject I can see that the White Helmet's footage is poorly done. They lack logic. For example, they stated that chlorine had been used in certain neighbourhood. We know that chlorine gas is heavy and has little effect when used in small amounts in open spaces. Yet the footage shows the affected children who get up as soon as they have been showered with water.

These and many more similar fake chemical weapons attacks fabricated by the White Helmets were widely publicized by the Western media and became part of a disinformation campaign of unprecedented scale.



Briefing by Maxim Grigoriev, Director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy and Alexander Shulgin, Permanent Representative of Russia to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on 11 March 2019 in OPCW. At the briefing evidence of fabrication of chemical weapons attacks by the White Helmets was presented.

For the most part, organizations that produced disinformation subsequently quoted by the mass media were funded by Western governments.

In fact, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights simply cannot be referred to as Syrian, since it is located in Great Britain and not in Syria. For a number of years, the organization has been one of the main disinformation sources for Western mass media. The truth is that its founder Osama Ali Suleiman is operating under the false name Rami Abdul Rahman right from his home in Coventry. Despite his claims, he has never been a human rights activist, but was twice convicted back in Syria and then immigrated to Great Britain. According to mass media reports, his activities are financed from the budget of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. For instance, in 2018, journalists Peter Hitchens, Jan Sinclair and subsequently others, ¹ got hold of evidence of a £194 share of the organization's funding.

The White Helmets organization has received hundreds of thousands of US dollars from the governments of the US, Great Britain and states of the Persian Gulf. In November 2018, the British Foreign Office published on its official Twitter account the photo of its new Secretary Jeremy Hunt with an explanation that helping the White Helmets was the first decision he had made as a Foreign Secretary. In June 2018, pursuant to US President Donald Trump's decision, the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development allocated another \$6.6 million to fund the White Helmets' activities. A lion's share of these funds was spent on shooting prearranged video-spots and producing fakes; a considerable share was paid out to terrorists who were the organization's members, and another significant share was embezzled by the White Helmets' leadership, from founder James Le Mesurier to numerous heads of hundreds of the organization's offices across parts of the Syrian territory occupied by terrorists. According to the mass media,² in November 2019, James Le Mesurier gave a confession of his prior abuse and sent in to the sponsor states his resignation. Earlier a Dutch financial accountant had identified in the foundation's records forged

¹ [https://www.albawaba.com/news/syrian-observatory-human-rights-flawed-still-necessary-1147532#:~: text=Funded%20by%20the%20Foreign%20Office&text=In%202012 %2C%20the%20UK%20funded, with%20communications%20equipment%20and%20cameras.%E2 %80 %9D](https://www.albawaba.com/news/syrian-observatory-human-rights-flawed-still-necessary-1147532#:~:text=Funded%20by%20the%20Foreign%20Office&text=In%202012%2C%20the%20UK%20funded,with%20communications%20equipment%20and%20cameras.%E2%80%9D)

² <https://nltimes.nl/2020/07/17/dutch-accountant-uncovers-fraud-behind-syria-rescue-organization-white-helmets-report>

receipts for the amount of \$50 thousand, which Le Mesurier himself had admitted before he committed suicide.

The Syrian-American Medical Society (SAMS) has enjoyed a multi-million-dollar financial support from the US Government, which is provided through USAID. According to the 2015 SAMS financial statement, the organization's budget increased dramatically nearly tenfold, from \$672,987.00 in 2013 to almost \$6 million in 2015. USAID accounted for more than \$5.8 million out of this amount. SAMS Executive Director David Lillie is a former USAID staff member, just like SAMS Director of Operations Tony Kronfli. In addition to providing medical assistance in Syria, the organization has been undertaking giant lobbying efforts aimed at shaping public opinion in the US and advancing the idea of the US intervention in Syria. SAMS operates in Syria in close contact with terrorist organizations in respective occupied territories including Idlib.

According to Wikileaks, the Bellingcat organization was financed by the British Ministry of Defence from the US budget (through the National Endowment for Democracy and the US Agency for International Development) and gets support from the Soros Foundation.

In fact, organizations like the White Helmets, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the Syrian-American Medical Society and the Bellingcat were founded with direct support from Western governments, operated using their resources and under their control to serve their main purpose of producing and spreading disinformation.

Despite thousands of proven and documented cases of killings of civilians committed by the US-led International Coalition, primarily by the US military, an unprecedented disinformation campaign aimed at whitewashing its activities swept over Western mass media. Not only was it based on double standards: it was an absolute opposite of the campaign aimed at blaming the Syrian government. Whenever any materials, no matter how misleading and self-contradictory, appeared, even when there were witnesses who confirmed the fact of falsification, Western mass media published numerous materials directly accusing Syrian armed forces. Whenever clear evidence and proof of strikes by the US-led International Coalition appeared, Western media tended to hush them up or dissolve them in differing opinions so as to blur over

the coalition's blame, while giving maximal coverage to statements of coalition members who denied stark facts and hypocritically announced that they were taking measures to avoid civilian casualties.

For instance, the Airwars database contains a record of 10 March 2019¹ concerning a strike launched on the Al Baghouz civilian camp: «between 50 and 70 civilians were reportedly killed — mostly women and children... In addition to this, “dozens” were reportedly wounded.” Coalition spokesman Sean Ryan said: “We do not see any evidence of casualties among civilians.” Another record of 10 September 2017 reads as follows: “it was reported that 7 civilians were killed in the Al Fardous neighbourhood in Raqqa, following alleged US-led Coalition air strikes... identified three of the victims and said that an additional ‘three young men and one woman’ were killed but they remained unidentified as the bodies were still under rubble.” A later report from Ar Raqqa Al Hadath gave further details on one of the victims, Abu About Ibrahim Al-Karaf: he was a judge who had graduated from the University of Damascus in 1994 with a Doctorate in law. According to the report, the coalition bombing “hit his house next to Al Basrawi mosque.” It described him as “one of the most prominent jurists in the province of Raqqa” where he “served as a public lawyer.” All sources blamed the US-led coalition for the incident.

During the investigation into this incident in order to prepare a joint Airwars — Amnesty report (April 2019) “War in Raqqa: Rhetoric versus Reality”² Amnesty International’s field investigators identified two more victims and determined the precise location of the strike noting that a total of five people were killed there. The report notes: «Two members of the Badran family and three neighbours were killed in the last of four separate air strikes which killed a total of 39 family members and 10 neighbours as they fled from neighbourhood to neighbourhood in search of safety.” The strike hit Faisal Mahmoud Al Sukhni’s house (a three-storey building) at 4 pm, west of the Fardous mosque, killing the owner, tenant and 3 guests. Another man and his son in a separate section of the house survived. Amnesty researchers spoke to a witness,

¹ <https://airwars.org/civilian-casualties/?country=syria&belligerent=coalition&search=CS1906>

² www.raqqa.amnesty.org

named Rasha: “As Ousama and Mohammed left the neighbour’s house a drone struck the road. They ran back into the house and immediately a plane bombed the house and destroyed it. Mohamed, Ousama, the owner of the house and two guests were all killed.” Amnesty also spoke to Abdel’ila Basrawi al Karaf, who testified to the event that killed his father, Ibrahim Basrawi al Karaf.

In February 2019, the coalition assessed the incident as lacking credibility. It stated in its report: “Upon examination of all the data available, it was determined that civilian casualties were unlikely to have been caused by a coalition strike.”

According to Reuters News Agency’s information of 6 June 2017,¹ «the coalition spokesman Col. Ryan Dillon said: ‘This is not the first time we have struck barges and water craft that have moved across the river to support the operations that ISIS is doing in and around Raqqa’.” The numerous testimonies of people affected, which were collected by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy and provided above, clearly show that coalition strikes killed many civilians, who were predominant among those using water craft.

Equally indicative is the acknowledgement of Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend, the American commanding general of the coalition armed forces, who said: “We shoot every boat we find”.² This statement is in fact a confession of war crimes.

But despite all these striking examples of crimes, nothing prevented the US-led International Coalition from launching a large-scale disinformation campaign aimed at rejecting systemic and cynical killings of Syrian civilians. The very same information material from Reuters indicates that “Coalition air strikes have killed many civilians in Raqqa and the other IS-held towns along the Euphrates river valley... The coalition says it tries hard to avoid civilian casualties and investigates any that are reported”.³

¹ <https://uk.reuters.com/article/mideast-crisis-raqqa-coalition/u-s-led-coalition-hits-is-boats-crossing-euphrates-at-raqqa-spokesman-idINKBN18X2BH>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/02/world/middleeast/us-backed-forces-close-to-trapping-isis-holdouts-in-raqqa.html>

³ <https://uk.reuters.com/article/mideast-crisis-raqqa-coalition/u-s-led-coalition-hits-is-boats-crossing-euphrates-at-raqqa-spokesman-idINKBN18X2BH>

Another telling example was the US' reaction to the facts of killings of civilians by the US-led coalition, which were made public at a UN Human Rights Council meeting. US Ambassador James Jeffrey did not admit the facts; furthermore, he officially stated that “we [the US] do not accept the findings of that particular body,” meaning the Commission established pursuant to a United Nations Human Rights Council resolution.

Amnesty International's information material “Syria: While Raqqa's dead are buried in mass graves, US-led coalition buries its head in the sand” reads: “Prior to Amnesty International's June 2018 report ‘War of Annihilation: Devastating Toll upon Civilians in Raqqa — Syria’, the Coalition had admitted to causing just 23 civilian deaths in its entire Raqqa campaign. Our dedicated, ongoing investigative work is chipping away at this false narrative.”

Following a string of blustery denials from military officials and politicians, at the end of July this year, the Coalition quietly admitted to a further 77 civilian deaths.”

“So far, residents have recovered around 2,500 bodies — some from the rubble and others exhumed from mass graves — the majority believed to be civilians killed by Coalition air and artillery strikes.”

“Some 30,000 homes have been destroyed and a further 25,000 severely damaged. Imagine a city the size of Pittsburgh lying 80% destroyed... This is not the vision of “liberation” that the US-led Coalition promotes.”¹

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/10/syria-while-raqqas-dead-are-buried-in-mass-graves-us-led-coalition-buries-its-head-in-the-sand/>

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