



# **The Annual Report of Human Rights Violations and Victims of the Conflict in Syria in 2024**



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# Human Rights Violations and Victims of the Conflict in Syria in 2024

## • Introduction

This report sheds light on human rights violations during the conflict in Syria in 2024. Parties to the Syrian conflict and the intervening States violated human rights and international humanitarian law during military and security operations before the fall of Bashar al-Assad.

Deliberate killing, indiscriminate shelling, and targeting of livelihoods and infrastructure, amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, in addition to unlawful detaining, which has often turned into financial extortion or enforced disappearance, torture, rape and killing.

After 13 years of war, the gap between the people and their economic, social and political rights has worsened. Syria continues to suffer from lack of food, health services, clean water and safety. Internally displaced persons from many areas could not return to their homes and property.

The report includes the numbers of Syrian civilian killings and injuries, (cases that the monitoring team was able to document), and an analysis of the data of the civilians who fell as victims of the conflict. It also presents the numbers of unlawful detaining within the context of the conflict, and data on ISIS activity in Syria during 2024.

The report aims to emphasize on the need for a ceasefire throughout Syrian territory, and to activate justice mechanisms in building new Syria to stop or significantly reduce violations by protecting the evidence and ensuring that perpetrators will not escape. Protecting human rights is not only a process of documentation, but a pillar of building sustainable peace.

The report is based on INSIGHT's databases, collected from open sources and testimonies of survivors, victims and activists, some of which were presented in previous periodic reports. They were verified each month and reviewed in January 2025.

INSIGHT notes that the number of victims are greater than showed in the report (more than the ones that our team could monitor). The report can provide indications of the persistence and distribution of violations by specific categories, events, region or period of time.

## - Parties to the conflict

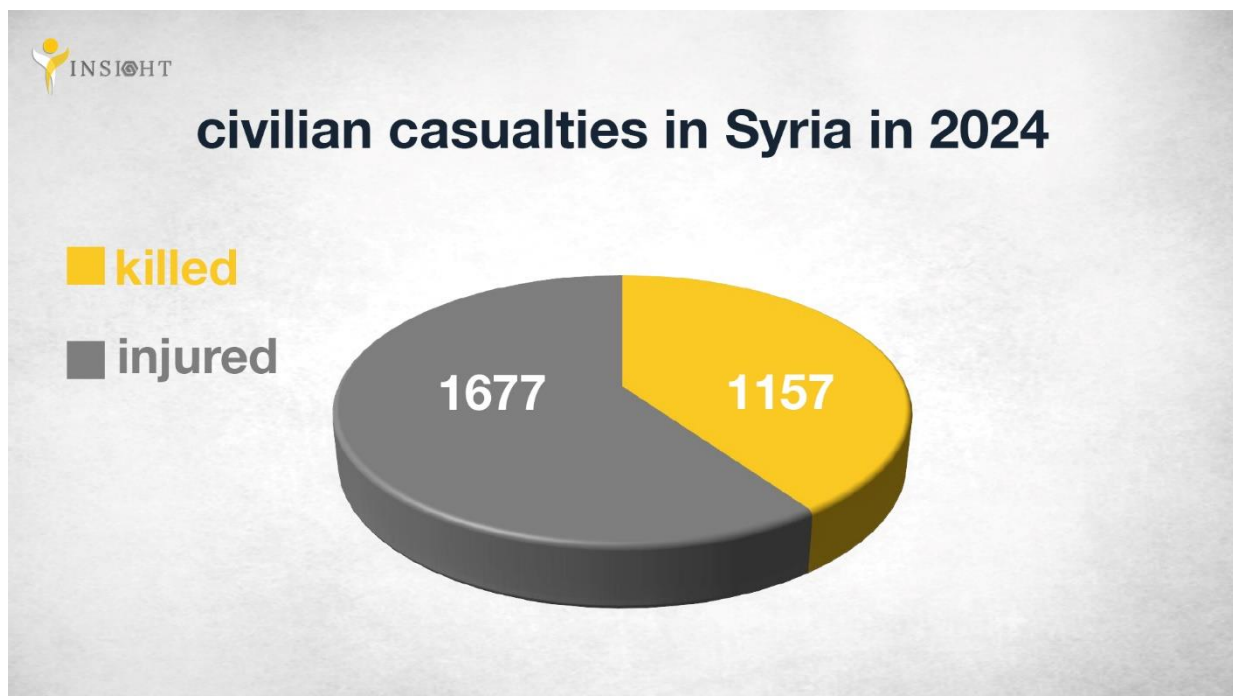
During 2024, the main parties to the conflict in Syria were: Bashar al-Assad's regime in the center and south of the country, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Idlib and large parts of its countryside in the north-west, the Turkish-backed opposition Syrian National Army (SNA) in Aleppo countryside in north-west, and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) backed by the United States-led Global Coalition in northeast of Syria.

In addition to, other less influential armed groups (depending on the size of their held areas and the population): local armed groups in Daraa and Suwayda in south Syria, ISIS in the desert and the east, militant groups in Idlib, the Free Syrian Army in Al-Tanf near the Iraqi border, and other groups supported the Syrian regime such as National Defense and pro-Lebanese Hizbollah groups.

The main states that has intervened in the conflict were: Iran, Turkey, Russia, the United States and Israel, but the regime's fall on December 8 led to the collapse of the Syrian army and its Iranian allies and then Russian troops withdrew. Whereas both Turkey and Israel increased their interventions in Syria.

## - Civilian victims of conflict in Syria in 2024

INSIGHT team documented 2834 Syrian civilians who fell as victims to the conflict, fighting and hostilities (1157were killed and 1677were injured).



32% of the killed people were children and women (19% children and 13% women), and 34% of the injured were children and women (more than 22% children and about 12% women).

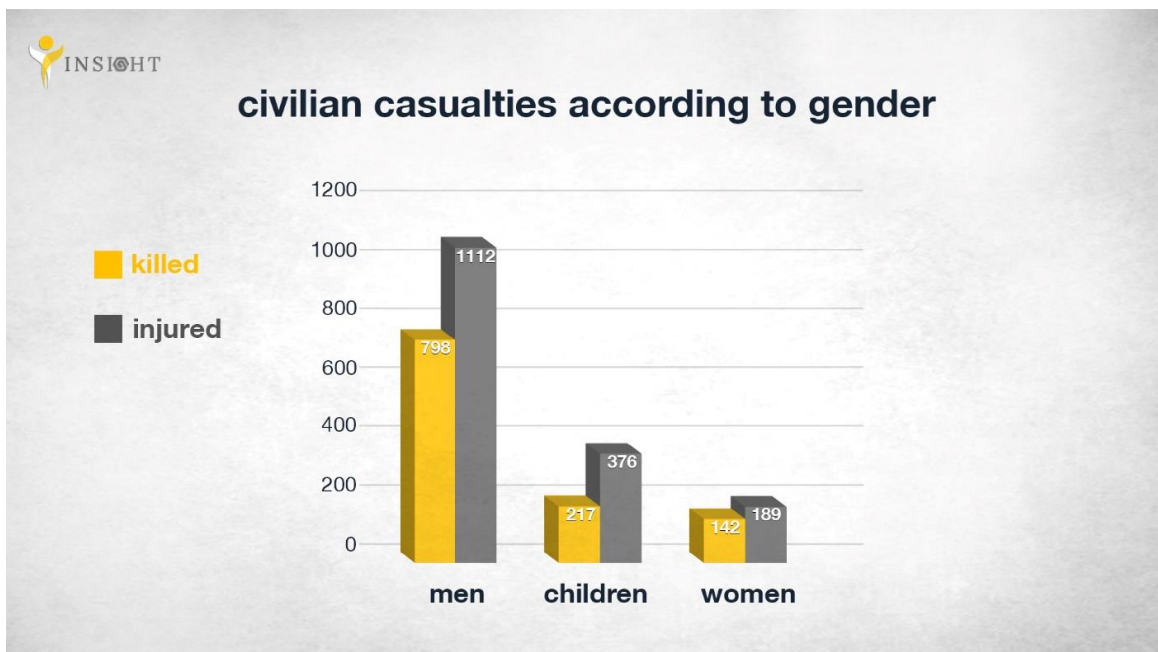
These statements reaffirm the breach of international humanitarian law. There is neither distinction between objectives nor measures to protect civilians, and the increase of civilian casualties does not lead to a military victory or progress.

It is considered a crime of genocide, according to article 6, paragraph c, of the Rome Statute: 'deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part'.

Documenting the number of victims by local and international organizations is important for the next phase of the Syrian reality after the fall of Bashar al-Assad. Ceasefire and military de-escalation have been achieved in most parts of the country, though fighting in the vicinity of Tishreen Dam near Manbij and Kobani in north Syria, and the security campaigns by the SDF and the forces of the caretaker Government and the country's new administration have continued. Nevertheless, human rights violations are still committed in many Syrian areas.

Syrians have suffered the scourge of war, enforced disappearances, torture in prisons, arbitrary arrests and forced deportations. They have been burdened by a deteriorating economic situation that was exacerbated by the sanctions imposed by the United States and European States on the Assad regime and Syria's entities and institutions.

After the fall of the former regime in Damascus, communities expressed fears that restrictions on public freedom would be imposed because the new administration's policies were not evident. The administration sent reassurances through the media, though reprisals and sectarian incidents occurred.





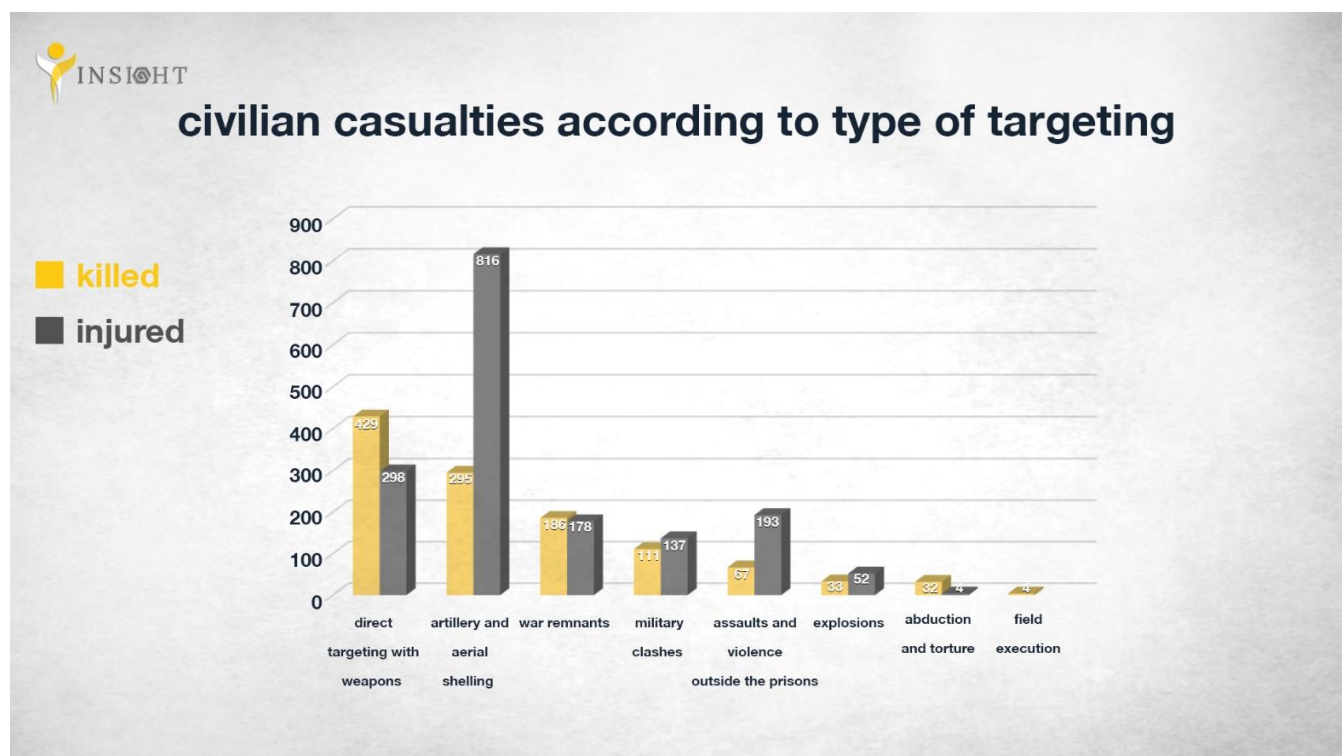
## - Causes of death and injury of victims

Analyzing the data that INSIGHT team collected showed that direct targeting with light weapons caused the highest proportion of casualties (429 civilians), a form of deliberate killing by different parties to the conflict who did not commit to distinguishing between military objectives and civilians.

Followed by aerial and artillery shelling (295 civilians). According to the analysis geographical areas were shelled according to zones of control without distinguishing between military objectives and civilian objects.

Often, there were no specific periods or spatial targets of shelling, and the parties did not take precautions to protect civilians or reduce casualties, which prevented civilians from obtaining protection or moving away from targeted areas.

The previous 2023 annual report by the same documentation team had reported that the shelling had caused the largest number of civilian casualties, followed by direct targeting of weapons.

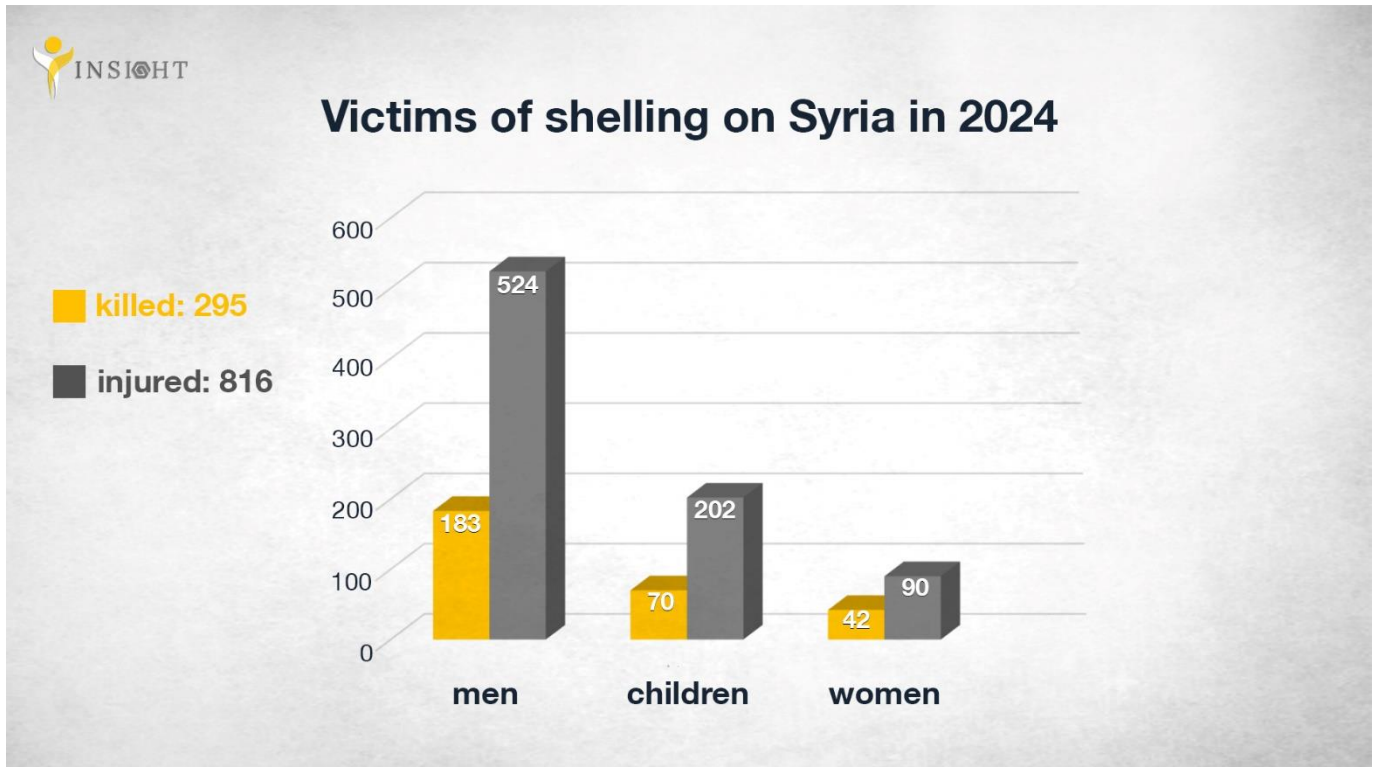


There were no major changes in influence areas during 2024 (except for December), though the third cause of civilian casualties was war remnants, which clearly indicates the continued threat to civilians' life in several areas. Some mines and ammunition may have been from previous years or have been recently cultivated as in attacks by ISIS cells or other parties.

## • Shelling

Artillery and aerial shelling caused the killing and injury of 1111 innocent civilians (295 killed, 816 injured), amid continuous airstrikes by the intervening states after the fall of Assad regime on December 8.

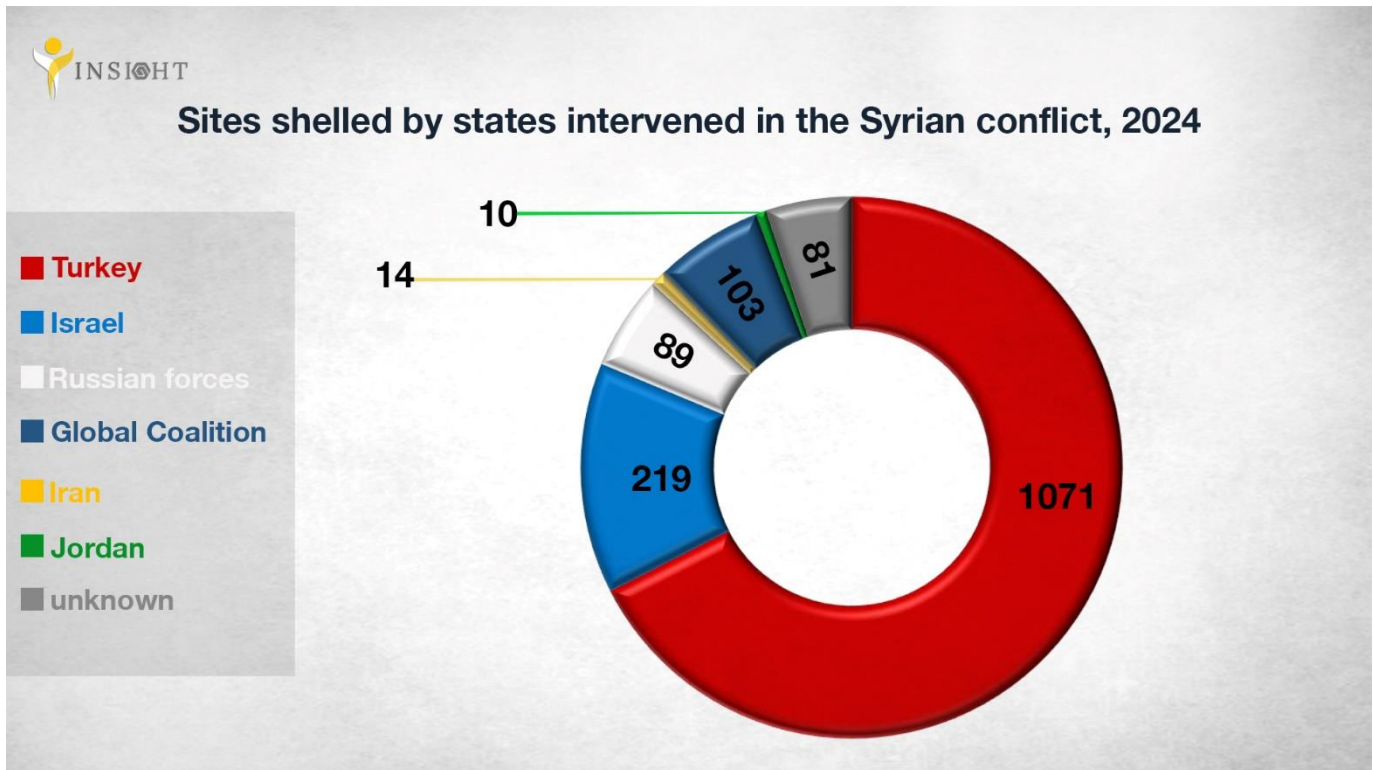
The victims of the shelling were: 228 civilians in former regime's areas (82 killed, 146 injured), 249 civilians in the SDF areas (74 killed, 175 injured), 45 civilians in the SNA areas (16 killed, 29 injured), and 589 civilians in HTS areas (123 killed, 466 injured).



Artillery and aerial shelling and killing and injuring innocent civilians, caused the destruction of property, homes and infrastructure necessary for the living of original inhabitants and internally displaced persons throughout Syria.

On the other hand, the shelling represents the intentional or unintentional hostility of one party to the conflict and the civilians in their zone of influence while in another's interest, leading to more hostilities on the ground and the perpetration of new violations.

In 2024, the parties to the conflict and intervening states shelled 2,199 locations throughout the country.



451 sites in areas controlled by the former regime were hit by aerial or artillery shelling, (219 sites shelled by Israel, often stating that they included Iranian factions or supported Lebanese Hezbollah military, and 102 sites shelled by the Global Coalition to Fight ISIS in response to pro-Iranian factions targeting the Coalition's sites).





HTS targeted 63 sites with artillery shelling, and Turkish-backed factions targeted 12 sites, within the control areas of the former Bashar al-Assad's regime.

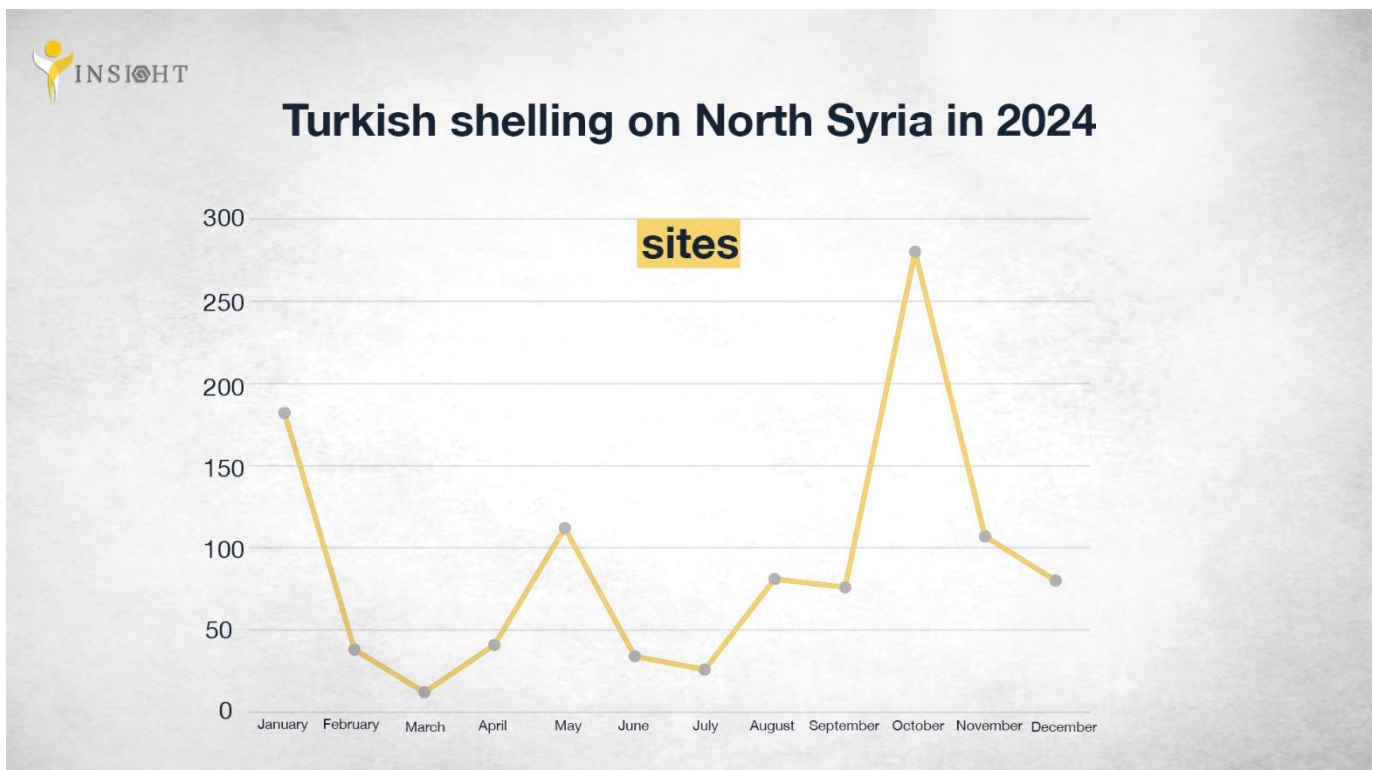
Jordan's airstrikes targeted 10 locations in south Syria as part of its fight against drug smuggling into its territory. INSIGHT recorded another 45 sites shelled in the areas controlled by the former regime, mostly east Syria, without identifying the perpetrator.

The data indicated that the majority of the targeted sites were military and security points, though civilians were there or houses and businesses owned by civilian victims killed or injured in the shelling were nearby.

In the SDF areas 1,129 sites were shelled, the most violent of which were by Turkey's warplanes, drones, and artillery on 378 sites, some of which were frequently targeted at different times of the year.

In addition to 693 sites in the SDF held-areas that were targeted by the pro-Turkish SNA factions with artilleries and missiles.

The "Islamic Resistance in Iraq" targeted 21 sites of the Global Coalition and American forces. The former regime forces and pro-Iranian factions targeted 12 sites. Another 25 sites were shelled by unknown perpetrator.



In areas controlled by Turkish-backed SNA factions, at least 46 sites were shelled (24 by regime forces, 11 by the SDF, and 2 by Russian forces). INSIGHT team was unable to identify the perpetrator that shelled the other 9 sites.

In HTS controlled-area (before its operation "Deterrence of aggression" in late November) 573 sites were targeted, the majority by the former regime forces (481 by regime forces, 87 by Russian forces, 2 by pro-Iranian factions and 1 by the Global Coalition) and 2 other sites by unknown perpetrator.

- **Arbitrary detaining**

INSIGHT recorded the arrest of 2,028 Syrian civilians by the parties to the conflict in Syria during 2024, including arrests that lasted only few days and those resolved with payments.

802 civilians were detained by the Turkish-backed SNA factions, on charges of dealing with the Autonomous Administration, refraining from paying the money imposed for agricultural seasons and businesses or attempting to cross the Syrian-Turkish border irregularly.

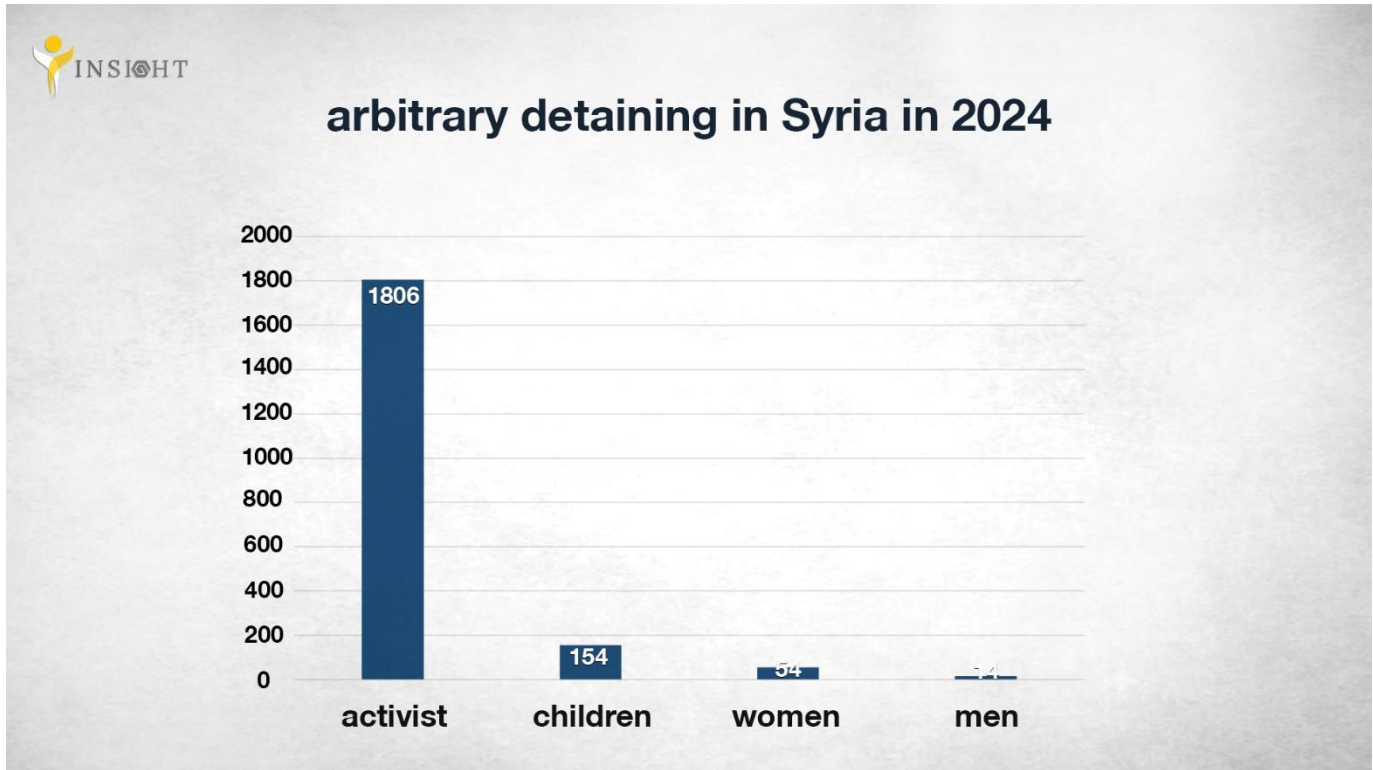
750 civilians were detained by HTS security services, mostly on charges of participating in protests against HTS or espionage.

159 civilians were detained by the former regime and pro-Iranian factions on charges of communicating with hostile actors or informal foreign exchange trading, and renewing previous accusations of terrorism and hostility against some refugees who had to return from Lebanon.

29 civilians were detained by the SDF, mostly on charges of belonging to ISIS or participating with pro-Iranian groups in fighting the SDF forces in Deir ez-Zor.

Also, local armed groups in south Syria detained at least 16 civilians, and ISIS abducted 6 civilian men.

Turkish forces arrested 255 Syrian civilians, 132 of whom were transferred into Turkish territory, 6 Syrians were arrested by Jordanian forces and 5 Syrian civilians were arrested by Israeli forces.

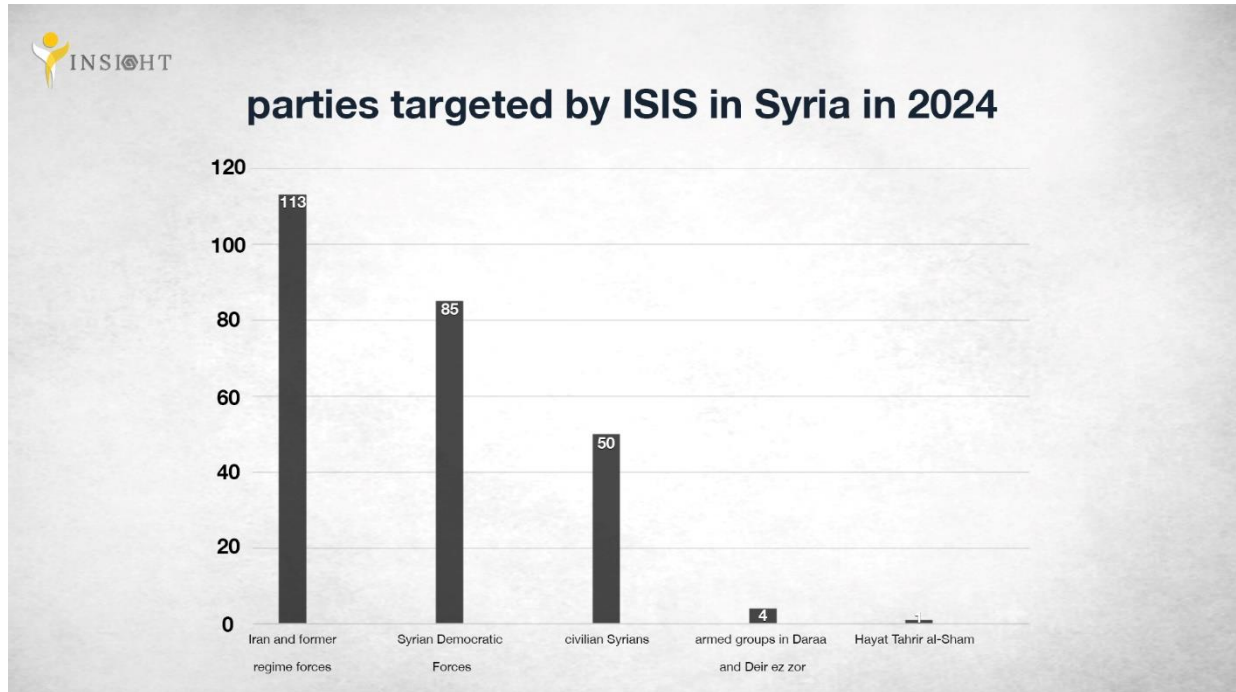


The fall of Bashar al-Assad regime released detainees in areas controlled by former government forces; however, many prisons and detentions in different areas of control are still neglected, such as the prison of al-Ra'i in northwest Syria, that teems with innocent people.

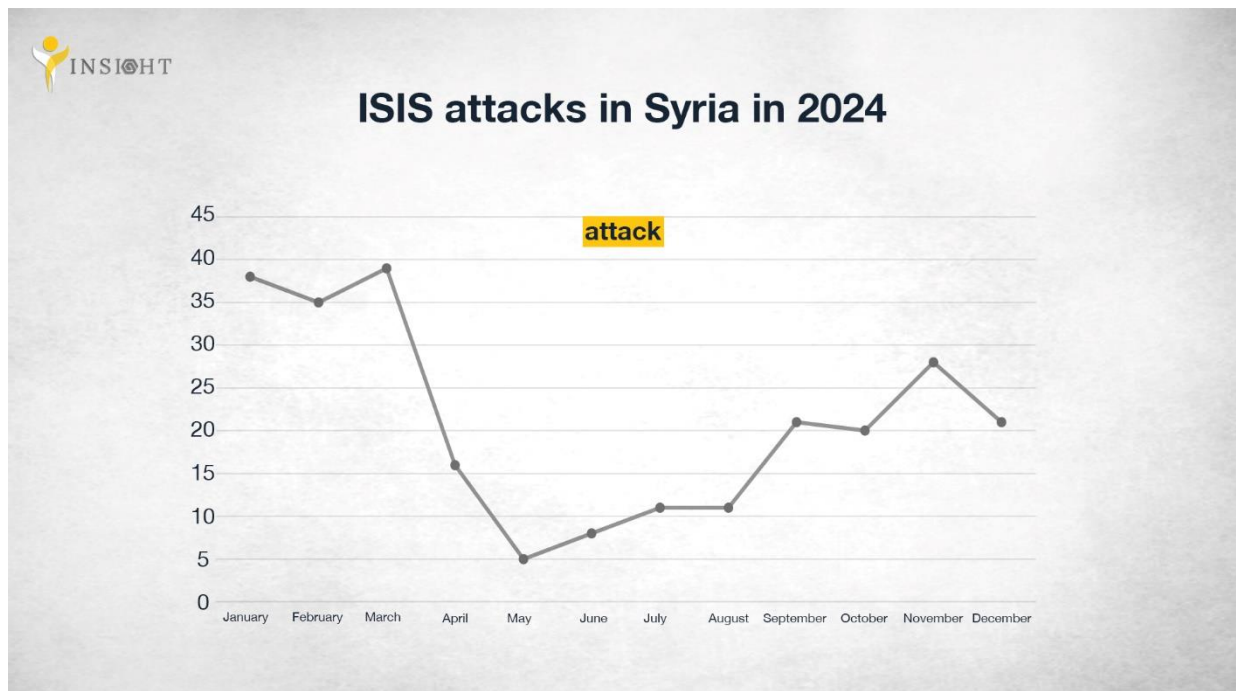
The right to a fair trial is the most prominent of the human rights enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights and stated in "Mandela" rules, which was approved at the United Nations General Assembly in 2015: "No prisoner shall be subjected to, and all prisoners shall be protected from, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, for which no circumstances whatsoever", which is also included in the seventieth Bangkok rules for the treatment of women prisoners and non-custodial measures for women offenders, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010.

- **ISIS**

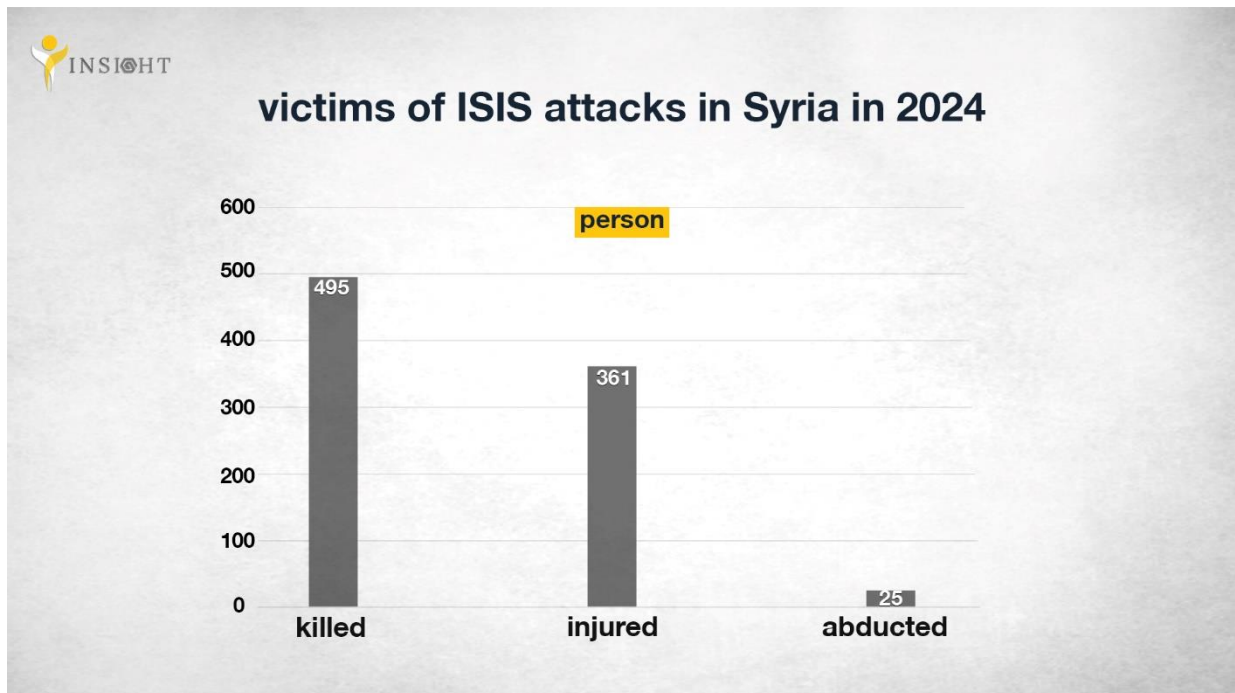
During 2024, ISIS cells carried out 23 attacks, which resulted in the killing and injury of 856 persons (military and civilian) of different parties to the Syrian conflict.



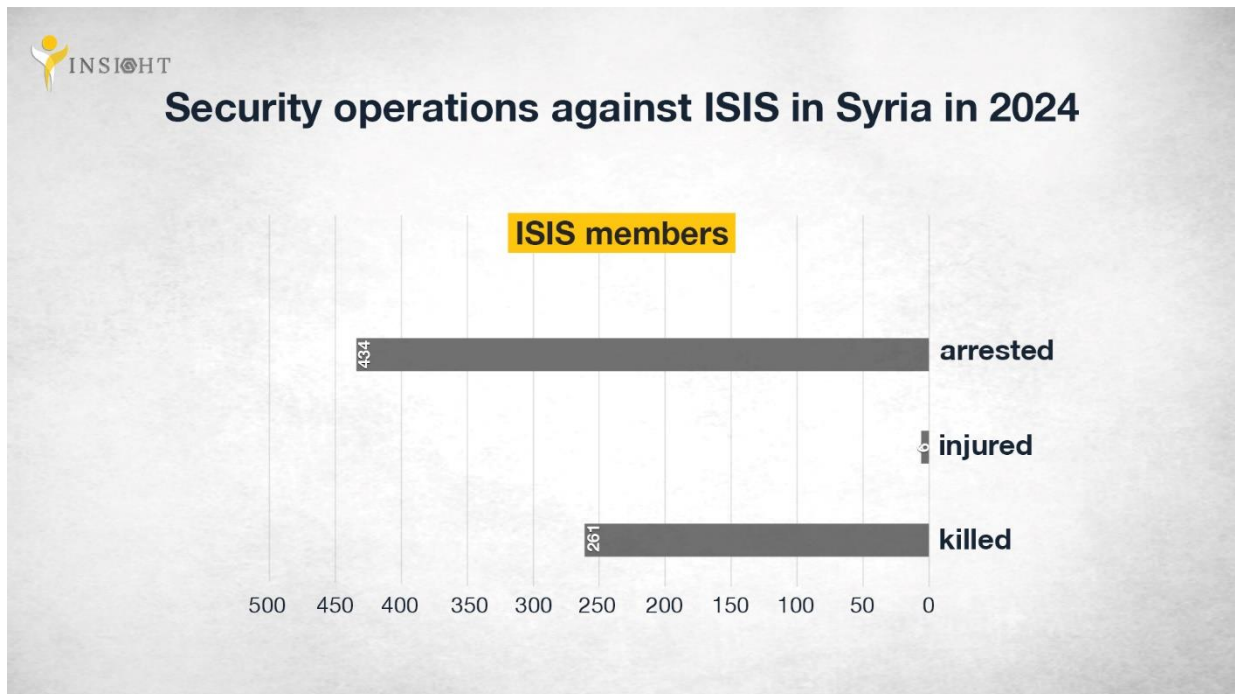
ISIS was more active in the first three months, and then decreased its activity. It escalated its operations from September until the end of the year.



81 civilians were killed and injured in ISIS attacks in 2024, some of the victims were in different villages and cities and others were searching for truffle.



108 operations and raids were carried out against ISIS (9 operations by the United States-led Global Coalition, 52 by the SDF supported by the Coalition, and 34 mutual operations).





Russian forces launched 6 operations against ISIS, 1 by regime forces, 3 mutual and 1 by local groups in south Syria.

Pro-Iranian factions launched an operation against ISIS and Turkish forces arrested an ISIS operative.

The number of families that left Al-Hol camp, including ISIS members' families, was 766 (2,291 individuals), mostly women and children. The Autonomous Administration also handed over 221 children and 56 women to their countries.

- **Children victims**

At least 217 children were killed, 376 were injured and 54 were arrested as a result of the conflict in Syria during 2024, one of the worst years that had a devastating impact on children in the world's conflicts, according to UNICEF and the Global Peace Index.

The majority of these children have become victims of shelling and war remnants in Syria. There is no excuse for killing, injuring or arresting children even as part of the parties' combat assessments and pursuit of military superiority.

Majority of the children were killed in their homes and some lost their lives or were injured with other family members who were struggling to keep them safe until the end of the war.

Apart from the direct effects of the conflict, such as child recruitment, forced displacement and the arrest of dozens of children along with their relatives or alone; millions of Syrian children have been deprived from the right of education because of displacement and extreme poverty.

It also increased the rates of displacement, school dropout and begging. Children were also deprived from health care, including life-saving vaccines, stunting injuries and severe malnutrition.

5 million Syrian children in different areas of Syria face the risk of some 324 thousand lethal war remnants, unexploded ordnance and mines, according to UNICEF.

Our team monitored incidents of death and injury of children caused by indiscriminate shooting, caused by the weapons in the hands of the people, who use it without strict restraints by all of parties in Syria.

- **Women**

Syria's conflict caused the killing of at least 142 women, injury of 189 and the arrest of 154 during 2024.

Societal violence also continued, Syrian women suffered from the conflict and its consequences like displacement, harsh living conditions, loss of breadwinners. The proportion of women working in hard labour, prostitution and the promotion of drugs, has increased.

In addition to being girls or women, violations against them were occurred based on their ethnic or sectarian background or places of living and work.

Article 3 of the Third Geneva Convention prohibits murder, physical integrity and abuse; though dozens of civilians, mostly children and women, have lost their lives as a result of Turkish shelling on north and east Syria. Article 25 of The Hague Convention prohibits 'the attack or bombardment, by whatever means, of towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings which are undefended'.

INSIGHT has been able to document only one case of rape, while we are sure that there are many cases that we have not reached because of the social factors that hinder the efforts of documenting such violations.

After the overthrow of al-Assad regime on December 8, female activists were concerned about women's role in the future of the new Syria, as statements from leaders of the new government and religious advocacy campaigns in many areas called for restrictions on women's freedom.

Syrian women are demanding the elimination of legal discrimination against them, yet the Syrian Nationality Act still does not allow the Syrian mother to grant her nationality to her children, which deprive thousands of Syrian women married to foreigners, who have fled or been killed in combat, from registering their children's parentage.

- **Displaced people and refugees**

INSIGHT monitored new displacements during the military escalation in 2024, such as the non-remote displacement in countryside of Idlib and Deir ez-Zor, due to security and military tensions.

The SNA attacks in northern countryside of Aleppo since November 27 caused a new displacement of families who had fled Turkey's 2018 military operation in Afrin.

The team monitored the arrival of some 100 thousand displaced persons from Afrin and Aleppo countryside 'Al-Shahba' to east of Euphrates, and the number was increased following the displacement of other families from Manbij, which was taken over by SNA factions.

Many families displaced from 'al-Shahba' went to Aleppo, others returned back to Afrin, even though they believe they would be subjected to violations and financial extortion.

Throughout the year, various factions of the SNA committed violations in Afrin, then in Al-Shahba and Manbij, including killing, arrests and physical and moral abuses, as well as looting and extortion by imposing royalties and ransoms on the people.

Violations against the original population of Afrin (the Kurds) continued, which caused more people to leave. Turkey has established 13 housing compounds for arrivals in the region during the war, some of them are families of SNA members, as it seeks to change the demography of Afrin in the long-term.

Although roads have been opened for the return of the majority of displaced persons to their homes and property all over Syria, the same old obstacles prevent the return of displaced persons from Turkish-occupied areas - Afrin, Ras al-Ayn and Tal Abyad - due to the violent behavior of the SNA factions.

The displacement caused a demographic change, and violations of real property rights were committed, particularly in Afrin, Ras al-Ayn and Tal Abyad, from which Kurds were forcibly displaced in 2018 and 2019.

They were deprived from the yield of their agricultural seasons and had to rent houses at high prices or live in schools and camps as the donor relief international organizations barely respond to them, which invoke the difficulty of remittances because of the Syrian regime's international sanctions lists.

The return of internally displaced persons to their homes and property is the first step to redress victims of forced displacement, and it is a shame that the majority of displaced persons from the northern Syrian areas have not yet been able to return or recover their property.

In 2005, the Sub-Commission on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights of the United Nations adopted the Pinheiro Principles on the protection in all circumstances of the funds and property of displaced persons against Indiscriminate looting, attacks, use as a shield, target, destruction and seizure of military operations.

The war in Lebanon has also caused the return of Syrian refugees despite the lack of safe conditions. Some have been arrested and were subjected to violations, including torture and killings, by the security services of Bashar al-Assad's regime before its fall, despite the fact that they have legally settled.

Outside Syria, attacks by militants of Syrian origin or from Arab and Islamic states have led to an increase in the incidence of hatred to refugees, escalating calls for their deportation or tightening restrictions on the acceptance of refugees' requests for protection and asylum.

- **Missing persons**

Immediately after the collapse of Bashar al-Assad's regime, military personnel and civilians stormed the prisons, including Sadnaya prison, amid massive chaos.

The detainees were released and bodies found in detention centres and cemeteries, but the preservation of evidence and documents was not organized or professional, causing new pain for families who were unable to find evidence about the fate of their missing persons.

While families declared solace with relative recognition of the death of their missing persons, others continued to suffer waiting for institutions that could answer their questions.

The United Nations appointed Ms. Carla Quintana as Head of the UN Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria after previously identifying staff and their functions, which gave hope for a mechanism to support the families of missing persons.

Syria has not yet signed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, but the "right to the truth" is enshrined in the 1992 Universal Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which stated in articles 32-34 that " the right of families to know the fate of their relatives ".

## • Justice and judicial remedies

The former Assad regime continued to overlook transparent cooperation with the International Committee for the Search of Missing Persons in Syria, in addition to arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture and inhuman treatment of prisoners. The new caretaker government argues that improving economic and security realities is currently a priority, transitional justice rules have not been established yet, at a time when the rights of victims and their families should be guaranteed.

Although mass graves had been uncovered, the bodies' identities had not been accurately determined by criminal analysis. The "Bournemouth Protocol" calls for the protection of mass graves to uncover the truth that is the right of victims' families and communities.

The country's new administration launched security campaigns against officials and members of the former regime during the last week of 2024, and continued in 2025 amid the absence of any clear mechanism for prosecution, compensation or increasing penalties for perpetrators to prevent new violations for reprisal.

Hate speech has soared among Syrian components through social media and the media platforms, raising fears for the future of coexistence and peace amid reports of horrific practices by factions' members in the countryside of Homs and the Syrian coast, as well as human rights violations in some universities, such as Latakia and al-Andalus.

## • Recommendations

**For the international community:**

- 1- United States and the European Union must lift economic sanctions on institutions and resources directly affecting the humanitarian situation in Syria.**
- 2- To exert international pressure on Turkey that sponsors the controlling factions in the northern countryside of Aleppo, and Ras al-Ayn, which prevent the safe return of civilians to their villages and cities, and to issue a condemnation resolution by the General Assembly.**
- 3- To maintain the right to temporary protection of displaced persons and refugees in the states in which they reside until the Syrian situation is stabilized so they will desire to return voluntarily.**
- 4- Syria's neighboring states should engage in building relations and cooperation to support economic and political stability in Syria and border control without hostile actions towards communities, civilian objects and infrastructure.**



- 5- International organizations should provide integrated technical support for reconstruction and ensure the new administration's progress in achieving standards of democracy, integrity and transparency.
- 6- Establishing and supporting international courts to prosecute non-Syrian ISIS members detainee, inside and outside Syria, and supporting those courts with international expertise. Dismantling the camps by repatriating the families by their states.

**For the new Syrian administration:**

- 1- To establish a body of justice from which national courts with the task of holding accountable those involved in war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Assad regime and arresting them in any state under international arrest warrants.
- 2- Demining and removing war remnants for accelerating recovery.
- 3- To call upon the Turkish state to halt its indiscriminate shelling on civilians and to prevent its drones and warplanes on Syrian territory.
- 4- To respect human rights and hold the fighters of the former regime accountable, according to international conventions and the International Bill of Human Rights.
- 5- To ensure the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons to their areas of origin and ensure that funds and relief assistance will not reach to corrupting actors.
- 6- To establishment oversight bodies and inspection systems on the functioning of judicial, financial and penitentiary facilities.
- 7- To ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, as well as the Rome Statute and adapt it to national legislation.
- 8- To abide to all international rights signed by Syria, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the CEDAW Convention against Discrimination against Women.
- 9- Collect, preserve and protect evidence such as mass graves and government archival records to facilitate the search for the fate of missing persons and cooperate with relevant international mechanisms.
- 10- Reparation and compensation for all those affected by military actions, whether in their real estate or the families of the forcibly disappeared and the families of the martyrs.

**11- To ensure women's access to decision-making positions and political participation in according to International Resolution 1325 of 2000.**

**12- Reforming institutions and the role of the judiciary and schools and amending laws to match Syrians' aspirations for a free and dignified life.**

