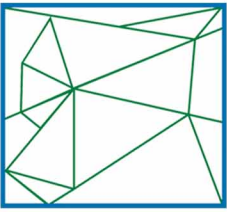


سوريون
من أجل
الحقيقة
والعدالة
Syrians
For Truth
& Justice



October 2016

Cover photo: A woman at the funeral victims
Credits: Photojournalist Dalil Suleiman

**”They Destroyed our
Memory and All We Have”**

A Flash Report on the Explosion of Qamishly City on 27 July, 2016

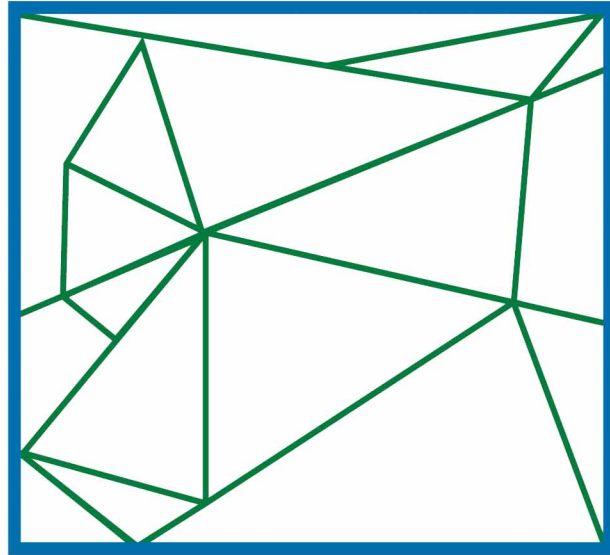
www.stj-sy.org

About the organization

“Syrians for Truth and Justice” (STJ) is an independent, non-governmental non-profit Syrian organization. It involves a number of Syrian human rights defenders, both men and women, from different backgrounds and affiliations. The founding team also includes academics from different nationalities.

STJ works for a Syria where all citizens, males and females, enjoy dignity, justice and equal human rights

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I. Preface

I am a baker in one of the local bakeries in Qamishly. I woke up early in the morning, just as I do every day, and went to my workplace. It was around 9:20 am when I heard a big explosion that shook the city. My brother looked out the window and said that he believed the explosion had taken place near The Youths City, a place about one kilometer away from the place of the actual explosion. But when I looked out the window, I saw the smoke billowing up from the site of explosion. I told my brother that the explosion was in Amoda Street and that it looked close to our home

I immediately borrowed my friend's car and tried to get to the site of explosion, but the Asayesh forces had blocked all the roads, so I walked to the place of explosion which was a few hundred meters away from where I parked the car. When I got to the explosion site, I immediately looked at the house I lived in with my family. The house was a multi-story building, but I couldn't see any house. I only saw the street located behind the house. The building had turned to a pile of ashes and nothing was left

I tried to find my father's car, hoping that he would have driven to the market as he usually does. But I found it on fire instead. I stared for a while at the destruction caused by the explosion. In a while my cousin came to tell me that he took my mother to two hospitals but both confirmed that she had passed away. He told me that he put her body in one of the mosques of the city. I searched for the rest of the family and I found my little daughter, who had been put in an ambulance with a serious injury. About ten minutes later, some people retrieved my son from under the rubble, so I took him immediately to Faraman Hospital, but he was dead already. I went back to the site. There I saw my uncle who told me that my wife and my two daughters are in Nafez Hospital, but that they were dead as well. My brother came later and told me that one of my sisters survived the explosion with some fractures in her pelvis and shoulder

I carried the bodies of my wife and two daughters, then the body of my son, and put them all next to the body of my mother in the mosque. Then I went to the National Hospital looking for the rest of the family. There, I found my little sister who got burned completely. My brother's wife was split in two halves due to the explosion. I searched in all hospitals, morgues and mosques but couldn't find my father

The next day I looked for him again in all hospitals and mosques, but in vain. So I went back to the explosion site where rescue teams were still working. I told them that I couldn't find my father who was supposed to be here at the time of the explosion. I told them that I expected that his body was still under the rubble. Indeed, they found his dead body after an entire day. He was dead. In this explosion I lost eight family members. In the nearby building, where my uncle was living with his family, I lost a son and three daughters-in-law. In the basement of my building, lived my uncle. He also lost two members; Dr. Castro and his sister Balshin, who was a medical student. We have lost everything in this explosion - family, money, all we have... all we have

**Survivor Samir Abdul Karim Ahmad Sheikh Mousa
Qamishly – August 2016**



.Exclusive photo for STJ (Qamishly 27 July, 2016). Photo Credit: Dalil Suleiman, photojournalist

II. Methodology

"Syrians for Truth and Justice" managed to document no less than 72 casualties in that explosion, the majority of whom were civilians, in addition to the names of seven missing persons who have yet to be found at the moment of this report's production

This report depends in its methodology on a number of direct testimonies, whether from eyewitnesses living in the vicinity of the explosion site or survivors from the explosion. The report also depends on the testimonies of families and relatives of the victims as well as some of the medical staff that treated the wounded and received the dead bodies

Additionally, STJ analyzed dozens of videos and photos taken at the site which displayed the large numbers of civilian lives lost, the massive destruction incurred, and material losses in residential buildings/stores in the surrounding area

III. The Explosion

On 27 July, 2016, at around 9:20 am a **large truck** loaded with tons of explosives was detonated in one of the neighborhoods of Qamishly/Qamishlo city (north east), in the Kurdish self-government areas. The western neighborhood was the name of the place. The majority of its residents were Syrian Kurds. The explosion immediately **killed dozens** of civilians and wounded scores of others. (Some sources put the number of the wounded as high as 170). The blast was perpetrated by a suicide bomber driving a **truck bomb** which he detonated in the middle of Amoda Road, near the well-known Qasemo Mosque and in the vicinity of several headquarters of the self-government, including a police station for the internal forces (Asayesh) which was 200 meters away from the explosion

The city has been subject to several explosions before, but this one is considered the most violent one in the history of the city due to the amount of explosives used and the intensity of the blast which caused massive destruction in the area and caused dozens of casualties. Many eye-witnesses told STJ that the severity of the blast reduced several bodies into shreds. Torn pieces belonging to eight people were put in nylon bags to be distributed later on eight shrouds



Photo for STJ – Photo Credits; Dalil Suleiman, photojournalist

The organization which calls itself “the Islamic State” also known as “Daesh” claimed responsibility for the blast through its Amaq Agency. Although several media reports were issued by Amaq talking about the intention of targeting the internal security Asayesh forces affiliated to the self-government, the explosion location and the number of civilian casualties suggest that the suicide bomber had **the intention to** cause the highest number of possible losses among civilians. The targeted place is usually crowded with hundreds of pedestrians, as well having dozens of businesses in the area. The "targeted locations" were also ten meters away from the explosion according to eyewitnesses and locals

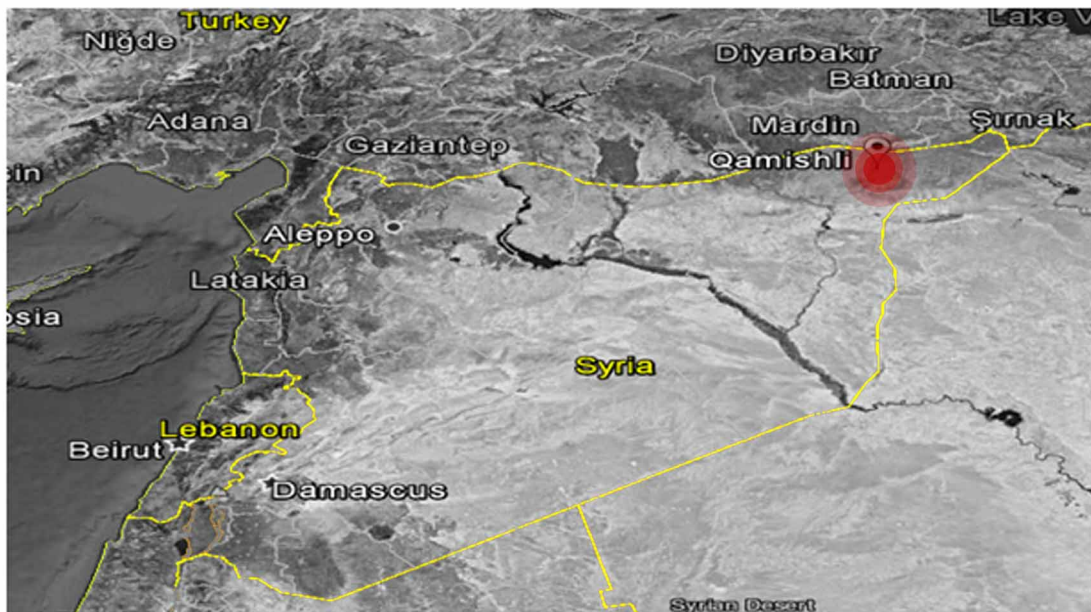


A post by Amaq Agency, affiliated to ISIS, claiming responsibility for the explosion in Qamishly. The post reads: “A source tells Amaq that “over 100 killed and dozens others were injured due to a martyrdom operation conducted amidst a group of headquarters belonging to the Kurdish Units in Qamishly “

The International Humanitarian Law that applies at times of armed conflicts strictly" prohibits all combating parties, including non-state actors, from launching attacks that intentionally target or kill civilian populations, attacks that don't distinguish between civilians and combatants, or attacks that cause civilian casualties which would be excessive in relation to "the military advantage anticipated" from the attack. Planning, preparing or conducting intentional illegal attacks is deemed as a war crime

IV. The Place Targeted by the Truck Bomb

The explosion in Qamishly city took place on 27 July, 2016 in an area crowded with civilian population. The area is known by the name "TareekAmoda" (Amoda Road) which is the main road that links Amoda city and Qamishly. It was the road that witnessed mass protests against the Syrian government in 2011. Qasimo Mosque is located in the vicinity. It was the mosque from which most protests took off in 2011. In the surrounding area of the explosion site, about 200 meters away, a number of headquarters belonging to the self-government are located, including a police station of the Asayesh and some other ministries including the ministries of defense and agriculture among others. However, these locations were slightly harmed as they were relatively distant from the blast





A satellite imagery showing the place of the blast



A photo published by a Turkish website taken from Nasibeen Town, showing the explosion of Qamishly

V. Descriptions of the Truck and the Driver

A store owner at “al-Hilaliya Square” told STJ that a long truck passed in front of his store the morning of the explosion. It had a long trailer that consisting of an upper and lower part. "The upper part of the truck was completely empty," he said, "whereas the lower part wasn't visible to see the load. However, it was clear from the tires that they were under heavy pressure, which suggested that the truck was carrying a heavy load. When the truck passed through al-Hilaliya Square, it crashed into the square itself and almost flipped over. The driver of the truck seemed to be a teenager, around 15 years old. He drove through towards the main road (Amoda Road). The truck was swinging to the right and the left, which raised further suspicions, especially that it is known that such trucks, according to the laws enacted by the self-government, are not allowed to cross the (belt of the city) into the center, before making sure that it is completely clean and acquired authorization to get into the city. A few minutes later, a huge explosion shook the area where the truck was heading, so I expected that it was the truck I saw a while ago

;Another citizen from the neighborhood called Amer T., told STJ what he saw that day I was going to work on that morning. I was 200 or 300 meters away from the blast. When I heard a strong noise from behind, for a second I thought that it was the warplane that was flying in the sky moments before the explosion as it was shot down. However, I looked behind to see a large cloud of smoke coming from the vicinity of Qasemo Mosque on Amoda Road, so I immediately headed to the place. Immediately upon arrival to the scene, several consecutive explosions took place, because of the fuel tanks and the gas cylinders there. The destruction was very severe, and I think that all people in the surrounding of the explosion died because of the strong blast

One of the recruitment centers that belonged to the self-government was about 700 meters away from the explosion. There was a police station and several other centers affiliated to the self-government ministries located 200 meters away from the explosion. Each were partially affected. I saw the remnants of the truck that had exploded (there were remnants from the metal of the rear tires). One of the bakers around the Karmouty Roundabout (**al-Hilalya Square**) told me that the truck stopped in front of the bakery and an adult male got off the truck and handed it over to a young boy who looked no more than 14 years old. The adult driver took a motorcycle and went away, while the boy drove the truck to the square, where he stopped for a short while then he continued to Amoda Street and detonated himself. It was obvious that he was young and didn't know how to drive a truck like that big one

At least sixty people were killed in that explosion based on the destruction and the dead” bodies we saw” Amer added. “There were no less than 200 wounded people who were transported to the hospitals of the city which lacked the necessary medical staff and supplies. In addition to that, there were several cases of amputated limbs. Luckily, the explosion took place at that time. If it had taken place a little later, it would have caused hundreds of casualties, because of the crowdedness of that area. Some victims were so completely torn apart that not a small shred remained of them to be buried in a grave. They .were reduced into tiny pieces



A piece remaining from the truck detonated by Daesh – Photo Credits: Activists from the site of the incident

VI. Testimonies of Eye-witnesses and Families of the Victims

A restaurant owner, that is located in the vicinity of the blast said that one of the victims who was called “Dara Hussein Abu Amsha” bought some stuff and headed back home just when the truck came very close to him. He added that when he went to the scene, directly afterwards, he couldn’t find any trace of the victim. Later, he told the victim’s family about what he witnessed

Ronahi, the wife of Dara, stated

We have been living in Germany for several years. A few days before the incident my” husband decided to travel to Syria to visit his family and he took some money with him to give to his family. He also had some money from other friends who wanted to send money to their families as well. He was supposed to buy a piece of land for us, as I sold all my jewelry for that purpose. Following the explosion, the self-government told me that they didn’t find Dara’s body, but they found his hand and put it in a “coffin” with a piece of paper and a picture of Dara. I still can’t believe all the accounts .on my husband’s death

Khadija Saeed, 52, Ronahi's sister, described their suffering

He had lived in Germany for six years. He came back here to visit family and friends and for medical treatment, but the explosion was closer to him. We couldn't even see him. He was a father of three, a boy and two girls. His children became orphans after the incident. On the day of the incident, he went to the marketplace for some business but he was killed and reduced to shreds after the explosion. We were told that they found his small bag directly after the incident.

Another lady, who was close to the explosion site, said she saw three men close to the explosion. They were blown several meters in the air due to the explosion. No trace was found of them later.

Dr. Castro, who was discussed in the Preface, according to relatives, called him immediately after the explosion on his mobile phone. Castro told him that he was still alive and he was in the "basement of the building" he was living in. but because of the lack of experience in rescuing people stuck under the rubble, the digging and pressure, the rest of the building collapsed over the head of Dr. Castro Khourshid Suleiman. He died with his sister Balshin, a medical student, and his aunt engineer "Amira Shiekhy

A driver told STJ that three drivers working on the transport line of al-Hilaliya were killed along with all passengers. He added that when he arrived at the site of the blast, the smell of death and blood was everywhere in the place. There was also mass destruction in the surrounding buildings and stores.

Sister of pharmacist Jouhar Muhammad Ismail (Souria), who spoke about her brother who was killed in the explosion

He is from Qamishly, al-Kournish neighborhood. He attended high school in Qamishly then traveled to the Republic of Kazakhstan to study pharmacology. He finished his college in Kazakhstan in 1999, then he went back to Qamishly to start his career by opening a pharmacy there, in Amoda Road.

His sister Souria adds

My brother Jouhar was loved by all family members, relatives, and most of the people of Qamishly. He lived his life bearing the worries of all his brothers and family members. He always helped them without hesitation. He also helped any person asked for help in Qamishly. Everyone in the city would testify to that. He exerted great effort in providing his medical services to the locals, especially in the years following the outbreak of the Syrian revolution. We asked him several times to travel with his family outside Syria to any European country away from the war, especially after the deterioration of the situation. However, his response was always: 'There are people other than me and my family who deserve to get out of Syria, whether my brothers, or other extended family members or

My brother Jouhar used to open his pharmacy at ten in the morning, but on the day of the explosion, he was in his pharmacy at nine, because he had an appointment with a medicine company that was supposed to bring him a batch of medicine. But the terrorist explosion took place and deprived me of the dearest person to me

Another witness, called Sherwan T. was in a car heading towards the city marketplace when a strong blast shook the city. Although he was about one kilometer away from the explosion, he told STJ that, to his surprise, the windows of so many houses he was passing through broke, which made him realize the strength of the explosion. He headed to the blast site immediately. **Sherwan said in this regard**

When I got to the place, I found that Asayesh forces had cordoned off the area. The” destruction was massive and scary. Several consecutive explosions took place after the main one. We learned that these were the fuel tanks and cooking gas cylinders. Dozens of wounded people were transported to hospitals, and there were so many “[victims] who were reduced to shreds, and nothing remained of them



A photo for STJ (Qamishly 27 July, 2016). Photo Credit: Dalil Suleiman, photojournalist



A photo for STJ (Qamishly 27 July, 2016). Photo Credit: Dalil Suleiman, photojournalist

VII. Appendix: Names of the Victims and Missing Persons

Civilians

1-Abdul Karim Sheikh Mousa, who was killed with his wife and a number of his family members. He was born in 1955



2-Abdul Karim Samir Abdul Karim Ahmad Sheikh Mousa, a boy born in 2010

3-Reem Abdul Karim Samir Abdul Karim Ahmad Sheikh Mousa, a girl born in 2012

4-Abdul Karim Nazir Abdul Karim Sheikh Mousa, 10 months old

5-Ms. Del Firaz Abdul Majeed Yaldirim, born in 1958. She is the wife of Abdul Karim Ahmad Sheikh Mousa and the grandmother of the children

6-Ms. Abeer Hameed Hamoudi, born in 1983. She died with her children Abdul Karim Samir Abdul Karim Ahmad Sheikh Mousa and Reem Samir Abdul Karim Ahmad Sheikh Mousa

7-Ms. Bayan Abdi Hussein, born in 1985. She was married. Note: Her surname came from another source mistakenly as "Abdeen"

8-Sheerin Abdul Karim Ahmad Sheikh Mousa, born in 1993

9-Engineer Amira Ahmad Sheikho, born in 1969. Note: The name came from another source mistakenly as “Amina Shiekhi”. She was married with four children. She died with her (relatives (Balshin and Castro Suleiman



10-Ibrahim Ahmad Faraman, born in 1984. He was a government employee who was supposed to get married on Friday 1 August, 2016, a few days after the day of explosion



11-Ahmad Muhammad Ali KhanoMardini
12-Ismail Abdul Karim Khaled, a child

13-AvinSalah Hussein, born 1989.. Note: The name came from another source mistakenly as “Avin Saleh Hussein.” She was married and pregnant at the time of the explosion. She died along with her fetus



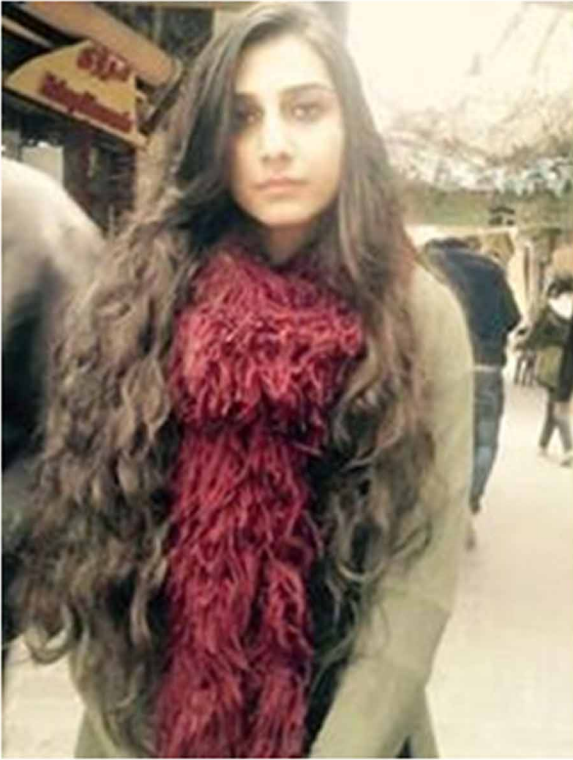
14-The fetus of Avin Salah Hussein

15-AyazFayekMousa, born in 1998. He is the only son in his family



16-Basem Ismail

17-BalshinKhourshid Suleiman, born in 1997. She was a first year student of medicine in Damascus. She was killed with her brother, Dr. Castro, and a number of her family members in the same attack



18-Dr. Castro Khourshid Suleiman born in 1984. He was an orthopedist. He was killed with his sister, Balshin, and other members of his family



19-Dara Hussein (also called Abu Amsha). He was an expatriate living in Bochum, Germany. Note: The name came from another source as "Dra Shamsi Hasan



20-Janko Ahmad

21-JwanKhodor Mahmoud, born in 1982. He was married with two kids. He is a local from Amouda

22-Jouhar Muhammad Ismail, born March, 2, 1974. He was a pharmacist. He was also married with two children, Jeen and Muhammad



23-Hassan Mahdi, three years old

24-Abdul Hakim Ahmad Mashaal, born in 1976. He was married with two children. Note: The name came from another source mistakenly as “Hakim Mashaal and Abdullah al-Hakim Mashaal



25-KhourshidIsmatDarwish, born in 1978. He was married with two children. He was killed with his wife, Berevan Ibrahim,in the explosion

26-Dayar Khaled Sheikhmous, born in 29 July, 2004



27-Suleiman Khalil Suleiman AbuFanar, born in 1962. He was married and had five sons. He was an employee in Qamishly municipality



28-Fatima Ahmad, 53 years old

29-Lukman Yousef

30-Raman WalidMashaal. Note: The name came from another source as “Raman Yousef”. He was born in 2001

31-LeelanImadHamdi, born in 2010



32-Muhammad Abdul Mohsen Osi, born in 11 June, 1987

33-Muhammad Mohsen Othman (also known as Abu Kawa



34-Mousa AbuGhassan

35-Naviyeh Hussein Abdul Rahman (Umm Muhammad), born in 1966. Married with four children. Note: The name came from another source as “Naviyeh Hajji Hajji

36-Hanouf Farhan Anz, born in 1964. She was killed with her son in law and granddaughter



37-The granddaughter of HanoufAnz

38-The son in law of HanoufAnz

39-Helen TawfikMallaRasoul, born in 1983. Note: The name came from another source as
."Helen Rasoul

40-Welat Abdi Muhammad, a child born in 2003



41-Abdul Salam Haj Fuad Yousef, born in 1964. Married with three sons



42-Berevan Ibrahim, born in 1986. She was married with two children. She was killed with her husband KhourshidIsmatDarwish in the explosion. She was pregnant in the explosion and she died with her fetus



43-The fetus of Berevan Ibrahim

44-Mahdi Shaker Abdi (Polat Hercule) member of the Democratic Community Movement

45-Alaa Eddin Jamil lessa Fatimi, born in 1974

46-Fatima Yousef Suleiman, born in 1986. Married with five children. Note: She is a different

47-person from Faima Yousef al-Hussein al-Hammoud

48-Ali Abboud al-Aliwi, born in 1968. He comes from Heemo Village, near Qamishly. He is a

49-father of five. His son Fawaz was killed with him in the explosion

50-Fawaz Ali Abboud al-Aliwi, born 2002. He was killed with his father in the explosion

51-Beiroza Kalash. Note: The name came from another source mistakenly as Fairouz Kalash

52-Laila Saleh Suleiman, born in 1983. She was an employee in the municipality of Qamishly

53-Sabeeha Ahmad al-Khaleef, born in 1949. She is from al-Mohasan area in Deir Ezzor.

54-She was displaced to Qamishly. She was married with eight children

55-Hanifa Farhan Anas

53-Dawood Hussein Muhammad, born in 1959. He suffered from a psychological disorder. He was married and had four sons

54-Abdullah Ahmad Hammad, born in 1957. He was a driver

55-Ismael Abdul Karim Khaled, born in 2005

56-Zanar Abdul Rahman Abdi, born in 2000. A primary school student in the sixth grade

57-Hozan Muhammad Omar, born in 10 August, 2007. He had three sisters



58-Hasan Mahdi. A child

59-Janko Ahmad

60-Unidentified girl (the body was in Faraman Hospital)

61-Unidentified adult male (the body was in Faraman Hospital)

62-Ati Ahmad Mousa. Note: The name came from another source as Aaty Ahmad Mousa

63-72 Unidentified Dead Bodies

B. Military Personnel

73-Muhammad Hussein Majeed, born in 1994. He was a member of Asayesh forces—the internal security apparatus

74-Lukman Hasan Abdi, born in 1996. He was a member of Asayesh forces—the internal security apparatus

75-Abdullah Mardini, born in 1 January, 1994. He was married with a son. He defected from the Syrian regular army, then he joined the Asayesh—the internal security apparatus. He was turned into pieces

C. Names of the Missing Persons

76-Abdul Rahman Walid Mashaal

77-Abdullah Abdul Salam Fuad Yousef

78-Sateer Abdullah Fasih Osman, born in 2 April, 1980. She was married with three girls. She .(hand't been found

79-Muhammad Abbas Kasem, born in 2001. He was a Preparatory school student, ninth grade. He was working in Kamal Kawara store for beverages

80-Saleh Khalaf Sheikh Mousa, born in 1962. He is from Tal Shaeer Sheikhan Village. He . was married with six sons. No trace has been found for him

81-Suleiman Abu Hassan

82-Haitham Ezz Eddin al-Ali. Note: The name came from another source as Haitham Ezz Eddin al-Yousef). He is a taxi driver from Neef Vilage. His body has not been found

According to the Kurdish Organization for Human Rights in Syria (DAD), the explosion killed at least 64 and wounded no less than 95 others, most of whom were civilians. In addition, one of the sources (who spoke on condition of anonymity) told STJ that the truck was loaded with explosives by members of ISIS in the countryside of Deir Ezzor Governorate

Buyer Press Website. One of the websites the report depended on for the completion of • investigation and missed information about the victims

Special thanks for activists Nobar Ismael, Haitham Hasso, Shirwan Takfan and Welat • Darwish for their contribution to the achievement of this report

Till the moment of writing this report, none of the missing persons mentioned here were found. Locals, eye-witnesses and activists who participated in writing this report stated that it was most likely that the victims were reduced into pieces, which made it difficult to identify them