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Syria: 27 Persons Killed in Air Raids on Five Cities in Idlib

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On July 12, 4 simultaneous air raids rendered about 15 people dead; another two concurrent raids took a toll on over 12 persons, however, on the 16th of the same month

On July 12, 2019, four main cities in Idlib province suffered simultaneous air raids, which made a target of populated areas and caused the death of no less than 15 persons, most of whom are women and children, not to mention the many injured others. Idlib, Jisr al-Shughour, Ariha and Ma`arat al-Nu`man were monitored by the field researchers of Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ as being the cities at which the aerial attacks aimed. The village of Ma'ar Shoreen, for its part, was a target to tow synchronized air raids, which hit it on July 16, 2019, killing over 12 persons, including children.

1. Bombardment of Idlib City:

On Friday morning, 12th of July 2019, an attack aircraft, Sukhoi Su-24, embarked on an air raid, releasing four missiles in the airspace of three byways which host houses, around 09:14. These minor roads are located within the al-Qusour Neighborhood; the missiles, however, landed on the side of the neighborhood that leads to the Sabaa Bahrat roundabout in Idlib city, resulting in the death of Mohammad Ratib Melhim, a civilian, and the injury of 13 other persons. STJ's field researcher in Idlib city reported that the first missile landed near the Idlib Municipality Council, only about 20 meters from the Council's location. The second missile ended in front of a populated building, where an office of Rakeen Organization operates. The third and the fourth missiles fell approximately near each other, on two buildings, one of which is also populated. The two buildings are located close to a makeshift housing center for people displaced from Homs and are not far from a building that the Syrian Government-affiliated Military Security Service used to own earlier on.

The targeted areas are close to the al-Qusour Street, which has lately witnessed several blasts.¹

¹ "Three Explosions in Idlib: One of Them Triggers Mass Execution", STJ. March 20, 2019. Last visited: July 19, 2019. <https://stj-sy.org/ar/1227/>.



The street on which one of the missiles landed, near the Idlib City Council on July 12, 2019. Photo credit: STJ.

Two photos taken by STJ, documenting the destruction caused by the bombing of a residential building opposite to Rakeen Organization's office, Idlib city, on July 12, 2019:



Photo no. 1



Photo no. 2



A residential building partially destroyed for being a target to air raids, Idlib city. Taken on: July 12, 2019. Photo credit: STJ.

STJ's field researcher interviewed several eyewitnesses based in the target areas. Ammar al-Hamdou, a volunteer of the Syrian Civil Defense/White Helmets, who lives near the makeshift housing center, close to which a missile landed, said:

"The neighborhood where I live was hit by two missiles. My duty as a White Helmets' volunteer necessitated that I report the exact location. I did. I made sure that my infant girl and family were fine and put on my uniform. Despite my previous injury and somehow slow movement, my brother and I went down the alleyway. Ambulances started to arrive in the site and several wounded people were offered first aid. When I confirmed that no other injured persons were around, I moved my family to another place, for our house was rendered inhabitable."

A woman, also living in the neighborhood, described the destruction that befell her house due to the bombing:

"We were asleep when a missile landed near the house. The windows were shattered into many pieces and fell on us. We left the house sound but extremely afraid that the shelling would be resumed. We abandoned the house and chose to flee, for the area is a constant target and most of its population have already escaped. It has become a forlorn area."

The university student Mahmoud al-Daba'an, also based in the neighborhood, said:

"The first a few seconds of the shelling were dreadful. We live on the fourth floor. I immediately headed to the balcony to see where the bombing was aimed at; it was unbelievably close to us and near my brother's house. I hurried there on the spot. Upon my arrival, the Civil Defense team have had already recovered a dead body and hospitalized many injured persons."

2. Bombardment of Ariha City:

Also on Friday morning, July 12, around 09:10, an aircraft conducted a raid against a residential neighborhood in the city of [Ariha](#), which rendered six persons dead and injured 22 others, including eight children. The civil observatories, which monitor air traffic with special devices, reported that the raid was initiated by a Syrian regular army-affiliated- Sukhoi Su-24.

The raid killed the following persons among others: the boy Tareq Mustafa Ahmadou, Narjiss Ezeddin, a female, Fatima Ahmad Rihawe, a female, Bakour Ahmad Mahmoud, a male, and Hamshou and Tahir Ahmadou, two male civilians.

STJ communicated with the local activist Amjad Aktalaty, who headed to the target area less than ten minutes after the raid. He said:

"It was a three-missile-raid, which all fell at the same time and landed in the same spot, on an alleyway near al-Hal market. The alleyway consists of regular-shaped houses and a few two-story buildings only. I reached the target area about ten minutes later, the people were fear-stricken; there was so much blood and too many

people were injured. I heard the wounded people wailing for help; some of them were trying to reach the ambulance by themselves. I also saw women holding their children and running at full speed; they were running aimlessly in an attempt to move as far away from the site as possible.”

3. Bombardment of Jisr al-Shughour City:

On Friday morning, 12th of July 2019, an attack aircraft, Su-22, targeted the city of [Jisr al-Shughour](#) with an air raid around 09:00, which covered areas near the city’s hospital - the building of which was partially destroyed. It also resulted in the death of five persons and the injury of nine others. STJ’s field researcher spoke to a civilian who survived the shelling. He said:

“On Thursday at midnight/early on Friday, the regime’s forces, positioned at the Jurin Camp, attacked the city with several missiles, one of which fell near my house and injured a female relative of mine. On Friday morning, around 09:00, an attack aircraft raided the city; three of its missiles ended in the neighborhood where I live, no more than 30 meters away from my house. One of the missiles landed in the area separating my house from my parents’. The shrapnel wounded my sister. I left my house, headed to my parents’ and ordered them out. I transported them out of the city with my family, sending them to a village at the Turkish borders. I, then, accompanied other men to hospitalize the people. We pulled out a child and a woman [from the debris]. She was all deformed. There were many dead bodies at the hospital, which, as I saw, was partially damaged, for the bombing was in close proximity to its location. Ten minutes from my arrival in the hospital, we could hear the sound of another raid; it was targeting sites at a 200 meters distance only and resulted in no human casualties.”

4. Bombardment of Ma`arat al-Nu`man City:

STJ’s field researcher, based in the city of [Ma`arat al-Nu`man](#), reported that around 01:30 p.m., on Friday, July 12, 2019, aircraft, believed to be Syrian regular forces’ affiliates, raided one of the city’s popular markets, causing the destruction of shops and one bakery on al-Sattiea Neighborhood, rendering three civilians dead and 14 others injured. The researcher noted that the target area was not overcrowded as usual, which lessened the human casualties.

5. Bombardment of Ma'ar Shoreen Village:

On July 16, 2019, an attack aircraft, SU-22, launched twin air raids against the village of [Ma'ar Shoreen](#), killing 12 persons, some of whom are children, and injured more than 10 others.

According to eyewitnesses and bombing survivors, to whom STJ spoke, the first raid targeted a house near the main square. The second raid, nonetheless, happened five minutes only after its predecessor, making a direct target of the square.

The local activist [Hafiz Tarman](#), who was at the square at the moment of the shelling, informed STJ of the following:

“I am one of the shelling survivors. I was only a few meters away from the targeted house. The sound of the missile’s blast was ear-piercing; but still, I heard the voices of women and children screaming at the top of their lungs in the house where the missile landed. During the first a few seconds, I only shielded myself from the shrapnel. And, then, I saw an injured child and two persons; both were dead. On the walky-talky, I heard one of the civil observatories demanding that the assembling crowds be dispersed immediately because the aircraft were still hovering and would possibly embark on a new raid against the same spot. This was what did happen. The aircraft conducted another raid, near the village’s main square, where all the shops exist. Seven people, children included, met their fate. I could see body parts as well.”

A civilian, by the name Huthaifa al-Shahad, also described the raids to STJ’s field researcher:

“Just before the raid, I was having breakfast with my family. We suddenly heard the fall of a missile; the explosive sound that ensued was deafening. At first, we thought that it landed in our house, the women and my children started to wale and cry. I left the house barefooted to see that the missile has landed two streets from my house. I ran there. Women and children were just escaping, and some people managed to hospitalize two wounded girls aboard their civil cars. I tried, with other people, to break the assembly and evacuate the area, fearing another raid.”

He added:

“Five minutes after the first raid, I was already at the main square, a second missile landed only 100 meters away from me. I saw every single phase of the blast. It was then, when I turned back home, to wear my clothes and put my shoes on, so I could move faster. I went back to the square. Arriving there, I could see that the people have already recovered four bodies, of persons who died immediately. I started searching for survivors. I went into Amjad al-Ahmad’s shop; he was dead inside his shop, his body lying on the ground among detergents. We carried him to the car. I also found another dead man, at the entrance to Youssef al-Hamdou’s house. The first aid responders took his body. I continued searching in the debris. We waited for the fire engines, for a fire broke out due to the explosion of oil barrels inside Jameel al-Ahmad’s shop. We dispersed the people, collected the body parts and remnants and placed them in a plastic bag. After an hour and a half of continues work and search, we found the young man Wael Mohammad lying on the ground in Mazen al-Sami’s shop. We rushed him to the hospital. It was a state of extreme terror and massive destruction.”



History

Syrians for Truth and Justice was conceived during the participation of its co-founder in the Middle-East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program, who was driven by a will to contribute to Syria's future. Starting as a humble project to tell the stories of Syrians experiencing enforced disappearances and torture, it grew into an established organisation committed to unveiling human rights violations of all sorts.

Convinced that the diversity that has historically defined Syria is a wealth, our team of researchers and volunteers works with dedication at uncovering human rights violations committed in Syria, in order to promote inclusiveness and ensure that all Syrians are represented, and their rights fulfilled.

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