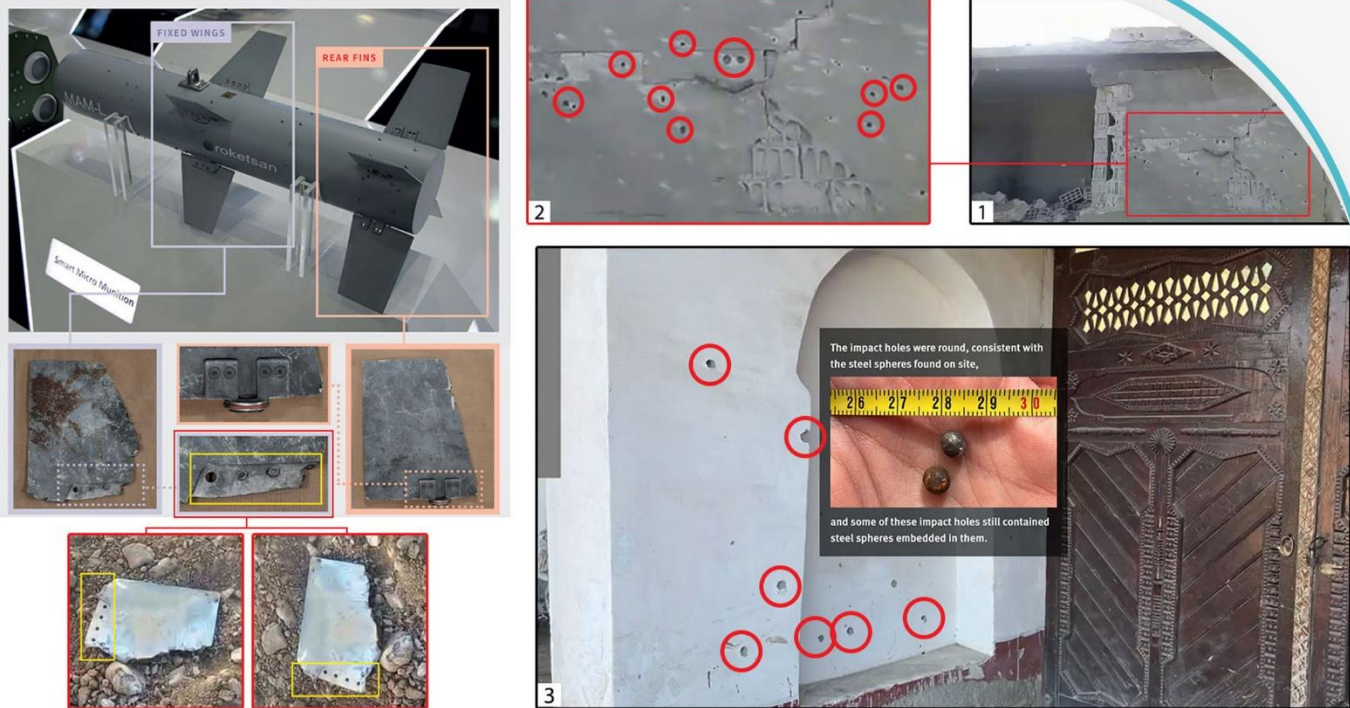


# Syria|Kobanî: New Evidence on the Killing of 22 Civilians, Half of Them Children, in January and March 2025



Urgent, Independent, Impartial Investigations Into The Documented Airstrikes Are Needed To Secure Justice For Victims And Protect Civilians





## **Syria|Kobanî: New Evidence on the Killing of 22 Civilians, Half of Them Children, in January and March 2025**

*Urgent, Independent, Impartial Investigations Into The Documented Airstrikes  
Are Needed To Secure Justice For Victims And Protect Civilians*



In the present report, Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) details two Turkish airstrikes, likely carried out using drones, in the city of [Ayn al-Arab/Kobani](#) in northern Syria on 28 January and 16 March 2025, which resulted in the deaths of 22 civilians, half of whom are children.

Ayn al-Arab is administratively under the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) and militarily controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). [Since 2022](#), Ayn al-Arab and its surrounding countryside have frequently been targeted by intensive airstrikes conducted by the Turkish military against areas in northeastern Syria. The most recent strike, in late October 2024, [killed](#) 14 civilians and wounded 22 others. Türkiye asserts that these operations aim at the People's Protection Units (YPG), affiliated with the SDF, which it considers the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), designated by Türkiye as a terrorist organization.

Nevertheless, the city experienced a rise in violence when the Syrian National Army (SNA), supported by Türkiye, launched [Operation Dawn of Freedom](#) on 30 November 2024, with the goal of taking control of areas held by the SDF. This operation led to the SDF capturing Manbij, while both the [Tishrin Dam](#) and the [Qarah Qawzaq/Qeregozaqê Bridge](#) on the Euphrates River became frontline zones between the two sides. Attacks by Turkish forces and the SNA around the Tishrin Dam [resulted](#) in 24 civilians being [killed](#) and at least 200 others injured, all of whom had gathered in the dam area to protest against the assaults.

The Qarah Qawzaq Bridge, [located](#) in the countryside of Ayn al-Arab, [serves](#) as a strategic base for building lines of defense against attacks on Ayn al-Arab, Ain Issa, Raqqa, Al Tabqah, and other areas controlled by the SDF .

The first airstrike documented in this report took place on 28 January 2025, targeting a [public market](#) in the town of [Sarrin](#), in Ayn al-Arab. The strike [resulted](#) in the killing of 12 civilians, including three children, and the injury of 13 others. The second airstrike occurred on 16 March 2025, targeting a [farm](#) located between the villages of Qumji and Barkh Batan, south of Ayn al-Arab. This strike [resulted](#) in the killing of 10 civilians, including eight children, and the injury of another girl, all of whom belonged to the same family.

It is notable that the second airstrike occurred after a series of military agreements aimed at easing tensions between the conflicting parties and protecting civilians. The SNA factions announced their formal and practical integration into the Syrian Ministry of Defense of the Syrian Interim Government following the "[Victory Conference](#)," held on 29 January 2025. Meanwhile, the government, led by Ahmed al-Sharaa, signed an [agreement](#) with the SDF on 11 March 2025, stipulating a ceasefire across all Syrian territories.

The airstrike raised concern among Turkish circles, as the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (HDP) [called](#) it a "massacre," stating that the attack was "a deliberate message aimed at destroying hopes for peace." Tuncer Bakirhan, the party's co-chair, condemned the strike during a press conference he held jointly with officials from the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) to discuss steps toward implementing the [call](#) of the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan, to dissolve the party. He said: "We would like to emphasize that these attacks and similar actions will cause severe damage to the ongoing processes, whether here (the dissolution of the party) or in Syria (the agreement between the SDF and the Syrian administration to integrate into state institutions)."

Based on the information in the report, STJ recommends that the new government take effective steps to ensure stability and protection for all areas covered by the agreement with the SDF, building on its earlier move of deploying Syrian army forces and general security to the Tishrin Dam on 12 April 2025. It also urges conducting transparent and effective investigations into the killings documented in this report, as well as other indiscriminate killings carried out by Turkish forces, if any, by independent and impartial investigative committees. The reports issued by these committees should be made public to guarantee the full right of the victims and their families to know the truth. Most importantly, STJ recommends that relevant international bodies open investigations into the airstrikes documented here and work to hold those responsible accountable. This should be done in a way that ensures justice for the victims, protects civilians in the targeted areas, and respects international humanitarian law, measures that would help improve stability across all of Syria. The organization also calls on the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI Syria) to include these incidents in its upcoming report and to urge the Turkish government to respect the right to life of civilians, the principle of distinction between combatants and civilians as well as between military targets and civilian objects, and the principle of proportionality, which calls for avoiding excessive harm to civilians and civilian objects compared to the limited military advantage expected from military operations.

The report is based on nine detailed testimonials collected by STJ from victims or witnesses of the Turkish airstrikes and shelling in Ayn al-Arab. Some of them asked that their identities or any details that could reveal them remain confidential for security reasons; therefore, pseudonyms have been used to refer to them below.

## 1. Turkish Airstrike on a Farm Kills 10 Civilians from One Family

On 16 March 2025, a Turkish [airstrike, likely conducted by a drone, killed](#) 10 members and injured another from the Osman Abdo family while targeting a farm between the villages of Qumji and Barkh Batan, south of [Ayn al-Arab](#).

In addition to Osman (42), who worked as a guard at the targeted farm, the strike [victims](#) included his wife, Ghazala Osman Abdo (39), and their children: 8-month-old infant Avesta, 2-year-old Fawaz, 4-year-old Saleha, 6-year-old Yasser, 13-year-old Delovan, 14-year-old Dajla, and 15-year-old Ahin, all of whom died on the day of the strike. Their 18-year-old daughter Ronida later died from her injuries, and their 9-year-old daughter Narin was severely [wounded](#).

To obtain details of the incident, STJ spoke with two sources, one of whom was Akid al-Ahmed,<sup>1</sup> a civilian who witnessed the shelling and helped transport some family members to al-Amal Hospital, also known locally as Kobani Hospital. Al-Ahmed detailed,

“I was sitting [outside the house] when I saw two artillery shells fired from the al-Hawshariyah base, located near the Qarah Qawzaq Bridge. I saw the shells heading toward the village [of Qumji]. I hurried inside the room, and moments later I heard two loud explosions nearby, followed by the sound of more shells being fired. After hearing the explosions, I went up to the roof of the house and saw smoke rising from one of the farms south of the village, about 500–600 meters away. The sound of a drone could be

<sup>1</sup> Interviewed online by an STJ researcher on 26 March 2025.



clearly heard in the sky, and I saw the targeting of the valley near the farm. After the valley was targeted, the artillery fire stopped. The valley is about 300 meters from my house.”

Al-Ahmed added that his neighbors heard children’s voices and cries for help coming from the valley after the shelling. Some people went to the site and found many dead and wounded. They then returned to transport nine of them, the parents and seven children, to Kobanî Hospital, fearing they might also be targeted. Later, they discovered the presence of two other girls, and he said,

“We did not notice them because they had moved away from the others due to the force of the strike”.

The open-source data analysis expert at STJ identified the location of a Turkish military base near the [al-Hawshariyah](#) village, northeast of [Manbij](#) city, which was also mentioned in media [reports](#) and [statements](#) by the SDF published on its official channels.



Image 1 - The Turkish military base near al-Hawshariyah village (Geolocation: [36.663666, 38.057471](#)).



Al-Ahmed said the incident impacted residents of the targeted village and nearby areas, causing many families to flee their homes. Al-Ahmed explained,

“Six villages were abandoned by their residents due to repeated artillery shelling and the presence of drones overhead. These villages are: Barkh Batan, Hamdi Bouzo, Jayd al-Qird, Qumji, Ashmeh, and Saifi. Geographically, these villages are situated next to each other in a circular formation, with the targeted area roughly in the middle. The village of Qumji consists of two parts, Qumji Kabera and Qumji Saghera. About 100 families used to live in these two villages, but now only six families remain.”



Image 2 – Funeral of nine victims killed in the Turkish airstrike on 16 March 2025. Source: [North Press Agency](#).

The second source, Shiraz Qassem,<sup>2</sup> the owner of the farm where the victim Osman worked, confirmed the details of the targeting, stating that the family members were targeted in the valley next to the farm while trying to flee the shelling, and that they were killed in a Turkish airstrike. Qassem added,

“The artillery strikes took place approximately 2 km south and 5 km west of the village of Qumji. There are no military positions or headquarters in the village. I still do not understand why this attack occurred, and I hope that a committee will be formed to investigate the incident, as those who were killed were civilians who only wanted to work.”

Regarding the material damage, Qassem said that the farm had been shelled three times, which destroyed the building and caused losses he estimated at around \$12,000.



Image 3- Screenshot from a video documenting the transfer of the bodies of the victims killed in a Turkish airstrike on 16 March 2025. Source: Witness Shiraz Qassem.

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<sup>2</sup> Interviewed online by an STJ researcher on 24 March 2025.





سوريون  
من أجل  
الحقيقة  
والعدالة  
Syrians  
For Truth  
& Justice

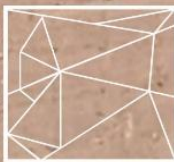




Image 4 – Collage above created by STJ; shows the geographic location of the targeted farm building (coordinates: [36.688106, 38.254454](#)) with Image no.1, which shows the farm building from the western side, and Image no.2, which displays damage on the edge of the roof caused by the airstrike. It appears the explosion happened on the eastern side of the building, facing away from Turkish/SNA positions in Aleppo and approximately 50 km from Turkish/SNA positions in Raqqa. Source: Witness Shiraz Qassem.

Images from the site of the targeted farm show small, rounded fragments near the strike, consistent with previously documented [MAM-L](#) strikes, Turkish-guided munitions typically carried by TB-2 drones and other Turkish UAVs. For example, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) [report](#) on the border conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2022 noted that, according to the manufacturer, MAM-L missiles can be equipped with three types of warheads: enhanced (thermobaric), anti-tank, or fragmentation (high-explosive fragmentation). STJ concluded that the warhead used in one of the attacks “was of the high-explosive fragmentation type, designed to target ‘soft targets’ such as personnel, and that its fragmentation effect is produced through the steel balls we found at the site, a distinctive feature of this type of warhead”.

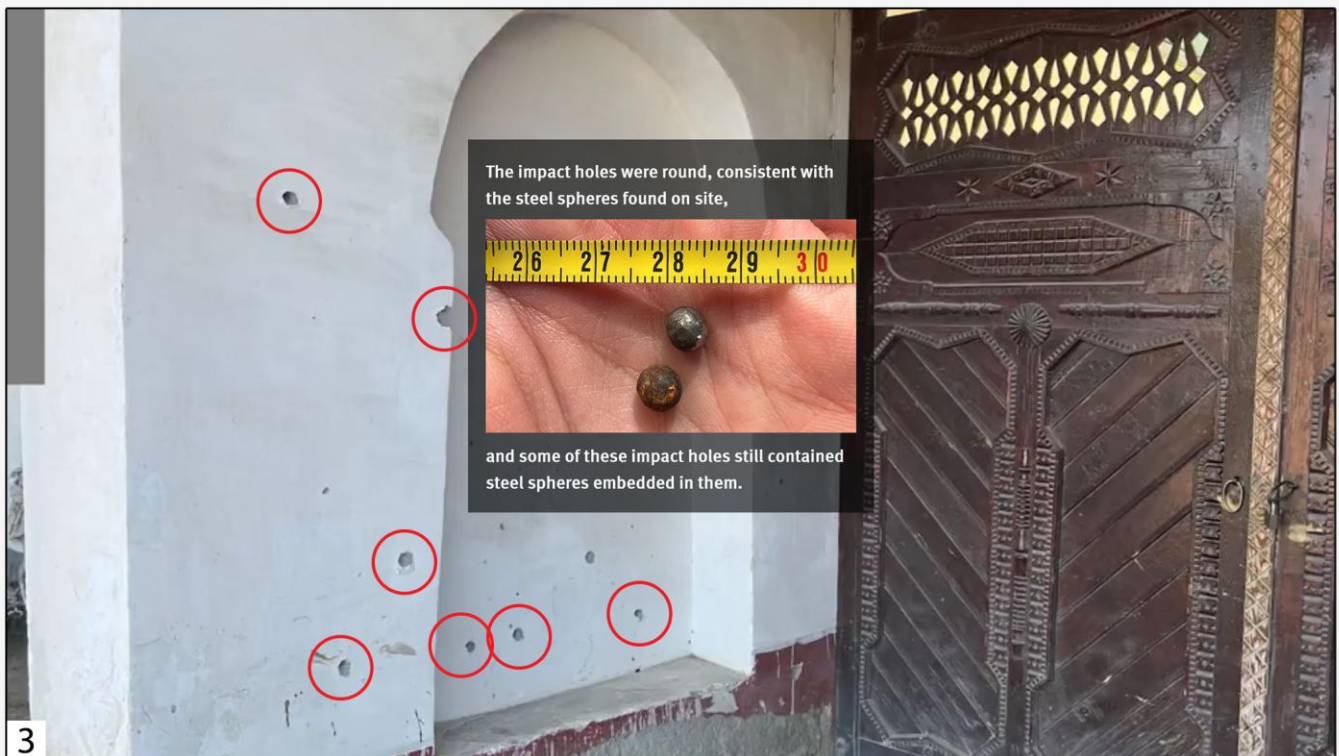






Image 5 - Collage above created by STJ links Image from the HRW [report](#), depicting circular “fragmentation effects” consistent with the type of warhead used in the documented attacks, with Images no.1, no.2, and no.4, which show similar fragmentation marks on the walls of the targeted farm building. Source: Witness Shiraz Qassem.

The open-source data analysis expert at STJ was also able to approximate the location (coordinates: [36.691223, 38.253933](#)) where the airstrike that killed members of the Osman Abdo family occurred. This location is at the intersection of the valley and the road, approximately 340 meters from the farm building.

Image 6 - The targeted farm building – highlighted by a yellow square. Source: witness Shiraz Qassem.



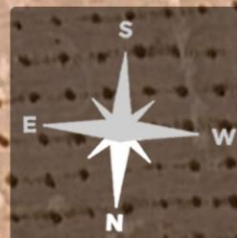






Image 7 – Remains of clothing and fragments in the valley where members of the Osman Abdo family were killed. Source: Witness Shiraz Qassem.

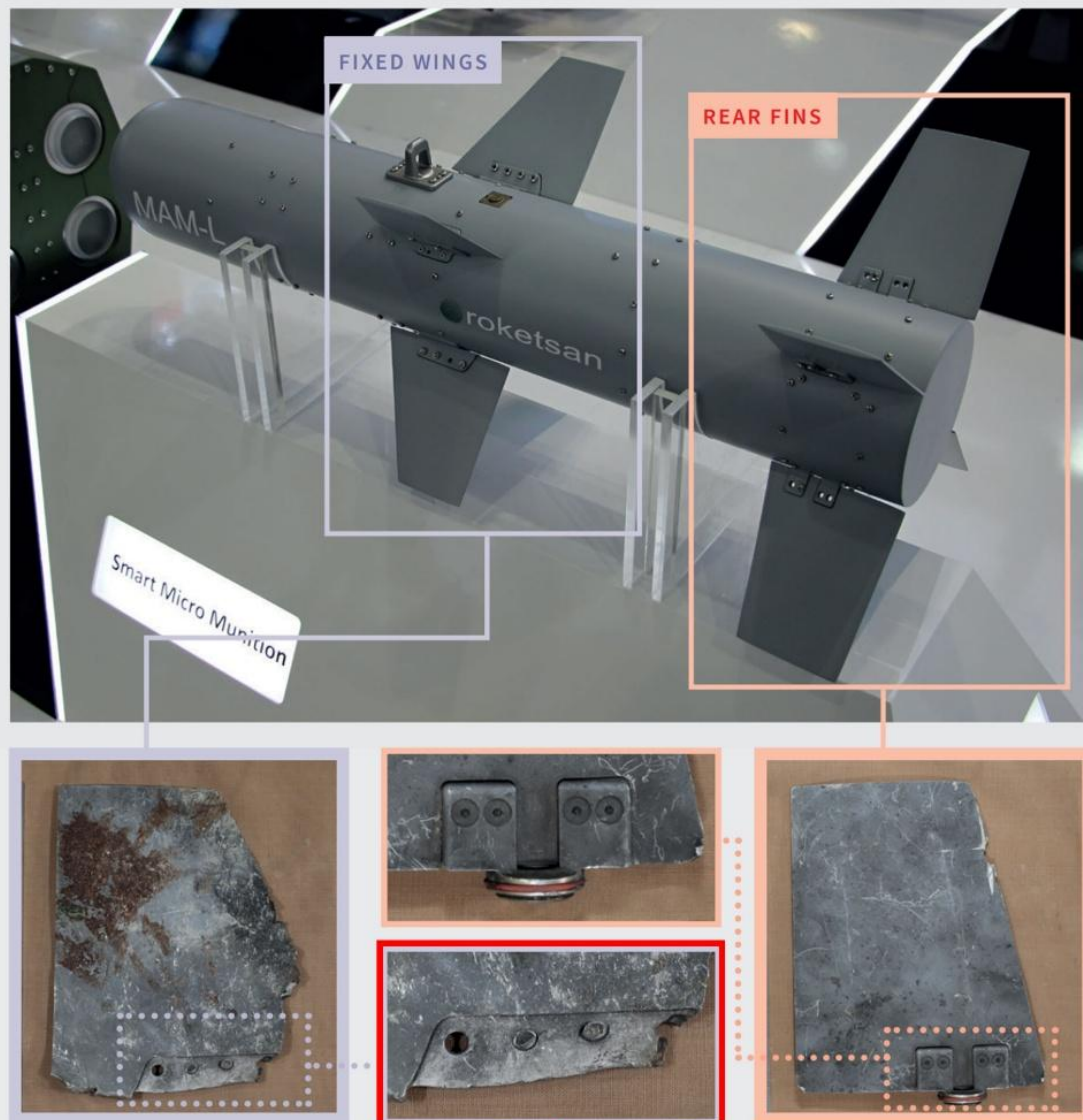
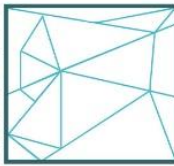




Image 8 – Bloodstains in the valley where members of the Osman Abdo family were killed. Source: Witness Shiraz Qassem.







**Figure 2**

Fragments recovered from a missile strike on 1 April 2022 compared to a complete MAM-L missile. The photograph of the full missile was taken at the IDET International Defence and Security Technologies Fair in Brno, Czechia, in 2017 (source: Wikicommons).



Image 9 – Collage above created by STJ depicts a fragment from the airstrike site in the valley (Image 1, source: witness Shiraz Qassem). This fragment appears consistent with MAM-L munition fragments documented in a [report](#) by Conflict Armament Research, which analyzed previous drone strikes in northeastern Syria.

## 2. Turkish Airstrike on a Public Market Kills 13 Civilians

On 28 January 2025, a Turkish airstrike, [likely conducted by a drone](#), targeted a [public market](#) in the town of Sarrin, in Ayn al-Arab. The strike [killed](#) 12 civilians, including three children, and injured 13 others. Some victims were hit by shrapnel in various parts of their bodies, while others suffered severe burns, according to Razan Abda,<sup>3</sup> a nurse at the [Sarrin](#) town clinic, which received several of the wounded that day.



Image 10 - One of the children injured during the Turkish airstrike on the public market in Sarrin town on 28 January 2025. Source: Witness Razan Abda.

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<sup>3</sup> Alias used at the request of the witness interviewed online by an STJ researcher on 12 February 2025.





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Image 11- Collage above created by STJ links the location of the airstrike in the Sarrin market (coordinates: [36.584818, 38.297363](#)) with Images no.1 and no.2, which show the aftermath of the strike. Source: [Northeast Syria News Facebook page](#).

STJ spoke with Jawad Masoud,<sup>4</sup> one of the injured in the strike and a relative of three victims. He was wounded by shrapnel in his leg and another piece in his eye, which caused bleeding. He traveled to Aleppo for treatment because Ayn al-Arab lacked doctors specialized in these cases.

At the time of the bombing, Jawad was at a shop owned by relatives in the market, repairing his motorcycle, where nine other people were also present. Among them were Taleb al-Ali (21), his cousin Ahmed al-Ali (30), and his other cousin Mahmoud al-Ali (25), all of whom were killed when a shell landed about three meters from their gathering spot. Shrapnel also hit a fourth person, inflicting a severe abdominal injury that nearly cost him his life.

Regarding Mohammed Issa al-Ali,<sup>5</sup> another person wounded in the Turkish airstrike and the owner of a shop in the targeted Sarrin market, he was injured by shrapnel in multiple parts of his body, requiring surgery. He also lost two of his brothers and one of their sons, as well as two children among his relatives. Describing the moment of the strike, al-Ali said,

“At the moment of the explosion, we felt something hit the ground in the middle of the market. The shell was about eight meters away from us. A powerful blast occurred, with fire and shrapnel spreading everywhere. The shrapnel consisted of small balls the size of prayer beads. Fires broke out in several places, including a number of motorcycles. The shops were severely damaged, including ours, which was damaged by about 70%, with our losses totaling around 70 million Syrian pounds (approximately \$70,000). The scene after the explosion looked like massive destruction.”

It is noteworthy that the witness’s description of the shrapnel as “small balls the size of prayer beads” aligns with the type of fragments produced by Turkish [MAM-L](#) munitions mentioned above, as documented in the HRW [report](#) on the border conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2022.

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<sup>4</sup> Alias used at the request of the witness interviewed online by an STJ researcher on 14 March 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Interviewed online by an STJ researcher on 16 March 2025.







Image 12 – Collage above created by STJ showing images from the airstrike site depicting fragmentation effects consistent with Turkish MAM-L munitions: circular holes in the motorcycle's fuel tank (Image no.1, source: [Kurd News](#) on X) and in the truck door (Image no.2, source: [Ronahi TV](#) channel on Telegram).

Describing the moment of the strike and the scene that followed in the market, Suad Abdul Hamid,<sup>6</sup> a licensed midwife working at a clinic located just 50 meters from the targeted site, recounted,

“Because of the loud noise, I lost consciousness for a moment, and when I regained it, the sounds outside were extremely loud. Minutes after the explosion, I went outside the clinic and saw a large amount of blood on the ground, with people providing first aid to the wounded. I later learned that 12 people had lost their lives. Everyone who died or was injured were civilians. No military personnel were present; I did not even see any soldiers in the market or on this street, neither on that day nor on any other day. They are always stationed at their posts.”

In the rural area of Sarrin, STJ also confirmed two Turkish airstrikes believed to have been carried out by warplanes. The [first strike](#) targeted the [home](#) of civilian Jamal Darwish,<sup>7</sup> located in the village of Ashmeh, on 1 February 2025. The attack injured at least ten civilians who were inside the house at the time, including Darwish's two children. Darwish testified,

“I realized the strike was carried out by warplanes because of the extensive destruction in my home. The kitchen was targeted, and we were sitting in the nearby room. I do not understand why my home was targeted even though we are civilians with no ties to any military group, and no military personnel were among us. Maybe it was because we are Kurds, because two days later, another house was targeted, a two-year-old girl died, and a woman was injured and is now disabled.”

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<sup>6</sup> Alias used at the request of the witness interviewed online by an STJ researcher on 18 February 2025.

<sup>7</sup> Interviewed online by an STJ researcher on 20 February 2025.





Image 13 - Screenshot from a video showing the destruction of a house in the village of Ashmeh following a Turkish airstrike on 1 February 2025. Source: Witness Jamal Darwish.



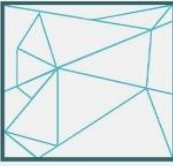




Image 14 – Collage above created by STJ links an image of a Turkish drone (Image no.1, source: [TÜRKSAVUNMA](#) YouTube channel) with a fragment found at the airstrike site on the house, which appears to be one of the tail fins from a [Roketsan-manufactured Teber guidance system](#), believed to be owned by the Turkish government (Image no.2 source: [SENGER](#) Telegram channel).

The second airstrike targeted three facilities, an olive mill, a water bottling plant, and a corn drying factory, in the village of al-Sana', on 20 January 2025. All three facilities belong to the family of Ahmed Musalam,<sup>8</sup> who explained,

“I knew it was a military aircraft by the extent of the destruction caused by the strike, which hit the middle of the olive mill and created a crater five meters deep and 20 meters wide. When reviewing the cameras, we found no military personnel passing by the olive mill, and there are no military points near the press except for a vehicle repair yard for military machinery, located about 700 meters away from us”.

Ahmed stated that 20 workers lost their livelihoods due to the olive mill going out of service, in addition to approximately 50 oil tins owned by local residents being damaged.

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<sup>8</sup> Interviewed online by an STJ researcher on 20 February 2025.

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Image 15 - Collage above created by STJ links the location of the targeted olive mill (coordinates: [36.634180, 38.273620](#)) with a photo depicting part of the damage caused by the Turkish airstrike (Image no.1, source: witness Ahmed Musalam).

Yusra Khalil,<sup>9</sup> an employee at the Women's Union of the DAANES, said that the repeated bombings in Sarrin and its surrounding areas have caused about 300 families to flee toward Raqqa, Tabqa, and other locations far from the frontlines.

Based on witness testimonies and open-source data cited in this report, it has been confirmed that Turkish drones launched airstrikes targeting solely civilian sites, with no evidence of nearby military targets or any link to military activity. These strikes caused civilian casualties, including women and children, showing that the attacks were indiscriminate and aimed at spreading terror among civilians.

Accordingly, these actions clearly violate the rules of international humanitarian law (IHL), especially the provisions of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. These conventions require parties to the conflict to carefully distinguish between military targets and civilian objects, as well as between combatants and civilians. They also prohibit indiscriminate attacks that could cause excessive harm to civilians relative to the expected military advantage. Additionally, these actions violate the principle of proportionality, which is a core principle in armed conflicts.

According to the testimonies of victims and witnesses, these strikes did not gain any clear military advantage, as they did not target military sites initially but instead targeted a popular market and a farm, confirming their unlawful nature.

In this context, it is important to note that Article 8 of the [Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court](#) states that intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such, or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities, as well as intentionally directing attacks against civilian objects that are not military objectives, constitutes a war crime within the Court's jurisdiction.

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<sup>9</sup> Interviewed online by an STJ researcher on 11 February 2025.





## ABOUT STJ

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) started as an idea in a co-founder's mind while attending the U.S. Middle-East Partnership Initiative's (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program (LDF) in 2015. The idea became a reality and flourished into an independent, non-profit, impartial, non-governmental human rights organization.

STJ's beginnings were more than humble; initially, it only reported stories of Syrians who experienced arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, or torture. Planted in fertile soil, the seed of this project grew into an established human rights organization licensed in the Middle East and the European Union. STJ today undertakes to detect and uncover violations of all types committed in all Syrian parts by the various parties to the conflict.

Convinced that Syria's diversity is a wealth, our researchers and volunteers serve with unfailing dedication to monitor, expose, and document human rights violations that continue unabated in Syria since 2011, regardless of the affiliation of the victims or perpetrators.