

# SOHR booklet



SOHR booklet, comprising **13** reports with infographics, summarises all key developments in Syria in **September 2023**

# 2023



العصد السوري لحقوق الإنسان



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# Introduction

Believing in merits of human rights and encompassing humanitarian principles, and as a Syrian human rights organisation, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), has done its utmost to monitor and document all violations committed against the Syrian people in September 2023 and tracked all developments on the ground.

In September 2023, SOHR published 824 news articles and nearly 58 reports. Meanwhile, local and international press and media agencies cited SOHR articles on more than 247 occasions. Also, many exclusive interviews with politicians, human rights activists, artists and military commanders. In addition, SOHR's director, Mr. Rami Abdulrahman, participated in 73 interviews on numerous international TV channels and radio stations.

SOHR has compiled its booklet, comprising 13 reports with infographics, to summarise all key developments in Syria in September 2023 with the aim of highlighting the plight of Syrian people through presenting all violations and crimes committed against them.



**المرصد السوري لحقوق الإنسان**  
**Syrian Observatory For Human Rights**

# Infographic: Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, **September** developments

## Syrian Observatory for Human Rights September Developments



**824**

News articles



**58**

SOHR reports



**73**

Interviews by SOHR director on various TV channels and radio stations



Local and international press and media agencies citing SOHR articles on more than **247** occasions



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## Monthly death toll | 113 civilians among 440 people killed in September 2023

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights documented the death of 440 people in September 2023. The fatalities were distributed as follows:

Civilian death toll: 113 persons, including 17 children under the age of 18 and 22 women over the age of 18, and they were as follows:

- One civilian died under torture in regime prisons.
- Nine civilians, including two women and five children, were killed in infightings and indiscriminate gunfire.
- Five civilians were killed by opposition factions and jihadists.
- Six civilians, including a woman, were killed in unknown circumstances.
- Eight civilians, including three children and a woman, were killed in explosions of old ordnance.
- 14 civilians, including three children and four women, were killed in bombardment and gunfire by regime forces.
- 46 civilians, including four children and 13 women, were murdered.
- One civilian died under torture in prisons of factions.
- Four civilians were killed by ISIS members.
- One civilian was killed in Turkish bombardment.

- Four civilians were killed by Turkish Jandarma.
- One civilian was killed by landmine and IED explosions.
- Nine civilians were shot dead by unidentified persons.
- Two civilians, including a child, were killed by SDF.
- Two civilians were killed in other circumstances.

Regime forces: 90

ISIS: 4

Syrian fighters of Islamist factions, rebel factions and other movements and organisations: 114

Syrian members of Popular Committees, the National Defence Forces and regime-backed militias: 24

Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and affiliated military formations: 34

Iranian-backed Syrian militiamen: 1

Jihadists: 3

Others: 57

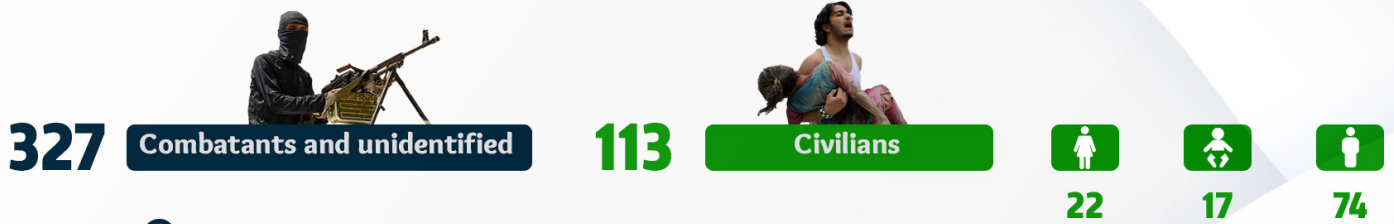
We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, call on the international community once again to work hard to stop the bloodshed in Syria. The people of Syria have been facing tyranny and oppression in their noble endeavour and cause to obtain justice, democracy, freedom and equality.

The Syrian Observatory renews its commitment to continue monitoring and documenting all the developments on the ground in Syria including, the massacres, violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against the Syrian people, as well as publishing all relevant statistics and casualties of such heinous acts, and hope to help all the ongoing efforts of bringing the perpetrators to special international courts, so that they do not escape justice for the crimes they committed against the people of Syria.

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# Infographic: Human fatalities across Syria in September 2023

SOHR documented the death of **440** people in September 2023



- 90 Regime forces
- 4 ISIS
- 114 Syrian fighters of rebel and Islamist factions and other movements and organisations
- 24 Syrian members of popular committees, NDF and regime-backed militias
- 34 Fighters of SDF and affiliated military formations
- 1 Iranian-backed Syrian militiamen
- 3 Jihadists
- 57 Others

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## September 2023 | SOHR documents nearly 240 arrests and kidnappings across Syria

### SOHR calls for immediate release of detainees and disclosing the fate of kidnapped people

While more voices call for revealing the fate of the detainees and kidnapped people across Syria, arbitrary arrests and kidnaps continue amid “timid efforts” by international bodies, like the United Nations and human rights organisations concerned with the Syrian issue.

As a human rights organisation, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) monitored and tracked kidnappings and arrests across Syria in the past month. In September 2023, SOHR documented the kidnapping of 26 people, including two children, and the arbitrary arrest of 214 others, including two children and four women.

#### Arrests

##### -Areas under the control of Ankara-backed factions

84 people, including a child and four women, were arrested on different charges, the most prominent of which were “communication with the Kurdish forces, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Autonomous Administration, and ISIS cells.” Here is a breakdown of these arrests:

- “Olive Branch” area: 53 people, including a child and four women.
- “Peace Spring” area: 30 people.
- “Euphrates Shield” area: One person.

## -Areas under the Syrian regime control

74 people were arrested on different charges, the most prominent of which are “evading the mandatory and reserve conscription in the regime army,” “communicating with foreign bodies,” and “cybercrimes.” They are distributed regionally as follows:

- Deir Ezzor: 18 persons.
- Daraa: Eight persons.
- Aleppo: Seven persons.
- Rif Dimashq: Seven persons.
- Homs: Six persons.
- Latakia: Five persons.
- Tartus: Four persons.
- Jableh: Four persons.
- Hama: Three persons.
- Damascus: Two persons.

Meanwhile, SOHR documented the death of one person under torture in the regime prisons and detention centres in September 2023.

## -Areas under the control of the Autonomous Administration

53 people, including a child, were arrested on different charges.

## -Areas under the control of Hayyaat Tahrir Al-Sham and opposition factions

Three persons.

## Kidnaps

### -Areas under control of Ankara-backed factions:

No kidnappings were documented in September 2023.

### -Areas under regime control:

23 persons, including a young lady; they are distributed as follows:

- Homs: 15 people.
- Al-Suwaiaa: Five persons.
- Daraa: Three persons.

### -Areas under the control of the Autonomous Administration:

Two children.

### -Areas under the control of Hayyaat Tahrir Al-Sham and opposition factions:

One person.

SOHR has verified the cases of arrests and kidnaps mentioned in this report and documented most of the names. SOHR also confidently estimates that the total number of kidnapped people is much higher. However, some victims' families preferred to keep the identities of their sons secret, fearing persecution and punishment by the bodies that had arrested and kidnapped them.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), warn against the repercussions of violating and non-complying with international accords signed by Syria, as well as the ongoing indifference by the warring powers in Syria to the issue of detainees and forcibly disappeared. We also appeal to the international community to seriously intensify its efforts to disclose the fate of the detainees and forcibly disappeared people, and identify and hold the perpetrators accountable

SOHR attaches the highest importance to this issue of detainees and always strives to highlight their and their families' plight and sufferings. SOHR also warns against using "terrorism" as an excuse to arrest politicians and human rights activists, using laws of counter-terrorism to justify arbitrary arrests.

We also call for the inspection of prisons in the entire Syrian geography, especially in regime-held areas, so that the real issue and conditions of detainees are unveiled. Furthermore, the fate of the missing and detainees who have been killed must be disclosed.

# Infographic: Arrests and kidnaps in September 2023

SOHR documents **240** kidnaps and arrests in September across Syria

**26**

Kidnaps



**214**

Arrests

**23**

People



**74**

People

**2**

Children



**53**

People  
1  
Child

**0**

No kidnaps documented



**84**

people  
4 Women 1 Child

**1**

Person



**3**

Persons

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## War ordnance casualties in September 2023 | 15 children among 30 civilians killed and injured in explosions of war ordnance across Syria

**SOHR renews its appeal to all relevant international bodies to urgently address the problem and remove old, unexploded ordnance from Syria**

War ordnance, such as old landmines and unexploded IEDs, bombs, shells, projectiles, grenades, etc. which are everywhere in Syria, continues to pose a threat to the safety and lives of innocent Syrians. These explosive remnants of war (ERW), which had been planted by military formations across the entire Syrian geography for over 11 years, have tragically killed and injured a large number of Syrian people.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked the issue of explosive remnants of war and documented all the casualties in explosions of old landmines and unexploded ordnance across Syria in September 2023; they are as follows:

- Deaths: Eight civilians, including a woman and three children.
- Wounded people: 22 civilians, including two women and 12 children.

The casualties are distributed regionally as follows:

- Areas controlled by Hayyaat Tahrir Al-Sham and opposition factions: Three injured children.
- Regime-controlled areas: Eight fatalities, including a woman and three children, and ten injured civilians, including four children.
- SDF-held areas: Five injured children.
- “Olive Branch” area: Four injured persons, including two women.

SOHR renews its call on all international organisations to work on removing unexploded war ordnance across Syria immediately and to address the problem appropriately, especially since all warring parties throughout Syria continue to plant IEDs and landmines. SOHR also calls upon international organisations to adopt a strategy to raise the residents' awareness about the threats of old ordnance which may have been planted in abandoned buildings as well.

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# Infographic: Deaths by explosion of old ordnance in September 2023

Explosions of old ordnance kill **8** civilians and injure **22** others in September 2023



Injured people

12



Fatalities

3



2



1

8



4



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## **“Putin-Erdogan” area in September 2023 | 87 persons killed in scores of acts of violence and HTS arrests spies working for International Coalition**

**SOHR renews its appeals to the international community to intervene immediately and force Russia and Turkey to keep civilians away from their narrow mutual interests**

The “de-escalation zone”, stretching from the north-eastern mountains of Latakia to the north-western suburbs of Aleppo city running through both Hama and Idlib, has been under an “alleged” and in-name-only ceasefire agreed upon after a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan on March 2020 ,5.

However, that region has experienced a noticeable escalation of military operations by Russian and regime forces and their loyal militias, including daily bombardment with tens of rockets and artillery shells and Russian airstrikes, which all have caused significant human losses and material damage. Meanwhile, Turkey, the “de-escalation” guarantor, seems satisfied with its “timid” bombardment of regime positions, which has not restrained this alarming military escalation which is mainly concentrated in the southern countryside of Idlib, as well as affecting east Idlib countryside, towns and villages of Sahl Al-Ghab in the north-western countryside of Hama, Latakia mountains and western Aleppo countryside.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked all developments and violations against Syrian people in the “de-escalation zone” in September 2023, including the military escalation by Russian and regime forces, incidents of security disorder, attacks, deteriorating security, instability and disastrous humanitarian situation. These key developments can be summarised in the following main points:

## Acts of violence leave casualties

In September 2023, SOHR documented the death of 87 people in acts of violence in the “de-escalation zone;” they are as follows:

### 13- civilians, including two women and two children:

- Six civilians, including a woman and two children, were killed by regime forces.
- Four civilians, including a woman, were killed in incidents of security disorder.
- Three civilians were killed by Turkish Jandarma.

### 11- jihadists and members of opposition factions:

- Six jihadists were killed by regime forces.
- Five members of “Ansar Al-Tawhid” were killed in Russian airstrikes.

63- regime soldiers were killed by rebels and jihadists.

Dramatic military escalation: Nearly 39 operations leave tens of fatalities

In September, SOHR activists documented 39 operations in the “de-escalation zone”, which left 75 fatalities; they are as follows:

- Six civilians, including a woman and two children, were killed by regime forces.
- 63 members of regime forces, including officers.
- Five HTS members.
- A member of the jihadist organisation of “Ansaw Al-Tawhid.”

In addition, over 11 combatants and 20 civilians, including six children and two women, sustained various injuries in aerial and ground operations in the “de-escalation zone” in the past month.

### Nearly 1,000 rockets and artillery shells hit different positions

SOHR sources reported ongoing bombardment by regime ground forces and their proxies in September, where 950 artillery shells and rockets hit military and residential positions in areas under the control of Hayyaat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) and Jihadist groups and factions. The attacks targeted positions in the rural areas of Aleppo, Idlib, Hama and Latakia.

Regime attacks are distributed regionally as follows:

- Aleppo: 400 shells and rockets hit Darat Izza city and the villages of Kafr Nouran, Kafr Amah, Taqad, Tadeel, Kafr Taal, Ibzimu and the surrounding areas of Al-Atareb.
- Idlib: 300 shells and rockets hit the villages and frontlines of Bayanin, Hursh Bayanin, Sfouhen, Al-Rouwayah, Al-Fatirah, Kansafra, Ihsim, Balyoun, Al-Mawzarah, Maarrat Alya, Deir Sonbol, Al-Barah, Maarat Al-Naasan, Fulayfel, Mantaf, Marblit, Kadourah, Saan, Sarmin, Afes and Al-Nayreb.
- Hama: 100 shells and rockets hit Al-Sarmaniya, Al-Mabaqer, Al-Mashyak, Al-Ankawi, Kharbah Al-Naqous, Tel Waset, Al-Mansourah, Al-Qarqour, Al-Ziyyarah and Al-Qahera.
- Latakia countryside: 150 shells and rockets hit Al-Tuffahiyah frontline, the hills of Kabanah, Deir Al-Akrad and other frontline in Jabal Al-Turkman.

### Eight jihadists killed and injured in 38 Russian airstrikes

Russian fighter jets carried out 38 airstrikes on the “de-escalation zone” in September, targeting positions in Jabal Al-Zwiyah and Sahl Al-Ghab, mostly were concentrated on supply routes to Al-Malajah village, as regime forces were attempting to regain control of the posts they lost in the village for the jihadist organisation of “Ansar Al-Tahrir.” Those airstrikes killed five members of “Ansar Al-Tahrir” and injured three others.

## Turkish Jandarma kill and injure six civilians seeking a safe haven

Syrian civilians are struggling with dreadful living conditions which push them to risk their safety and lives by sneaking into neighbouring countries through dangerous routes used for smuggling, seeking a safe haven.

SOHR activists documented the death of three civilians and the injury of three others in attacks and gunfire by Turkish Jandarma in September, as those civilians were attempting to sneak from Idlib countryside into Turkey, seeking a safe haven.

## HTS security services arrest 16 persons, including 13 combatants for “spying for International Coalition”

The General Security Service of Hayyat Tahrir Al-Sham launched a large-scale campaign in HTS-held areas, targeting HTS members and senior commanders on different charges, mainly “spying for foreign bodies,” where SOHR has documented the arrest of 16 civilians in September; they are as follows:

- Three persons were arrested for “belonging to the Islamic Party of Liberation.”
- 13 persons were arrested for “spying for and collaborating with the International Coalition,” including commanders, among them an Afghan commander, a senior commander known as “Abu Younis” and the chief prosecutor of Jisr Al-Shughour city in the western countryside of Idlib.

## Hectic movements: Turkish forces reinforce posts and provide training courses for Syrians

Also, in September, Turkish forces brought in 47 vehicles carrying military and logistical supplies for reinforcing their posts in Idlib and Aleppo countryside. Moreover, groups of Syrian militiamen of Turkish-backed factions underwent training courses provided by Turkish forces for training them on the use of anti-aircraft shoulder-mounted missiles.

## Here are the most prominent movements by Turkish forces in the “de-escalation zone” in September:

- September 9: Turkish forces brought in a military convoy to the areas they control in Idlib countryside, through Kafar Lousin crossing in the northern countryside of Idlib. The convoy comprised about 20 military vehicle carrying logistic materials and equipment, and headed towards frontlines in Al-Barah and Kansafrah in the southern countryside of Idlib, to reinforce their posts there.
- September 11: SOHR sources reported the entry of a new military convoy to «Putin-Erdogan» area through Kafar Lousin border crossing in the northern countryside of Idlib. The convoy comprised about 15 military vehicles carrying logistic and military equipment, and headed towards the frontline of Al-Mastoumah in the southern countryside of Idlib. In conjunction with the entry of the convoy, a violent explosion was heard, on Bab Al-Hawa highway near Batbo area in the northern countryside of Idlib, which turned out to be caused by the targeting of the Turkish convoy with anonymous RPG shells.
- September 16: SOHR activists monitored the entry of a military convoy of the Turkish forces, comprising 12 machineries and trucks carrying logistic and military equipment, through Kafr Lucien border crossing in northern Idlib countryside, where the convoy headed towards Turkish checkpoints in Sama'an Mountain in Aleppo countryside.
- September 18: Turkish forces brought in a military convoy of 15 military vehicles carrying logistical materials through Kafar Lucien border crossing in northern Idlib countryside to strengthen frontlines in Jabal Al-Zawiyah area in southern Idlib countryside
- September 28: Turkish forces carried out exercises for members of Turkish-backed factions in Idlib countryside within “Putin-Erdogan” area, where 150 members of the National Front of the Liberation were trained with three types of anti-air missile launchers that are carried on the shoulders, in the military base in Al-Mastoma Town near Idlib City “Al-Tala'ae' Camp.”

## Incidents of security disorder in HTS-held areas leave four fatalities

SOHR documented several incidents of security disorder in areas controlled by Hayyaat Tahrir Al-Sham and opposition factions in Idlib city and surrounding villages in the past month. These incidents left four fatalities, including an -18year-old girl.

As a human rights organisation, we, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), call upon all international powers concerned with Syria's affairs and the international community to intervene immediately and put an end to the bloodshed in Syria, as well as applying international humanitarian laws and keeping civilians away from military operations and conflicts.

We also demand that Russia and Turkey, the “de-escalation” guarantors, comply with the ceasefire agreement and stop all violations, including intensive bombardment and airstrikes, which only affect civilians who seek a safe haven in the “de-escalation zone”, fleeing from the repression of the Syrian regime and its security services.

# Infographic: Violations in the “de-escalation zone” in September 2023

## Key developments in “Putin-Erdogan” area in September 2023

**63**   
Regime members


**87**

persons killed in acts of violence

**11**   
Jihadists and members of HTS  
and opposition factions

  
**9**

  
**2**

  
**2**

**1000** Rockets and artillery shells hit 40 positions



Escalating Russian aerial operations with 40 airstrikes hitting the “de-escalation zone”



Turkish Jandarma kills and injures six civilians seeking safe haven



16 people arrested including 13 combatants including commanders for “dealing with the International Coalition”

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## “Olive Branch” area in September 2023 | 53 arbitrary arrests and over 25 other human rights violations by Turkish-backed factions

### SOHR calls on the international community to intervene immediately and protect civilians from systematic violations by Turkish-backed factions

Since Turkish forces and their proxy factions captured several areas in north-western Aleppo, namely Afrin canton, after a military operation known as “Olive Branch”, humanitarian crises have been emerging and worsening gradually, with violations, attacks and explosions occurring almost daily. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked prominent developments and gross violations in these areas in September 2023, which can be summarised in the following main points:

#### Acts of violence leave casualties

In September, SOHR documented the death of nine civilians in areas under the control of Turkish forces and factions operating under the banner of “Olive Branch” operations room in the north-western countryside of Aleppo. A breakdown of fatalities is as follows:

- A woman and a little girl were murdered.
- Three combatants were killed in an IED explosion.
- Four combatants were killed in clashes with “Tahrir Afrin” Forces (Afrin Liberation Forces).



## Ongoing heinous crimes and violations

As Turkish-backed factions continue their blatant violations on a daily basis against the residents who have chosen to stay in their areas over displacement and against people displaced to Afrin canton, SOHR has documented 53 arbitrary arrests of civilians, including a child and four women, by Turkish-backed factions and seven cases of kidnapping in September.

Furthermore, SOHR has documented over 25 other violations distributed as follows:

-Four incidents of seizure and selling of displaced people's houses which had been forcibly seized earlier by Turkish-backed factions. The houses were sold at low prices and in US dollars in particular, where those houses were sold for 700 USD up to 1,200 USD.

-Seven incidents of felling fruit-bearing trees by factions of Turkish-backed "National Army," where over 310 olive trees were cut down in several areas in villages and districts of Afrin.

-Eight incidents of imposition of levies by factions, military police and Turkish intelligence; they are as follows:

- Five incidents in which ransoms of 1,000 to 3,000 USD each were paid by families in return for the release of detainees.

- One incident in which the "National Army" imposed levies on the indigenous inhabitants in Al-Ashrafiyah neighbourhood in Afrin city of 100 to 300 USD each persons in return for allowing them to stay in their homes, amid threats to expel them in case of they refused to pay the levies.

- Imposition of a levy of 1,000 USD by members of the military police on a civilian, who has recently returned to Maabatli district from north Aleppo countryside where he had been displaced, in return for allowing him to live in the district.

- Imposition of levies of 50 USD each person by members of “Al-Amshat” faction on displaced civilians in camps in areas under the faction’s control in Sheikh Hadid district, who benefit from food supplies and sums of money of 150 USD provided to each family by international and Arab humanitarian organisations. The factions members informed the beneficiaries that they would take 50 USD from every family in return for allowing them to stay in those camps, threatening to expel everyone refusing to pay the levy by force.

Also, SOHR also documented one assault by members of the military police who beat some displaced people from Damascus city and opened fire on them following a verbal altercation over parking a car in the market of Raju district in Afrin countryside.

## Explosions

SOHR activists documented the death and injury of 13 civilians in explosions of old ordnance and IEDs in “Olive Branch” area in the past month.

It seems that violations in “Olive Branch” areas will not stop as long as Turkish forces and their proxies keep breaching all international laws and charters, while no party or international or regional player is exhibiting any willingness to put an end to these “grave” violations, despite SOHR’s repeated warnings about the dreadful humanitarian situation in the region.

# Infographic: Violations in “Olive Branch” area in September 2023

## “Olive Branch” area in September 2023



53

Arbitrary arrests



1

Explosion



1

Assault



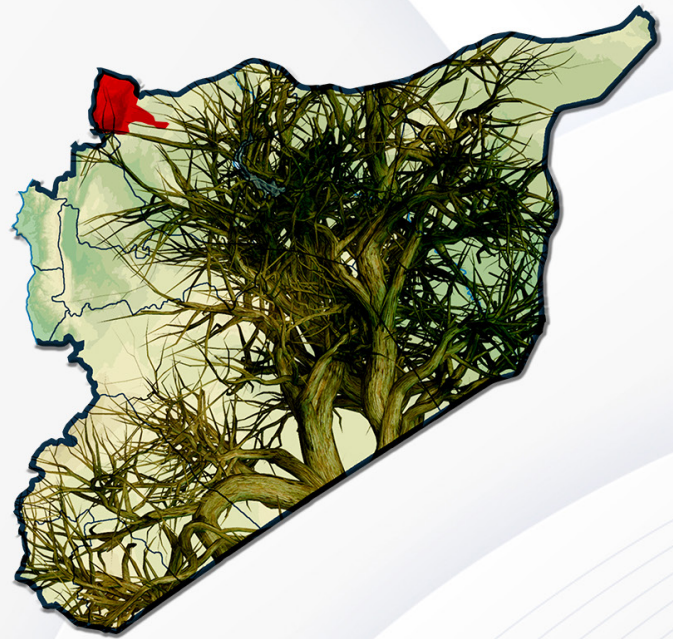
4

Incidents of selling and confiscating displaced people's houses



8

Incidents of imposition of levies on civilians



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## “Euphrates Shield” area and its surroundings in September 2023 | Nearly 100 casualties in acts of violence...five infightings...ongoing security chaos

SOHR renews its appeals to the international community to protect  
civilians in “Euphrates Shield” areas from chaos, insecurity, and  
violations of Turkish-backed factions

Since Turkish forces and their proxy factions captured several areas in Aleppo after a military operation known as “Euphrates Shield”, humanitarian crises have been emerging and worsening gradually, with violations, attacks and explosions occurring almost daily. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked September's prominent developments in these areas, which could be summarised in the following main points:

### Human casualties

In September 2023, SOHR activists documented the death of 72 people in areas under the control of Turkish forces and factions operating under the banner of “Euphrates Shield” operations room and their surroundings in the northern, eastern and north-eastern countryside of Aleppo. The fatalities' breakdown is as follows:

#### -Five civilians:

- One civilian killed by regime forces.
- One civilian was murdered.
- One civilian died under torture in a prison of Turkish-backed factions.
- One civilian was killed by Turkish-backed factions.

- One civilian was shot dead by unknown gunmen.

67- combatants:

- 33 killed in clashes with SDF.
- 31 killed in factional infightings.
- Two assassinated.
- One murdered.

SOHR also documented the injury of over 25 people in acts of violence in “Euphrates Shield” area and its surroundings in September 2023.

## Infightings

Also, in September 2023, SOHR activists documented five infightings in “Euphrates Shield” area and its surroundings, which left 31 combatants dead and nearly six other civilians and combatants injured.

## Ongoing violations

### Assaults

As Turkish-backed factions continue their violations against the residents of “Euphrates Shield” area and its surroundings, SOHR documented one assault, in September, precisely on September 23 when members of a patrol of the Military Police assaulted a civilian from Al-Bab City in eastern Aleppo countryside, while he was taking his mother to hospitals in Al-Bab City under the pretext that he is a wanted suspect, where her mother was also assaulted and insulted after trying to prevent members of the Military Police from arresting her son.

## Arrests

In September, “Euphrates Shield” area in its surroundings experienced only one case of arbitrary arrests, where members of a patrol of the military police arrested, on September 23, a young man from Al-Bab city in the eastern countryside of Aleppo for unknown reasons.

It seems that violations in “Euphrates Shield” area will not stop as long as Turkish forces and their proxies keep breaching all international laws and charters, while no party or international or regional player is exhibiting any willingness to put an end to these “grave” violations, despite SOHR repeated warnings about the dreadful humanitarian situation in the region.

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# Infographic: Violations in “Euphrates Shield” area in September 2023

## “Euphrates Shield” area and its surroundings in September 2023



67

Combatants



72

People killed in acts of violence



5

Civilians

## Ongoing human rights violations committed by Turkish-backed factions

5

Infightings



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## “Peace Spring” area in September 2023 | 66 people killed and injured in acts of violence and arrest of ISIS commander by International Coalition tops the events

### SOHR renews its call to the international community to protect civilians from systematic abuse and violations by Turkish-backed factions

Human rights violations have been escalating in areas under the control of Turkish forces and their proxy factions in Al-Hasakah and Al-Raqqah, known as “Peace Spring” areas, since they were captured in October 2019. These forces' aim is to accomplish specific economic and political objectives through exploiting the region's wealth, resources and people.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked all developments and violations committed in “Peace Spring” areas in September 2023.

In September, SOHR documented 35 fatalities in “Peace Spring” areas, and here are further details:

Four civilians:

- One civilian was killed by the Turkish Jandarma.
- Three civilians, including a woman and a child were killed by Turkish-backed factions.

31 combatants:

29 killed in attacks and clashes with SDF.

- One assassinated.
- One killed in a factional infighting.



Also, acts of violence in “Peace Spring” area in the past month left over 31 civilians and combatants injured.

Most of September’s fatalities in “Peace Spring” area were documented during the considerable military escalation between Turkish-backed factions on one hand, and SDF-backed formations and regime forces on the other.

In September, “Peace Spring” areas experienced one infightings which took place on September 29 when violent clashes with RPG, mortars and heavy machinegun erupted between members of the military police and members of “Al-Hamzat” faction from Al-Qar’an tribe in Ras Al-Ain city in northern Al-Hasakah countryside. The clashes left a member of the military police dead and three others seriously injured, as well as the burning of four vehicles, amid a state of panic and fear among civilians.

The clashes erupted after members of the military police had stormed a house of a member of “Al-Hamzat” faction on charge of “involving in smuggling operations,” but the member showed resistance and clashed with the military police, before the member’s wife and his son were killed and the situation evolved to armed clashes between the military police and tribesmen of Al-Qar’an tribe.

Separately, Tel Abyad city in northern Al-Raqqah countryside within “Peace Spring” area witnessed a state of high military alert, on September 10, by tribesmen of “Jeyss” tribe after the killing of a young man from the tribe by members of the 3rd Division of pro-Turkey faction the “National Army”. The victim’s relatives threatened to take revenge of the killer if the relevant authorities do not arrest the killer and hold him accountable.

While on September 19, unidentified gunmen opened fire on an Iraqi member of “Ahrar Al-Sharqiya” Faction in front of his house in Harat Harb in Ras Al-Ain in Al-Hasakah countryside within areas of Turkish-backed factions, killing him immediately. It is worth noting that he was a former member of ISIS before he joined the American-sanctioned Ahrar Al-Sharqiya Faction.

On the other hand, International Coalition Forces arrested two ISIS commanders on September 24 in an airdrop in Um Jeloud village near Ras Al-Ain city in “Peace Spring” area in northern Al-Hasakah. According to SOHR sources, one of the arrested commander is an Iraqi Emir (top commander) and the other is a Syrian commander.

While in early September, a delegation of employees of the UN and two technicians of electricity and water stations headed towards Alouk Station in eastern of Ras Al-Ain in “Peace Spring” area north western of Al-Hasakah, coinciding with the flight of two Russian helicopters to protect the delegation, where they went to monitor the operation of Alouk Station with no assaults by Ankara-backed factions.

Moreover, the Turkish-backed military police continued to detain 30 individuals in Ras Al-Ain within “Peace Spring” area in north-eastern Al-Hasakah, after having been arrested while attempting to sneak into Ras Al-Ain to get into Turkey with the help of smugglers from pro-Turkey factions.

The military police demanded the relatives of those individuals, after mediation by smugglers, to pay ransoms ranging from 3,000 to 5,000 USD each person in return for their release. One of the detainees, who was released after having paid the ransom, confirmed that there were 30 individuals from Al-Hasakah countryside and other Syrian regions were detained.

Overall, this bleak picture remains in place, with the widespread corruption and tyranny of the Turkish-backed factions without any deterrent preventing them from committing further humanitarian crimes against Syrian civilians in the “Peace Spring” areas.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, therefore, renews its appeal to the international community not to abandon its responsibility and obligations and find a lasting solution to the tragedy of the region’s civilians that are plagued with systematic abuse and violations committed by lawless factions, including thefts, murders, looting, arrests and kidnappings.

# Infographic: Violations in “Peace Spring” area in September 2023

## “Peace Spring” area in September 2023



31

Members of National Army factions



35

Combatants and civilians killed in acts of violence



4

Civilians



International Coalition forces carry out an airdrop operation and arrest 2 commanders of ISIS



Major military escalation between Ankara-backed factions and formations of SDF



Syrian Observatory For Human Rights

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Regime-controlled areas in September 2023 | 180 fatalities in acts of violence...nearly 40 murder crimes, infightings and assassinations...growing uprising by people of Jabal Al-Arab

SOHR renews its appeal to the international community to intensify its efforts to end the Syrian people's suffering

Regime-controlled areas experienced scores of dramatic developments in September 2023, including an alarming escalation of violence, worsening living conditions, tightening security grip and ongoing arbitrary arrests.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked all key developments in regime-controlled areas in the past month, which can be summarised in the following main points:

### Acts of violence leave many casualties

In September 2023, regime-controlled areas experienced an alarming escalation of acts of violence that left many casualties, where SOHR documented the death of 180 people across areas controlled by the Syrian regime and affiliated militias; the deaths are as follows:

### Civilian fatalities

58 civilians, including seven children and 12 women. Here are further details of the circumstances of these deaths:

- 29 civilians, including two children and 11 women, were murdered.
- 11 civilians, including a child, were killed in incidents of security disorder in Daraa.

- Eight civilians, including a woman and three children, were killed in explosions of old ordnance.
- Three civilians were killed by ISIS.
- A civilian died under torture in a regime prison.
- Two men were killed in indiscriminate gunfire.
- Two men were shot dead by unknown gunmen.
- A child was killed by regime forces.
- A man was killed by opposition factions.

## Non-civilian fatalities

### 107- combatants:

- 63 killed by opposition factions.
- 20 killed by ISIS.
- Ten killed in incidents of security disorder in Daraa province.
- Seven killed in infightings and clashes with gunmen.
- Three killed in internal infightings.
- Two killed in Israeli strikes.
- One assassinated.
- One killed in a landmine explosion.

-Five Iranian-backed militiamen:

- One non-Syrian militiaman was killed in Israeli airstrikes.
- Two Syrian militiamen were killed in an attack by an Israeli drone.
- One non-Syrian militiaman was killed in an internal infighting.
- One was assassinated.

-Three ISIS members:

- One killed in an incident of security disorder in Daraa province.
- Two killed in clashes with regime forces.

-Two former fighters, who did not join any military formation, after having struck a reconciliation deal with the Syrian regime, were killed in incidents of security disorder in Daraa.

-Three drug dealers were killed in separate assassinations.

-Two gunmen were killed in clashes with regime forces.

## Kidnappings and arbitrary arrests

As regime security and intelligence services continue their repression, SOHR activists documented, in September, the arrest of at least 74 civilians, as well as the kidnapping of 23 others.

A regional breakdown of arbitrary arrests is as follows:

- Deir Ezzor: 18 persons.
- Daraa: Eight persons.

- Aleppo: Seven persons.
- Rif Dimashq: Seven persons.
- Homs: Six persons.
- Latakia: Five persons.
- Tartus: Four persons.
- Jableh: Four persons.
- Hama: Three persons.
- Damascus: Two persons.

A regional breakdown of kidnaps is as follows:

- Homs: 15 people.
- Al-Suwaidaa: Five persons.
- Daraa: Three persons.

### Crime rate is on the rise

Since early 2023, regime-held areas have experienced an alarming escalation of crime rate, in light of the regime security services' failure to put an end to the state of disorder and rampant security chaos in all Syrian provinces.

The Syrian Observatory documented 23 murders in regime-controlled areas in September 2023, where domestic violence and armed robbery were behind some of these murders, while motivations behind the others remained unknown. These murder crimes left 29 fatalities: 11 women, 16 young and adult men and two children. The fatalities are distributed regionally as follows:

- Deir Ezzor: Six murder crimes left a child, five men and two women dead.
- Hama: Four murder crimes left three men and three women dead.
- Daraa: Four murder crime left two women and two men dead.
- Rif Dimashq: Four murder crimes left a child, two women and two men dead.
- Al-Suwaiaa: Two murder crimes left two men dead.
- Latakia: One murder crime left a men dead.
- Homs: One murder crime left a men dead.
- Aleppo: One murder crime left two women dead.

## Daraa “the cradle of the Syrian Revolution:” Security chaos noticeably escalates

Incidents of security disorder, mainly armed attacks, in Daraa province continued in September 2023, where SOHR documented 35 attacks in different areas throughout Daraa province. These attacks left 25 people dead; they are as follows:

- 11 civilians, including a child.
- A man accused of “involving in drug business.”
- Eight members of regime forces and security services and “collaborators” with security services.
- Two former fighter who did not join any military formations, after having struck a reconciliation deal with the Syrian regime.



- One ISIS member.
- Two ex-fighters with settled-status working for regime services.

## Six assassinations and attacks target combatants

In September, SOHR documented six assassinations and attacks which targeted members of regime forces and security services in Deir Ezzor, Rif Dimashq and Homs provinces, leaving many casualties.

## Ongoing infightings

Also, in September, regime-controlled areas experienced nine infightings among military groups affiliated to regime forces and militias in Deir Ezzor, Rif Dimashq, Homs, Al-Hasakah and Aleppo, which left several casualties.

## Dreadful living conditions push Syrians to immigrate

A large number of civilians head every day to the Immigration and Passports Directorate in Rikn Al-Din area in Rif Dimashq, to obtain passports, with the aim of immigrating outside Syria, as a result of the deteriorating living conditions within regime-held areas, as these areas are witnessing a stagnation in life movement due to the extreme high prices and the collapse of the value of the Syrian Lira against the US dollar, amid great neglect by the regime's government and its failure to improve living situation.

Many civilians are forced to sell their property and houses in order to cover the cost of travel to get out of the deteriorated Syrian swamp as a result of the large collapse in the economic conditions and the lack of hope for staying and improvement of these conditions.

Syrians in those areas suffer from a lack of jobs, offset by a decline in workers' wages and employees' salaries after the rapid and significant collapse in the value of the Syrian Lira against the US dollar, prompting many, especially the youth, to think about migrating to the Arab Gulf and European Union States in search of a better life.

According to SOHR sources, regime-held areas are witnessing a state of great public discontent, as a result of the indifference of the regime government and the lack of solutions to end the suffering of civilians. The past period witnessed the issuance of several decisions by the regime's government to raise workers' wages and employees' salaries by 100 percent, which was offset by other decisions to raise the price of fuel and bread and extremely high prices.

Furthermore, the security situation is also a reason of the reasons that push many civilians to think about leaving Syria, as the regime's security services manage to clamp down on civilians, in addition to arrests in order to obtain ransoms, in addition to the fear of a large proportion of the youth group of compulsory service in the regime's army and being taken to the frontlines of clashes.

### Ongoing uprising by people of Jabal Al-Arab

As residents from Jabal Al-Arab area continue their peaceful protests in Al-Suwaidaa, calling for toppling Bashar Al-Assad, applying political transition, enhancing the concept of the decentralization and implementing the International Resolution No. 2254, daily peaceful demonstrations are staged in Al-Suwaidaa city centre on a daily basis, where hundreds of residents participate in these protests. Several protests experienced the participation of thousands of residents. During those demonstrations, the protestors chant anti-regime slogans, such as "leave, Bashar." "Syria is better without Al-Baath Party." "Syria is free and Bashar must leave."

The protestors also left placards with anti-regime slogans written on them, some of which read “we can reconstruct our country together – Resolution 2254 – for the future of our children.” “Freedom is the will of the people.” “Peaceful uprising in Salkhad.” “Yes to the implementation of the Resolution No. 2254.” “The decentralization enhances the unity of Syrians.” “We want the implementation of the Resolution No. 2254 as soon as possible.” “Syria’s resources belong only to the Syrian people, and no one has the right to trade in them.” “Killing and displacing Syrian people is unforgivable crimes.” “No to sectarian strife among the constituents of the Syrian society.” “when people starve, then they eat the ruler.” “We will never forgive those who destroyed our country.”

Meanwhile, dozens of people from Al-Harak, Jassim and Al-Jyzah in Daraa countryside went out on mass protests supporting the popular uprising in Al-Suwaidaa province, expressing their solidarity with the demands of the protesters in Jabal Al-Arab to step down and overthrow the head of the Syrian regime.

The protesters hold banners with slogans written on them that read: “our demands are the freedom, releasing of the detainees, achieving social justice, returning the stolen properties to Syrian people,” “hold the criminals accountable.”

On September 11, the team of the bureau of labour and municipalities of “Al-Liwaa Al-Suri” opposition party started working in the neighbourhoods of Al-Suwaidaa city to protect residents from the outbreak of diseases. This coincides with piling garbage in streets, where the party attempts to cover the shortfall which is a by-product of corruption in the governmental institutes and contribute to constructing alternative institutions.

This came after “Al-Liwaa Al-Suri” party had set a plan, according to which the party’s members formed a service committee divided into four groups; each group comprises 100 employees entrusted with specific tasks, in order to contribute to establishing alternative institutions for serving the society and easing off burdens of the residents. Those employees have been distributed to the defence bureau, the bureau of the water institutions and other service bureaus.

The most prominent tasks of the recently-formed committee are manifested in securing services which are supposed to be provided by municipalities in all neighbourhoods of Al-Suwaidaa city, including evaluating the city's roads and neighbourhoods and removing garbage.

While on September 13, protesters from Al-Suwaidaa entered the building of Al-Baath Party branch, after employees' work time, in an attempt to close it again, amid chanting slogans calling for freedom, what pushed the guards of the building to intensively shoot the protesters to disperse them.

### Ongoing Israeli attacks

As Israel continues to violate Syria's sovereignty, SOHR documented four attacks in September, which left casualties and heavy material losses. Here are further details of these attacks:

- September 13: Three combatants: one Iranian-backed non-Syrian militiaman and two Syrians, were killed in Israeli airstrikes on weapons warehouses of the Lebanese Hezbollah near Al-Jamasah and Deir Hajar villages in Tartus countryside. Meanwhile, eight other combatants, including five officers of the air-defence forces, were injured, as the airstrikes also targeted a base of the regime's air-defence forces in Kartu village, which is located nearly ten kilometres away from the targeted first site. SOHR sources reported that trucks of the Lebanese Hezbollah arrived a day earlier in warehouses in a base of the air-defence forces near Al-Jamasah and Deir Hajar villages in Tartus countryside, where the Lebanese Hezbollah use those warehouses for storing weapons until transporting them to Lebanon.
- September 13: Israeli airstrikes targeted weapons warehouses of Iranian-backed militias containing advanced weapons in the area of the scientific research centre. The strikes also targeted an air defence battery in the 624th battalion in the same area in Hama countryside, where fire broke out in the battalion and within a forest surrounding the place. The attack left several combatants injured, and no fatalities were reported.

- September 21: Two members of Al-Jihad Al-Islamy Movement were killed in an attack by an Israeli drone on Baet Jen area in western Rif Dimashq near the border with the Syrian occupied Al-Golan.
- September 21: Israeli tanks targeted temporary monitoring positions of regime-backed gunmen that oversees the occupied Golan in Ain Al-Tina area in Al-Qonaitara countryside and destroyed two checkpoints.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has been all along warning against the repercussions of the crippling chronic crises and security chaos in regime-controlled areas and elsewhere in Syria, with only the Syrian regime to blame for the disastrous situation Syria is in right now. We, at the Syrian Observatory, call upon all international actors not to abandon their responsibility and obligations towards the people of Syria and urge them to find a lasting solution to the tragedy of millions of Syrians and bring Al-Assad, his affiliates and all those responsible for violations and those who aided and abetted the killing of Syrian people to justice.

# Infographic: Key developments in regime-controlled areas in September 2023

## Key developments in regime-controlled areas in September 2023

**180**

People killed in acts of violence

39

7

12

7

3

5

107

Gunmen

ISIS members

Iranian-backed  
militiamen

Combatants and collaborators  
with security services

38



murder crimes, assassinations, attacks and infightings



Ongoing uprising by people of Jabal Al-Arab



Dreadful living conditions push Syrians to immigrate

Syrian Observatory For Human Rights

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## Russian intervention in Syria 96 months on | 44 fatalities in nearly 30 airstrikes on “de-escalation zone” and ongoing distribution of aid supplies in different provinces

At a time when Russia's plans are proceeding with their 96th consecutive month of involvement in the Syrian crisis, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has monitored and tracked the recent developments during the [twelfth](#) month of the eighth year of the Russian intervention in Syria. Key developments can be summarized regionally as follows:

### North-west Syria

Russian fighter jets re-escalated their attacks on the “de-escalation zone” with nearly 38 airstrikes targeting the outskirts and surrounding areas of Al-Barah, Kansafrah, Al-Malajah, Balshoun, Ihsim, Al-Faterah and Al-Haloubah in Idlib countryside and Al-Ankawi in Hama countryside.

Those airstrikes left five members of “Ansar Al-Tawhid” jihadist group dead and three others injured.

Furthermore, Russian fighter jets carried out several airstrikes on areas controlled by Turkish-backed factions in Aleppo countryside.

Meanwhile, SOHR sources reported that a Russian convoy accompanied by a vehicle of SDF headed, on September 7, towards areas of the east of Euphrates, comprised of ten military armoured vehicles, carrying logistic materials and weapons, coming from Aleppo areas.

These convoys are the first of their kind, since the escalation of the Turkish forces and their proxies in SDF-held areas in the east of the Euphrates.

## North-east Syria

In the past month, Russian and Turkish forces conducted only one joint patrol in Al-Hasakah on September 21 when Russian and Turkish forces ran a joint military patrol in the northern countryside of Al-Hasakah, where the patrol set off from the crossing of Sherik village west of Al-Derbasiyah, with the participation of eight military vehicles for both sides, amid the flight of two Russian helicopters over the area.

Similarly, Russian forces ran a patrol alone on September 9 when Russian forces ran a military patrol comprised of five military armoured vehicles, on the International M4 road, in Minbij countryside, east of Aleppo, to monitor and follow up the events in the region.

As a part of exploiting the residents' dire living conditions and efforts to woo Syrian people, the Russian reconciliation centre distributed food and aid supplies to residents in Deir Ezzor, Daraa and Rif Dimashq on several occasions.

Between the 30th of September 2015 and the 30th of September 2023, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights documented the death of 21,174 persons. The breakdown of fatalities is as follows:

- 8,714 civilians: 2,115 children under the age of eighteen, 1,321 females over the age of eighteen, 5,278 men and young people
- 6,201 ISIS members
- 6,259 fighters of rebel and Islamic Factions, Hayyaat Tahrir al-Sham, the Islamic Turkestani Party, and fighters of Arab and foreign nationalities.



SOHR sources have reported that Russia used “Thermite-type explosives” in their airstrikes, a substance composed of aluminium powder and iron oxide which causes burns as it continues to ignite for about 180 seconds; some bombs used by Russian jets on the Syrian territory were loaded with this substance.

It has been discovered that they are “RBK500- ZAB 2,5 SM” cluster incendiary bombs each weighing about 500 kg (about 1100 pounds (ca. 499 kilograms)) and they were dropped by military aircraft. They carried anti-individuals and anti-vehicles small-sized bombs of the type (AO 2,5 RTM), loaded with 50 to 110 small-sized bombs stuffed with “Thermite”, which outpour out of it when they explode; the range of these anti-individuals and anti-vehicles bombs reaches 20 to 30 metres.

As the months pass, the Syrians suffer the scourge of the Russian intervention, which seems to resemble a kind of revenge and retaliation against Syrians for protesting against the regime that committed the worst violations against its own people. At a time when the map of alliances and power balances is changing, Russia has become the ultimate winner, succeeding in helping the Syrian regime regaining control over about two-thirds of the country after losing control of most of its territory. Moscow used the pretext of “the war on terror” to commit massacres against civilians, and sponsored and struck agreements that were soon after abandoned. Moscow and its war machine have spilled the blood of Syrians despite claiming to be a “political mediator” or “broker” that can deal with all parties to the conflict.

With all recent changes in the balance of powers, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights renews its appeals to the international community to put pressure on Russia to stop its aggression against the Syrians, and to find a political solution to end the Syrian crisis that completed its eleventh year.

# Infographic: Russian intervention in Syria in September 2023



Russian intervention in Syria **96** months on

 **38**

Airstrikes on **“Putin-Erdogan”** area



**5**

Jihadists killed



1 Joint patrol with the Turkish forces in areas in north eastern of Syria



Airstrikes on areas of Turkish-backed factions



Ongoing attempts to win over the people by handing over supplies



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The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, September 30.

## Iran's presence in Syria in September 2023 | Iranian-backed militias interfere in dramatic development in east Euphrates region and expand their influence in Homs desert and SOHR reports confuse IRGC

SOHR calls upon all international actors to intensify their efforts to expel Iran and its proxies from Syria and bring to justice all those who aided and abetted the killing and displacement of Syrian people

Iran and its proxy militias have unprecedented influence in most areas under the “symbolic” regime control, as neither attacks by Israel and the International Coalition, nor the “cold war” with Russia could hinder the alarming entrenchment and expansion of these forces across Syria. Strengthening their presence and promoting their ideology, the Iranians are still carrying on with their systematic plan to change the demography of different areas throughout Syria's geography.

In the following report, SOHR highlights the key developments in areas dominated by the Iranians in September 2023.

### Human casualties

SOHR activists documented the death of five Iranian-backed militiamen in ground and aerial attacks in Syria in September 2023; they are as follows:

- One non-Syrian militiaman was killed in Israeli airstrikes.
- Two Syrian militiamen were killed in an attack by an Israeli drone.
- One non-Syrian militiaman was killed in an internal infighting.
- One militiaman was assassinated.

## SOHR reports confuse Iranian-backed militias once again

On September 9, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) installed security cameras on the walls of the building of wheat and grain silos in Al-Mayadeen city and around the building as well, where rocket launchpads belonging to IRGC are deployed there.

This came after SOHR published a report with exclusive pictures proving that Iranian-backed militias exploit Syrians' public and private properties for their own benefit and put these residential areas at risk through deploying rocket launchpads and letting them exposed to expected attacks.

According to SOHR sources, Iranian-backed militias did not redeploy the rocket launchpads, as they had done after earlier exclusive reports by SOHR, where the militias were attempting to come to know how did SOHR camera monitored and took pictures of the recently-deployed rocket launchpads and disclose breaches to their buildings, amid growing discontent among Iranian-backed commanders and reports of summoning local militiamen for investigation.

While on September 10, Al-Mayadeen area, which is controlled by the Iranian-backed militias in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor, experienced a meeting held by leaders of IRGC. According to SOHR sources, the meeting was held in Al-Mazarea area on the outskirts of Al-Mayadeen under strict security guarding and measures, and it focused on the ongoing breaches against the IRGC and disclosing their movements and violations, especially by SOHR, which had published exclusive pictures of Iranian-made rocket launchpads which are deployed in the area of grain and wheat silos in Al-Mayadeen, few days earlier.

SOHR sources also reported that the leaders who attended the meeting instructed subordinated militiamen to intensify surveillance around the positions of the launchpads and weapons and ammunitions warehouses. The meeting coincided with a security campaign by IRGC, where eight of local militiamen were summoned for investigation regarding in the cause of the pictures published by SOHR.

SOHR vows to continue efforts to disclose all violations committed by Iranian-backed militias in Deir Ezzor and all Syrian territory until they leave Syria.

### Hectic movements in west Euphrates region

Areas controlled by the Iranian-backed militias in Deir Ezzor province, on the western bank of Euphrates, are recently witnessing escalating movements of those militias, where they conduct periodic and intensive exercises on an almost daily basis, supervised by IRGC and Lebanese Hezbollah. The Military exercises is concentrated on using missiles and drones and striking fake targets, in addition to exercises with live ammunition and heavy weapons, in Al-Mayadeen and Al-Bokamal areas, and other areas near the Syrian-Iraqi border, in operations that mimic the targeting of the bases of the international coalition on the other bank of the river.

While on September 17, SOHR sources reported that the Iranian “Revolutionary Guards” militias conducted military exercises in Al-Bokamal Desert near the borders between Syria and Iraq, where explosions were heard in Al-Hasian area in Al-Bokamal Desert in Deir Ezzor countryside, coinciding with the flight of an unidentified drone over the region. It is worth noting that the militias used artillery and heavy weaponry during the military exercises.

### Iranian-backed militias expand their influence in Homs desert

SOHR sources reported that IRGC seek to expand more and more within the T4 Military Airport between Palmyra and Al-Qaryatayn on the international road in the eastern desert of Homs. Despite the almost complete control of the IRGC on the airport, in which regime forces, Russian forces and Sukhoi and Meg aircraft are, the IRGC seek to expand into the airport with its large area and bring more weapons, ammunition and forces to it.

The Iranian “Shahed 86” drones are the most prominent weapons of IRGC within the T4 Airport, which they previously launched towards the international coalition base in Al-Tanf area, as they are launched from there, fly over the third and the second station, then over the Syrian-Iraqi border in the desert and from there to their targets, in addition to the presence of Iranian spy stations.

SOHR, through its sources, was able to monitor the T4 Military Airport with audio and video. Its lens also monitored hangars and rooms that are served as private operations room of the IRGC, which are also in the airport.

On September 11, the Lebanese Hezbollah militia and IRGC conducted military exercises within Palmyra Military Airport in the eastern desert of Homs, where fighters of Iranian and Lebanese nationalities are being trained to use drones by specialists from leaders of Hezbollah and Syrian guards.

### Iranian-backed militias exploit dramatic development in east Euphrates region to stir up sectarian strife

The Syrian Observatory obtained new details about Iran's efforts to lure tribesmen in Deir Ezzor to join Iranian-backed militias in areas under their control in west Euphrates region and areas on Euphrates river's bank opposite SDF-controlled areas.

According to reliable SOHR sources, Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) entrusted a former regime major general to recruit tribesmen to the ranks of Iranian-backed militias. The ex-major general is called “Ahmed Al-Hassan” and nicknamed as “Abu Mohanad” from Al-Mayadeen city in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor, and he had been the head the electronic warfare and monitoring departments. The ex-major general is also influent in French and have strong ties with many tribal elders and dignitaries in Deir Ezzor.

Accordingly, IRGC entrusted this general to form a military formation comprising gunmen of the region's tribes to fight US forces and destabilise east Euphrates region, as well as confiscating tribesmen to join the ranks of IRGC-affiliated formations in west Euphrates region.

“Al-Hassan,” who is a prominent pro-Iran figure in western Deir Ezzor, has played a major role in stirring up strife in east Euphrates region for the benefit of the Iranians.

In the first two weeks of September, “Hashim Masoud Al-Sotam”, the leader of the Iranian-backed “Osoud Al-Okaidat” militia, reinforced the security in the vicinity of his house via installing survey cameras to monitor movements in the vicinity of his house in fear of being assassinated.

The International Coalition accuses “Al-Sotam” of “targeting their soldiers” after he showed up in a video tape.

It is worth noting that “Hashim Masoud Al-Sotam” hails from Zaiban Town and lives in Al-Mayadin, and he has wide influence in areas of western of Euphrates.

“Hashim Masoud Al-Sotam” had recorded a video in the eastern bank of Euphrates calling the Arabic tribes in the area to participate in the fight against SDF following the clashes between SDF and local gunmen.

Moreover, several meetings were held by officers and commanders of regime forces and commanders of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps to discuss the reasons behind the failure of the attack which was led by “Al-Sheikh Nawaf Ragheb Al-Bashir” on SDF in late August and early September in Deir Ezzor countryside, amid growing tension in the region.

According to the sources, quantities of weapons have entered eastern and western Deir Ezzor countryside and have been sold in the region. This implies an ammunition supply for local gunmen in case there are new campaigns and clashes in the next days.

The meetings took place in the headquarters of “Liwa Al-Baqer” in Al-Villat neighbourhood in Deir Ezzor city, the military intelligence branch and the security zone in Al-Mayadeen city in eastern Deir Ezzor countryside.

## IRGC send Afghan troops from Iranian “autonomous colony” in Deir Ezzor to “Putin-Erdogan” area

Militias of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards instructed Afghani members to evacuate headquarters in Al-Bokamal and Al-Mayadin, and to head towards north western of Syria to reinforce positions of the regime forces opposite to areas of HTS.

Hundreds of fighters left Al-Mayadin and Al-Salihiya areas during patches towards Sahl Al-Ghab in north western Hama countryside and northern Lattakia countryside, and forces stationed in Jurin in Hama countryside, Salmy district and Al-Zuwaikat in Lattakia countryside, and Iranian headquarters in Nobl and Al-Zahraa in western Aleppo countryside.

SOHR obtained exclusive pictures and videos from Al-Salihiya area showing military headquarters of Afghani fighters empty with no signs of armed members.

### Ongoing Israeli attacks

As Israel continues to violate Syria's sovereignty, SOHR documented four attacks in September, which left casualties and heavy material losses. Here are further details of these attacks:

- September 13: Three combatants: one Iranian-backed non-Syrian militiaman and two Syrians, were killed in Israeli airstrikes on weapons warehouses of the Lebanese Hezbollah near Al-Jamasah and Deir Hajar villages in Tartus countryside. Meanwhile, eight other combatants, including five officers of the air-defence forces, were injured, as the airstrikes also targeted a base of the regime's air-defence forces in Kartu village, which is located nearly ten kilometres away from the targeted first site. SOHR sources reported that trucks of the Lebanese Hezbollah arrived a day earlier in warehouses in a base of the air-defence forces near Al-Jamasah and Deir Hajar villages in Tartus countryside, where the Lebanese Hezbollah use those warehouses for storing weapons until transporting them to Lebanon.



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- September 21: Two members of Al-Jihad Al-Islamy Movement were killed in an attack by an Israeli drone on Baet Jen area in western Rif Dimashq near the border with the Syrian occupied Al-Golan.
- September 21: Israeli tanks targeted temporary monitoring positions of regime-backed gunmen that oversees the occupied Golan in Ain Al-Tina area in Al-Qonaitara countryside and destroyed two checkpoints.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) is used to hearing the Syrian regime's empty mantra that it always reserves the right to respond to Israeli attacks. However, regime forces do not hesitate when it comes to shelling opposition positions or bombarding residential and civilian areas inside Syria. The Iranians also dare not launch a large-scale military operation against Israel, as they know full well that they will be facing the might of Israel's military, so the Iranians seem satisfied with letting its proxies do its bidding by firing only a few rockets from time to time on the occupied Syrian Golan, using the Iranian and Hezbollah-backed movement "Syrian Resistance to Liberate Golan".

At a time when the Syrian regime "intercepts and downs" Israeli missiles only with a Russian green light, Israel can hit Iranian targets -with the purpose of undermining the Iranian military presence in Syria- and only with Russia's full consent.

On the other hand, Washington justifies Israel's stance that "Tel Aviv practices its legal rights to defend its security and interests against the Iranian direct threat", not to mention the US desire to get Syria free of Iranian forces and militias.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), call for keeping the Syrian civilians out of the regional conflicts as the targeted areas and facilities are owned by Syrian people alone, not by Iran or its proxy militias.

SOHR stresses the importance of expelling the Iranian forces and militias from Syria without risking the safety and lives of civilians or damaging Syria's public properties and facilities.

S O H R

# Infographic: Iran's presence in Syria in September 2023

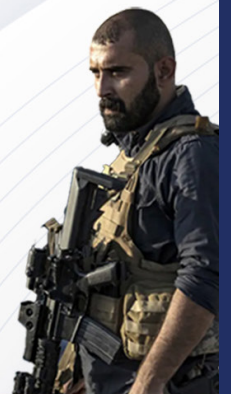
## Iran's presence in Syria in September 2023



From the Iranian protectorate to "Putin-Erdogan" area SOHR confuses the Iranian militias once again



Militias extend towards Homs countryside



Iranian militias take advantage of the events in eastern of Euphrates



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## SDF-held areas in September 2023 | Nearly 200 people killed and wounded in acts of violence...SDF regain control after bloody clashes with tribal gunmen...public protests grow over living crises

SOHR calls for protecting civilians, guaranteeing their rights, and putting an end to violations by “Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah”

Areas under the control of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), (SDF-held areas) experienced in September 2023 scores of incidents of security disorder and violations against human rights. In this context, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has monitored and tracked all key developments in SDF-held areas in the past month.

### Deaths in acts of violence

SOHR documented the death of 109 people in September 2023 in light of the ongoing acts of violence in SDF-held areas. Here are further details of those deaths:

23- civilians, including a woman and two children; they are as follows:

- Seven civilians were murdered.
- Six civilians, including a woman, were killed in clashes between SDF and tribal gunmen.
- A civilian was killed in regime bombardment.
- Two children were killed by SDF.
- Two men were killed in factional and family infightings.

- Two men were killed by ISIS.
- Three civilians; a woman and her two children, were killed in Turkish ground bombardment.
- A man was killed in an airstrike by a Turkish drone.
- A man was killed in Turkish bombardment.

#### 34- combatants:

- 18 killed in clashes with tribal gunmen.
- Seven killed in airstrikes by Turkish drones.
- Four killed in armed attacks.
- Two killed in attacks by ISIS members.
- Two killed by opposition factions.
- A commander was killed in an explosion.

#### 25- tribal gunmen were killed in clashes with SDF.

-Two regime soldiers were killed by opposition factions.

In addition, acts of violence in SDF-controlled areas in September left over 87 civilians and combatants injured.

#### Nearly 120 fatalities in bloody clashes between SDF and tribal gunmen

Clashes, which erupted between SDF and tribal gunmen in late August, continued for over ten days in September, where the local gunmen took control of different areas, before SDF regained control of the entire region on September 12.

This round of clashes, which lasted for over 15 days, left 91 fatalities:

- Nine civilians, including five children and two women.
- 57 local gunmen.
- 25 members of SDF, SDF-backed formations and security services, including 12 Arab fighters from Idlib, Al-Hasakah and Deir Ezzor.

In addition, over 104 people were injured in the same period, from August 27 to September 12; they are as follows: 58 local gunmen, 33 SDF members and 13 civilians.

Moreover, SDF managed to expel hundreds of gunmen who had sneaked from areas dominated by Iranian-backed militias on the bank of Euphrates river to SDF-controlled areas, where clashes were ongoing. Those gunmen were supported by tribal elders and dignitaries, and they were sent to the conflict zone under agendas of Iranian-backed militias which dominate east Euphrates region.

Although the local gunmen achieved no progress during the first round, Iranian-backed militias and their affiliates continued their efforts to stir up and fuel the sectarian strife, before groups of tribesmen crossed Euphrates river to SDF-controlled areas and unleashed a new attack. However, those groups holed up in the attacked positions for only a few hours, where SDF managed to regain control of all of those positions.

The second round of clashes left 27 fatalities:

- 22 local gunmen, the bodies of nine of them are in the custody of SDF.
- Four SDF members.
- One woman.

The clashes also left 42 persons injured: four civilians, who were injured in artillery fire by regime forces, 26 local gunmen and 12 SDF members.

SOHR had obtained video footages showing gunmen crossing from areas controlled by Iranian-backed militias towards east Euphrates region to join the infighting against SDF.

### Ongoing military escalation by Turkish forces

Turkish military operations, mainly ground bombardment and drone attacks, were documented in areas under the control of the Autonomous Administration on several occasions in September. SOHR activists documented the death of a civilian and injury of other civilians in Turkish ground bombardment in the past month, while Turkish drone attacks left eight fatalities: a civilian and seven members of SDF-backed military formations.

### Suspending ISIS attacks

In September, ISIS noticeably suspended its operations in areas under the control of the Autonomous Administration, where it carried out relatively fewer armed attacks and assassinations through gunfire, attacks with sharp tools and planting IEDs and landmines.

The Syrian Observatory documented five operations, including armed attacks and explosions, carried out by ISIS cells in SDF-held areas in September 2023. According to SOHR statistics, these attacks left four fatalities: two civilians and two combatants of military formations operating in areas controlled by the Autonomous Administration.

Those operations are distributed regionally as follows:

- Deir Ezzor: Four operations left two civilians dead.
- Al-Raqqah: One operations left two combatants dead.

Meanwhile, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), backed by the International Coalition, continued their large-scale security campaigns to curb the escalating activity by the organisation and its affiliated cells in SDF-held areas. According to SOHR activists, Seven anti-ISIS campaigns were carried out in September 2023, including five joint campaigns with International Coalition Forces. The seven operations led to the arrest of 11 members of ISIS cells.

### Escalating security chaos: Scores of infightings and murder crimes

SOHR activists have reported noticeable escalation of tribal and family infightings in SDF-controlled areas in September 2023 in light of the growing security chaos and proliferation of arms and military, amid security powers' inability to control the security situation. In the past month, SOHR documented two infightings which left two persons dead; they are distributed regionally as follows:

- Al-Hasakah: One infighting left one person dead.
- Al-Raqqah: One infighting left one person dead.

Moreover, SOHR documented six murder crimes in areas controlled by the Autonomous Administration in the past month over domestic violence, thefts and other unknown motives. These murders left seven fatalities; they are distributed regionally as follows:

- Al-Hasakah: One person.



- Deir Ezzor: Five persons.
- Aleppo: A man in Manbij.

### More families leave Al-Hawl camp

On September 94 ,3 families of ISIS left Al-Hawl Camp towards Al-Raqqa City where they hail from, in a gesture by Syrian Democratic Council and the Autonomous Administration and in mediation by dignitaries of the tribes in the region in an attempt by the Autonomous Administration to empty the camp.

While on September 13, a batch of nearly 150 Iraqi families of nearly 600 persons was evacuated from Al-Hawl camp in the far eastern region of Al-Hasakah countryside. The Iraqi families were transported in buses to Iraq under efforts by the Iraqi authorities and in coordination with the Autonomous Administration.

### Deteriorating living crises met with public protests

With the beginning of the new school year 2024/2023, families in all areas controlled by the Autonomous Administration have faced many challenges to secure basic school supplies for their children because of the skyrocketing prices. It is estimated that the prices of school supplies and uniforms have been increased by %100, compared to the prices of the last school year; this, in turn, have made families to shoulder extra burdens.

On the other hand, the Autonomous Administration in North and East Syria has recently issued a decision raising the price of the subsidised bread in areas under its control. According to the decision, the bread pack has increased from 500 SYP to 1,000 SYP.

This coincides with the ongoing freefall of the Syrian currency, where the Syrian pound against the US dollar recorded 14,500 SYP, at a time when the minimum per capital income in areas controlled by the Autonomous Administration reaches 80 USD, equivalent to one million Syrian pounds.

The rise in prices of diesel in areas in north eastern of Syria sparked anger and discontent among people, where the prices rose to %425 – %250 of original prices, without an official decree by the “Fuel Department” of the “Autonomous Administration.”

According to reliable SOHR sources, the rise in prices was not followed by an official decree to avoid being blamed by the people, who are already suffering from shortage of diesel amid the increase in value of the USD.

On the same context, users on social media circulated [#hashtags](#) demanding the Autonomous Administration to cancel the decree, and wrote [#No to the rise in prices of fuels](#) [#No to the suffocation of the Syrian people](#), condemning the decree that they described as not studied for.

It is worth noting that the price of one litre of subsidized diesel has risen from 545 to 2,300 Syrian Liras, where each car owner has the right for 50 litres every ten days, while the price of one litre of non-subsidized diesel has risen from 1,700 to 4,600 Syrian Liras.

As soon as the decision had come into effect, public anger and discontent prevailed in the region, where residents were concerned about a new increase in the prices of food products, goods, electrically-generated amperes, bread and fees of transportation.

On September 17, the general directorate of oil and fuels of the Autonomous Administration has issued a decision raising fuel prices provided to industrial institutions, private hospitals, touring cars, private companies and the military and civil institutions of the Autonomous Administration.

According to the new decision, the prices of diesel provided to service facilities remains unchanged.

Here is a list of the latest fuel prices in areas controlled by the Autonomous Administration:

-The prices which remained unchanged:

- Diesel provided to service facilities (bread bakeries, electrically-generated amperes, mills): 125 SYP per litre.
- Diesel provided to public means of transportation, vehicles of bread dealers and rented vehicles belonging to the Autonomous Administration's institutions: 525 SYP per litre.
- Diesel used for heating: 325 SYP per litre.
- Diesel used for cultivation: 525 SYP per litre.
- Subsidised petrol (high quality): 425 SYP per litre.
- Duty-free petrol: 1,700 SYP per litre.
- Kerosene: 425 SYP per litre.

-Prices which have increased according to the latest decision:

- Diesel provided to all means of transportation except public means of transportation, vehicles of bread dealers and rented vehicles belonging to the Autonomous Administration's institutions: from 525 SYP to 2,050 SYP per litre.
- Diesel provided to industrial facilities: from 525 SYP to 2,050 SYP per litre.
- Duty-free diesel: from 1,700 SYP to 4,100 SYP per litre.
- Diesel provided to the autonomous and civil directorates: from 525 SYP to 2,050 SYP per litre.
- Diesel provided to military institutions: from 525 SYP to 2,050 SYP per litre.

A day later, September 18, tens of civilians staged a popular demonstration in Ain Al-Arab city (Kobani) in the eastern countryside of Aleppo, protesting the Autonomous Administration's decision to raise fuel prices within areas of its control in northeastern of Syria. The demonstration coincided with a general strike and the closure of shops in both Ain Al-Arab (Kobani) and Minbij cities in the eastern countryside of Aleppo and Al-Malekiyah town in Al-Qamishly countryside north of Al-Hasakah, as a result of the issuance of the decision that comes in parallel with the deterioration of the living situations and the large collapse of the value of the Syrian Lira, which negatively affects the lives of civilians and threatens to increase the prices of basic materials. It will also affect the movement of transportation, industry, and the work of the civil institutions.

Also, dozens of residents from Al-Qamishly city gathered today in the centre of the city, under security protection by the Internal Security Forces, with the participation of writers, activists, and journalists, to demand the Autonomous Administration to cancel the decision of raising fuel prices. The protesters lifted placards with slogans that read: “We demand the cancellation of the decision of raising diesel price.”

While on September 25, Al-Raqqah City witnessed a strike by several owners of money exchange stores in front of the building of Public Finance southern of the centre of the city.

According to reliable SOHR sources in Al-Raqqah, the owners condemned the resolution issued by the Finance Department that states that owners of money exchange stores must deposit a minimum of 150,000 USDs to obtain licenses, where the owners see this as a decision that increase the suffering of people as markets in Al-Raqqah are considered as “black market” that does not follow the official prices.

## One kidnapping case and ongoing recruitment of children by “Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah”

SOHR activists have documented one case of kidnapping of two persons in September in SDF-controlled areas, where unknown individuals on a motorcycle kidnapped a little boy on September 15 in Al-Mufti neighbourhood in Al-Hasakah city.

While on September 11, members of Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriya operating in areas of the Autonomous Administration recruited the 18 years-old girl Inan Uthman from Al-Qamishly City, despite all appeals and calls to stop recruiting civilians and children. The young girl fled her parents' house and joined Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriya after she attended an entertainment camp.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), call upon the authorities in SDF-held areas to fulfil people's demands that call for the improvement of social and living conditions and not punish them for demanding their rights. We also call on the International Coalition and SDF to intensify their security campaigns against active and sleeping ISIS cells in various areas in east Euphrates to prevent the revival of ISIS which poses a threat to local, regional and international security.

SOHR calls upon the Autonomous Administration in north and east Syria, Syria Democratic Forces, and all relevant authorities to put an end to the ongoing violations by “Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah” (the Revolutionary Youth) in the east Euphrates region.

# Infographic: Key development in SDF-controlled areas in September 2023

## Fatalities in areas held by "Autonomous Administration" in September 2023

# 109

people were killed in acts of violence



20



2



1



2

Regime soldiers



50

tribesmen



34

combatants of military formations

5



Turkish aerial attacks as ISIS cells continue executing operations

8



murders and infightings



SDF regains control over the situation following clashes with armed tribesmen

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## 108th month of Coalition operations in Syria | Joint security campaigns with SDF lead to arresting six ISIS commanders and members...175 trucks arrive in Coalition bases...heavy military drills continue

Completing the 108th consecutive month of military operations against the “Islamic State” in Syria, the International Coalition continues sending military reinforcement to SDF-held areas, carrying out raids, arrests and various security campaigns in several areas controlled by SDF. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, in turn, tracked and monitored all operations and movement of the International Coalition during the past month.

In the 108th month of International Coalition operations in Syria, 175 trucks and vehicles affiliated to the Coalition, carrying military and logistical supplies, crossed into Syria from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in five batches on the 2nd, 5th, 9th, 13th and 20th of September. The trucks headed to the Coalition’s military bases in Al-Hasakah and Deir Ezzor in north-east Syria region. Here are further details:

- September 2: International Coalition Forces brought in a military convoy to SDF-controlled areas of in north eastern of Syria through Al-Walid crossing on the border with Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where the convoy comprises 20 trucks carrying logistical and military supplies, cement blocks and sealed boxes. The convoy headed towards the Coalition bases in Al-Shadadi City in Al-Hasakah countryside.
- September 5: International Coalition Forces brought in military reinforcement to areas in north eastern Syria from Kurdistan Region of Iraq, via Al-Waleed border crossing.
- September 9: International Coalition Forces brought in a large military convoy, comprising 60 US trucks carrying oil tanks, closed boxes and logistical and military equipment to areas, to Al-Hasakah province in north-east Syria from Kurdistan Region of Iraq, via Al-Waleed border crossing.

- September 13: International Coalition Forces brought in new military reinforcement to Al-Hasakah province in north-eastern Syria. The convoy, which comprised 35 fuel trucks and trucks carrying closed boxes, weapons, military equipment and logistical supplies, crossed into Syria from Kurdistan Region of Iraq and headed to the Coalition's bases in Al-Hasakah countryside.
- September 20: International Coalition Forces brought in a new convoy of 30 trucks carrying military equipment and logistical supplies to their bases in Deir Ezzor and Al-Hasakah.

With the growing tension between International Coalition an Iranian-backed militias and expected military confrontation, SOHR activists reported ongoing preparations by the two sides. In this context, SOHR activists reported that the International Coalition conducted several rounds of military drills. Further details can be summarised as follows:

- September 9: International Coalition Forces conducted military exercises with live ammunition on the vicinity of Al-Tanaf base within the 55th kilometre de-confliction zone near Syria, Jordan and Iraq border, simulating drone attacks and shooting down drone, in the case that the base came under possible attacks by Iranian-backed militias.
- September 11: International Coalition Forces conducted military exercises in Al-Tanef base in within the 55th kilometre de-confliction zone, at the border area between Syria, Jordan and Iraq to raise combat readiness and capabilities of their troops to counter any expected attacks. The exercises included sounding sirens and deployment of forces within shelters. They also continued their exercises to counter any attacks by Iranian militias drones that might target the base.
- September 14: SOHR sources reported that International Coalition Forces conducted military exercises in "Al-Omar" oil field and "Koniko" gas field in Deir Ezzor countryside, during which artillery and heavy weaponry were used to strike fake targets.



- September 15: International Coalition Forces conducted military drills in Hajeen desert, with the participation of the SDF-backed “Hajeen Military Council Forces.” The military drills included the use of artillery pieces, where explosions were heard, amid flights by fighter jets over the region.
- September 18: Violent explosions were heard in southern Al-Hasakah countryside, which were caused by military exercises with live ammunition by the International Coalition and SDF in Al-Shadadi Base in Al-Hasakah countryside.

In the past month, SOHR activists also documented the participation of the International Coalition in four joint security operations with SDF, namely raids and airdrops, arresting six ISIS members and commanders.

Here are further details:

- September 1: Anti-Terrorism units of the SDF and Anti-Terrorism service of Kurdistan Region of Iraq, with the support of the flight of the International Coalition, a member of "ISIS" cells, arrested, during a security operation, in "Al-Dashishah" town in "Al-Shadadi", south of Al-Hasakah. According to a security source, the person who was arrested was active in smuggling and supplying weapons to the "ISIS" members, and during the operation, a number of weapons and military equipment in his possession were confiscated.
- September 3: Security units of SDF arrested the official of the financial affairs of ISIS in a security operation in Al-Basera City in eastern Deir Ezzor countryside.
- September 7: SDF and Anti-Terrorism units, supported by the International Coalition in Kurdistan-Iraq region, launched a security operation yesterday and arrested the official of the Tribal Office and the Emir of ISIS' Islamic Bank after sieging his hideout in Al-Raqqa City, where his name is “Abd Al-Ghafour Tabr Al-Ziyab” and also known as “Abo Amir”, who supplied ISIS with weapons and equipment to launch operations in SDF areas, while weapons and military equipment that were in his possession were confiscated.

•September 22: helicopters of the International Coalition hovered in the airspace of Deir Ezzor countryside, along with firing flares over Al-Zarr village in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor. Meanwhile, a convoy of Syrian Democratic Forces arrived in the village, where members of the convoy asked residents, via loudspeakers, not to leave their houses. This coincided with launching a security campaign by SDF in Al-Zarr village, during which members of ISIS cells were arrested.

Also, in the past month, International Coalition Forces conducted three inspection tours. Further details are summarised as follows:

•August 27: The International Coalition conducted a military patrol comprising several armoured vehicles, where the patrol roamed towns of Theban, Al-Shahil and Al-Hawayj within SDF-held area in eastern Deir Ezzor countryside. This came in light of routine patrols conducted by International Coalition Forces to inspect the area.

•August 29: International Coalition Forces conducted a patrol comprising three armoured vehicles and a military vehicle of SDF, where the patrol set off from Al-Shadady Base in Al-Hasakah countryside and roamed Al-Khabour, Al-Hajana, Al-Harijiya and Al-Kassar Villages in north eastern Deir Ezzor countryside to check the situation and conditions in these villages that witnessed armed clashes between Deir Ezzor Military Council and SDF, after SDF arrested the head of council “Ahmed Al-Khabil”, also known as “Abo Khola.”

•September 13: International Coalition Forces conducted a military patrol of five military vehicles and a “pick up” truck. The patrol set off from Al-Omar oil field base and headed towards Al-Sha'afah desert and Al-Baghoz town in eastern Deir Ezzor countryside near the Syria-Iraq border.

Separately, SOHR sources reported that M16 rifles and MK14 sniper rifles were stolen from the weapons and ammunitions warehouses of the “Free Syria Army” in Al-Tanaf area. Meanwhile, the International Coalition started investigation and referred combatants of the factions, including the official responsible for armament in the “Free Syria Army,” for investigation.

According to SOHR sources, the armament official asked the International Coalition to summon commanders close to the leader of the “Free Syria Army” to interrogate them, explaining that individuals close to Farid Al-Qasem entered weapons warehouses and took weapons with the consent of the formation's leader without monitoring or prosecution.

## September 2023: Another month passes and no investigation into alleged Coalition massacres

Despite SOHR repeated and “unheeded” appeals, International Coalition and SDF have not announced the results of interrogations with ISIS detainees and what happened to the thousands of abductees. The Syrian Observatory had previously called upon the international community to investigate reports regarding the killing of 200 ISIS operatives and their families, women, and children, in a massacre committed by the Coalition's jets by bombing Al-Baghouz camp on March 2019 ,21.

According to SOHR sources, 200 bodies were buried at dawn on that particular day, without information on whether the International Coalition was aware of the presence of children and women from ISIS families inside the camp or not.

However, all these appeals remain unanswered. Therefore, SOHR renews its calls and appeals to all relevant parties to disclose and announce the whole facts and hold accountable those responsible for the massacres and violations over the past five years, during which the Coalition was actively involved in the Syrian crisis.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, while providing adequate monitoring of Coalition operations in Syria, stresses once more that it would have been possible to avoid the heavy losses of Syrian civilian lives if the International Coalition had not ignored SOHR's calls to spare and protect civilians from its military operations, where the presence of Islamic State militants or other jihadist groups in a civilian area does not in any way justify the blank and discriminate bombardment of the area and the loss of civilian lives.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also stresses that the negative impact of Turkish military intervention on civilians could have been avoided, if US Presidents had applied enough pressure on their Turkish counterparts to stop a new humanitarian crisis, displacing thousands and killing and injuring hundreds.

On the other hand, we at SOHR would like to remind the world that the oil and gas resources, controlled by the International Coalition, belong only to the Syrian people. Therefore, all the concerned parties are obliged under international laws and norms to preserve these resources and ensure that they will not be stolen or seized in any way; these resources do not belong to the "regime", "Iran" or any other party; they belong only to the people of Syria, who have been suffering the brutalities of an ongoing war for over ten years. SOHR also warns of the repercussions of exploiting these sources, seizing them, or depriving the Syrians of their rights to resources.

# Infographic: Activity and movements by International Coalition in the 108th month of its operations in Syria

**108th** month of Coalition operations in Syria



International Coalition

**175**



trucks carrying military and logistical supplies brought in to military bases in Syria

**4**



joint security operations with SDF lead to killing and arresting six commanders and members of ISIS



Extensive exercises conducted coinciding with the current tension with Iranian militias

The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, September 23.

## ISIS in September 2023 | Ongoing operations in Syrian desert leave nearly 25 civilians and regime soldiers dead, while attacks in SDF-controlled areas noticeably subside

### ISIS in September 2023 | Civilians among nearly 25 fatalities in operations in Syrian desert and subsiding attacks in SDF-controlled areas

Although the Counter-ISIS International Coalition command and the leaders of Syria Democratic Forces announced the elimination of the so-called Caliphate of the “Islamic State” in March 2019, recent developments on the ground indicate that ISIS has not been fully eliminated. ISIS continues launching military operations and counter-attacks which are met with security campaigns by Coalition forces and their Syria Democratic Forces partner throughout SDF-controlled areas, in addition to military operations by Russian and regime forces against ISIS cells in areas under their control. However, ISIS cells are still able to exploit opportunities to create a security vacuum and carry out assassinations, which clearly indicates that the “Islamic State” is still alive and kicking.

In the 110th month after the declaration of “Al-Baghdadi’s Caliphate,” ISIS carried out five operations, including armed attacks and explosions, in areas controlled by SDF. Those operations left four fatalities: a civilian and three SDF fighters.

Those operations are distributed regionally as follows:

- Al-Raqqah: Two operations left three combatants dead.
- Deir Ezzor: Three operations left a civilian dead.

Meanwhile, International Coalition Forces arrested six ISIS members and commanders in joint security campaigns with SDF in September in Al-Hasakah, Dier Ezzor and Al-Raqqah.

Moreover, International Coalition Forces arrested two ISIS commanders on September 24 in an airdrop in Um Jeloud village near Ras Al-Ain city in “Peace Spring” area in northern Al-Hasakah. According to SOHR sources, one of the arrested commander is an Iraqi Emir (top commander) and the other is a Syrian commander.

On the other hand, an ISIS member was killed in an incident of security disorder in Daraa province in south Syria.

In the Syrian desert, however, ISIS continued its operations, including ambushes, armed attacks and explosions, in areas under the control of the Syrian regime and its allies, especially in Al-Rasafah desert, the surrounding areas of Jabal Al-Bishri in Al-Raqqah, the frontlines of Ithriyah, Al-Rahjan and other frontlines in the eastern countryside of Hama, the desert of Al-Sukhnah, Palmyra in Homs countryside, Deir Ezzor desert and the administrative border between Al-Raqqah and Deir Ezzor.

According to SOHR sources, ISIS carried out seven attacks in the past month, killing 20 regime soldiers and proxy militiamen, while ISIS lost two members in clashes and security campaigns. In addition, three civilians were killed in the same period in ISIS attacks in the Syrian desert.

Here is a regional distribution of those attacks:

- Homs desert: Two operations left four combatants dead.
- Deir Ezzor desert: Four operations left 13 combatants, three civilians and two ISIS members dead.
- Al-Raqqah desert: One operation left three combatants dead.

## Islamic State's abductees: ignored and unaccounted

Although nearly 54 months have passed since the International Coalition's announcement of the defeat of ISIS which was a dominant force east of Euphrates River, and with the recent developments over the past period, however, silence still surrounds the issue of ISIS's abductees. All sides remain quiet and provide no clarification on the fate of thousands of abductees, where fear continues to grow for the lives and fate of the abductees, including Father Paolo Daololio, Bishops John Ibrahim and Paul Yazji, Abdullah Al Khalil, a British journalist, sky News journalist and other journalists, in addition to hundreds of abductees from Ain Al Arab (Kobani) area and Afrin, as well as the people of Deir Ezzor.

With the continuing crimes and violations against Syrian civilians, including death threats against SOHR workers by the Islamic State and other killers and criminals in Syria, The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights renews its vows to continue its work by monitoring, documenting and publishing all violations and crimes that committed against the Syrian people.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, renew our call to the UN Security Council to refer those war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Syria to the International Criminal Court so that all the criminals and killers of the Syrian people are brought to justice.

SOHR has been all along warning against ISIS resurgence and stressing that the defeat of ISIS in Syrian territory, as declared in 2019, was "symbolic", as ISIS has been only eliminated as a controlling power in populated areas. The daily attacks by ISIS fighters and cells throughout Syria, clearly indicate that the "Islamic State" is still alive and kicking. While the frequent security campaigns and military operations by regime forces, Russia, International Coalition, and SDF have all failed so far to curb or hinder ISIS's escalating activities.



The Syrian Observatory also points out that it had already warned, well before “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” declared itself as a “Caliphate State” in Syria and Iraq, that this organization did intend to work for the Syrian people and serve their interest, but rather ISIS continued to kill innocent Syrians, who had been suffering the brutality of war and violence and became displaced.

Furthermore, the “Islamic State” recruited children in the so-called “cubs of the caliphate”, controlled the wealth and resources of the Syrian people and harnessed them to build a “caliphate”, and traded openly back and forth with one of Syria's neighbouring countries.

S O H R

# Infographic: ISIS resurgence in Syria in September 2023



## ISIS in September 2023

ISIS lost 3 of its members in clashes with the regime forces



1

In security chaos cases in Daraa



2

In clashes with regime forces

7



Operations in Syrian desert

3

Fatalities of civilians

20

Fatalities of regime forces and their militias

5



Operations in areas of the Autonomous Administration areas

1

Civilian

3

Combatants



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The Syrian Observatory would like to point out that all information and figures mentioned in this report have been documented and updated until the date of publication, September 29.

# Conclusion

Neither a peaceful settlement nor a workable political solution has reached yet to inspire hope for the Syrians, while the conflicting actors have not yet resorted to rationality, respected dignity and humanity or complied with international charters ratified to preserve the rights of all human beings.

We, at the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), appeal to the international community to intensify its efforts to find an immediate lasting peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict and put an end to the senseless bloodshed and suffering of millions of Syrians, and to implement all UN Security Council Resolutions, particularly the Resolution No. 2254 unanimously adopted on 18 December 2015 and called for a ceasefire and political settlement in Syria. In the meantime, we also call on the international community and all aid and humanitarian organisations to support the millions of Syrians, particularly those displaced living in makeshift camps, who are in a desperate need of tangible help. We would like to see humanitarian aid taken out of any political calculations and delivered to all Syrians across the country, regardless of who controls which part. Many people September lose their lives if aid is not provided as a matter of urgency.

We would also like to call on all human rights organisations across the world not to forget the people of Syria and the violations they have endured. We want to remind the world, in unison, that very little has changed in Syria, and exert pressure on the powers that be to put an end to the Syrian tragedy.

Finally, we reaffirm our obligation and commitment to continue defending human rights, the unity of and sovereignty of our country; and we express our complete rejection of all foreign interventions and interference in Syria.



**Syrian Observatory for Human Rights**

**المركز السوري لحقوق الإنسان**

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