

# Turkish Attacks on North and Northeast Syria Since Early 2022 kill 57 Civilians Including Women and Children



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## **Turkish Attacks on North and Northeast Syria Since Early 2022 kill 57 Civilians, Including Women and Children**

*In its attacks on north and northeast Syria, Turkey did not regard the protection of civilians' lives according to the International Humanitarian Law (IHL)'s principle of proportionality. It caused excessive loss of civilian lives, inflicted damages to civilian objects and failed to take necessary precautions to spare the occurrence of incidental damages among the civilians to the maximum extent possible*

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## Executive Summary

Since the early of 2022 until the end of June 2023, [Turkey](#) and Turkish-backed factions affiliated with the opposition Syrian National Army (SNA) carried out 1,073 strikes against areas in north and northeast [Syria](#), killing 57 civilians, including seven children and five women, while injuring 185 others among them 24 children and five women.

Turkish attacks with [war drones](#) have been the deadliest for civilians in north and northeast Syria over the past year and a half. There have been a total of 152 drone attacks, killing 41 civilians, including three children and five women, and injuring 80 further civilians, among them 17 children and two women.

921 incidents of artillery and rocket shelling were carried out by Turkish forces and Turkish-backed SNA factions on areas in north and northeast Syria, in which 16 civilians were killed among them four children and further 105 were injured, including seven children and three women.

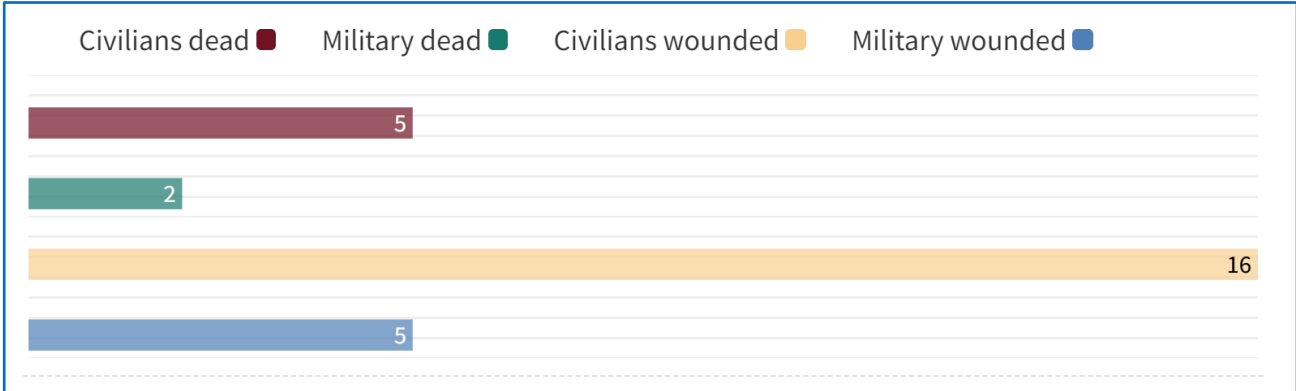
The population in north and northeast Syria where the [Syrian Democratic Forces](#) (SDF) are in control live in constant anxiety, insecurity and instability, as a result of the repeated Turkish attacks with either artillery and rocket shelling or warplanes and drones. Dozens of civilians have been killed or injured since the beginning of 2022. Moreover, the wave of illegal immigration seeking humanitarian asylum abroad has increased more than any other time since the conflict started in Syria.

The Turkish attacks have had a disastrous impact on the civilians' lives in areas in northeast Syria which has become a resort for hundreds of thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), exacerbated the already existing humanitarian crisis and damaged many residential areas, service and critical facilities in a time when the region's economy is in free fall and has got an already decimated infrastructure.

The Turkish aggressions have targeted all the areas in northeast Syria on the Syrian-Turkish border and al-Shahbaa region in northern Aleppo although it is included in the [De-escalation/Ceasefire Agreement](#) signed between Turkey, the [US](#) and [Russia](#) following the Turkish military operation "Peace Spring" in October 2019.

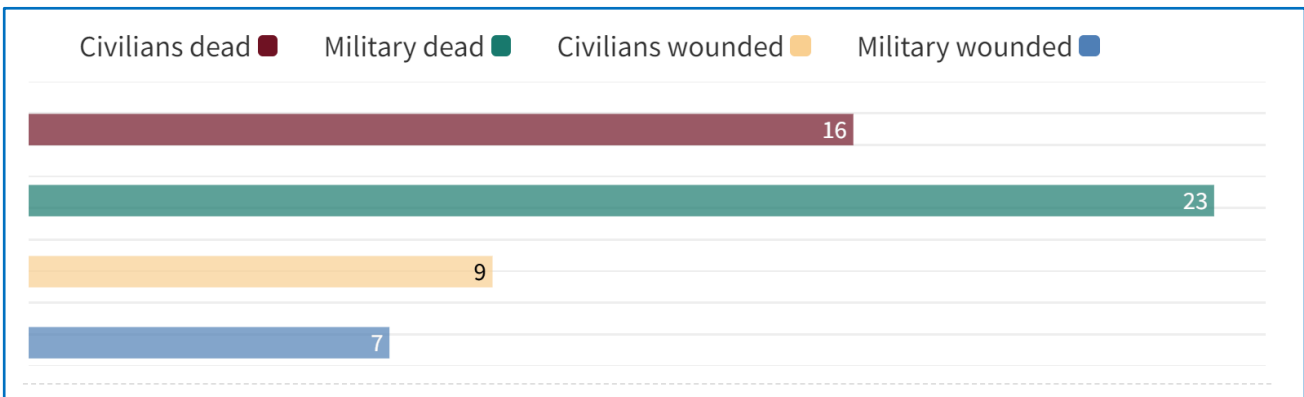
**In its attacks on north and northeast Syria, Turkey did not regard the protection of civilians' lives according to the International Humanitarian Law (IHL)'s principle of proportionality. It caused excessive loss of civilian lives, subjected them to injuries, inflicted damages to civilian objects and failed to take necessary precautions/measures to spare the occurrence of incidental damages among the civilians to the maximum extent possible.**

The information documented by Synergy Association for Victims demonstrates that Turkey’s artillery and rocket shelling during the first half of 2023 on areas located on the contact lines between Turkey and the SDF-held in north and northeast Syria had killed five civilians and injured 16 others while only two SDF fighters were killed and five were wounded.



Total toll of civilian and military casualties due to Turkish artillery and rocket shelling on areas in north and northeast Syria during the first half of 2023.

On the other hand, Turkish drone attacks on areas in north and northeast Syria during the first half of 2023 had caused the death of 16 civilians and the injury of nine others and had also killed 23 SDF fighters and injured seven others.



Total toll of civilian and military casualties due to Turkish drone attacks on areas in north and northeast Syria during the first half of 2023.

IHL’s principle of proportionality prohibits launching attacks on legitimate military targets which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian lives, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.<sup>1</sup>

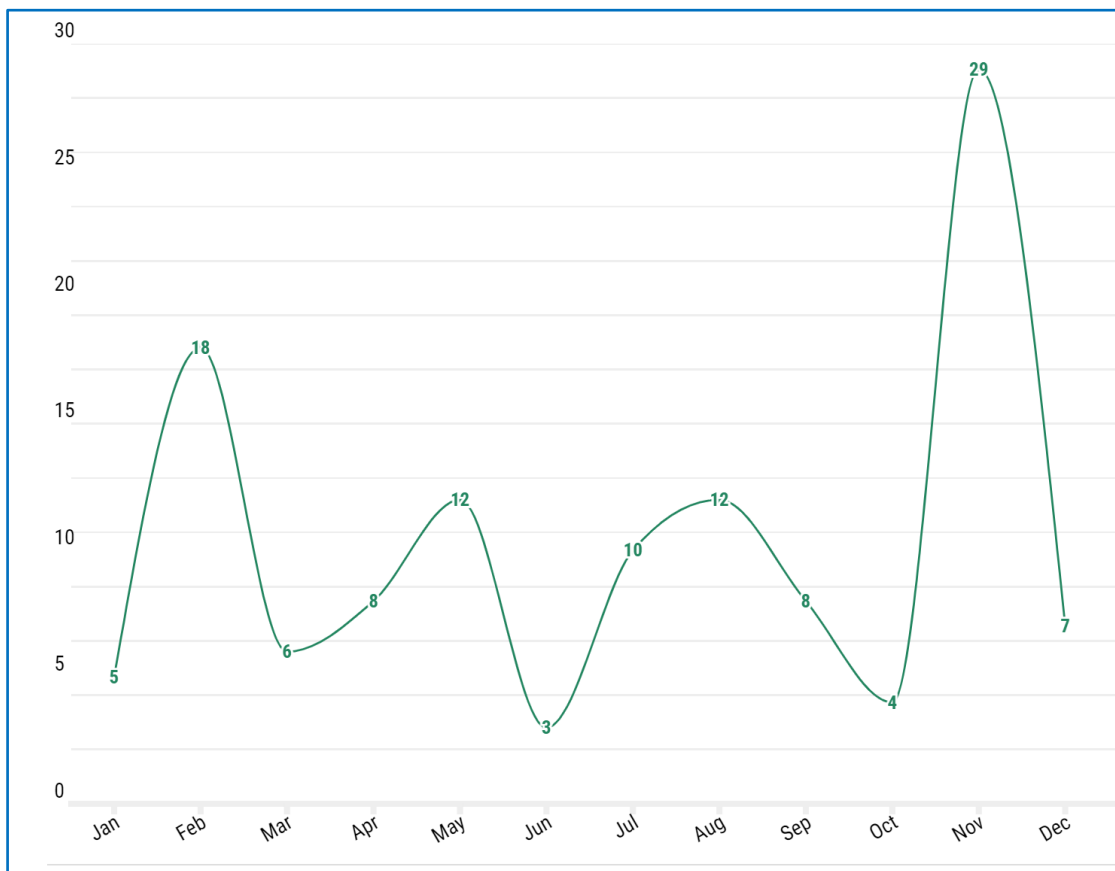
<sup>1</sup> Article 51 (5) (b) First Additional Protocol, and Rule (14) of the Customary International Humanitarian Law.

In all stages of any attack, affirmation should be made that the principle of precaution must be applied in conjunction with, and independently, the principle of proportionality. In other words, even if the incidental anticipated loss, injury of civilians and the damage inflicted to civilian objects are not excessive compared to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated, the attacker must, despite all, take all possible precautions to select means and methods of warfare that may be avoiding incidental damage amongst civilians to the greatest extent possible.

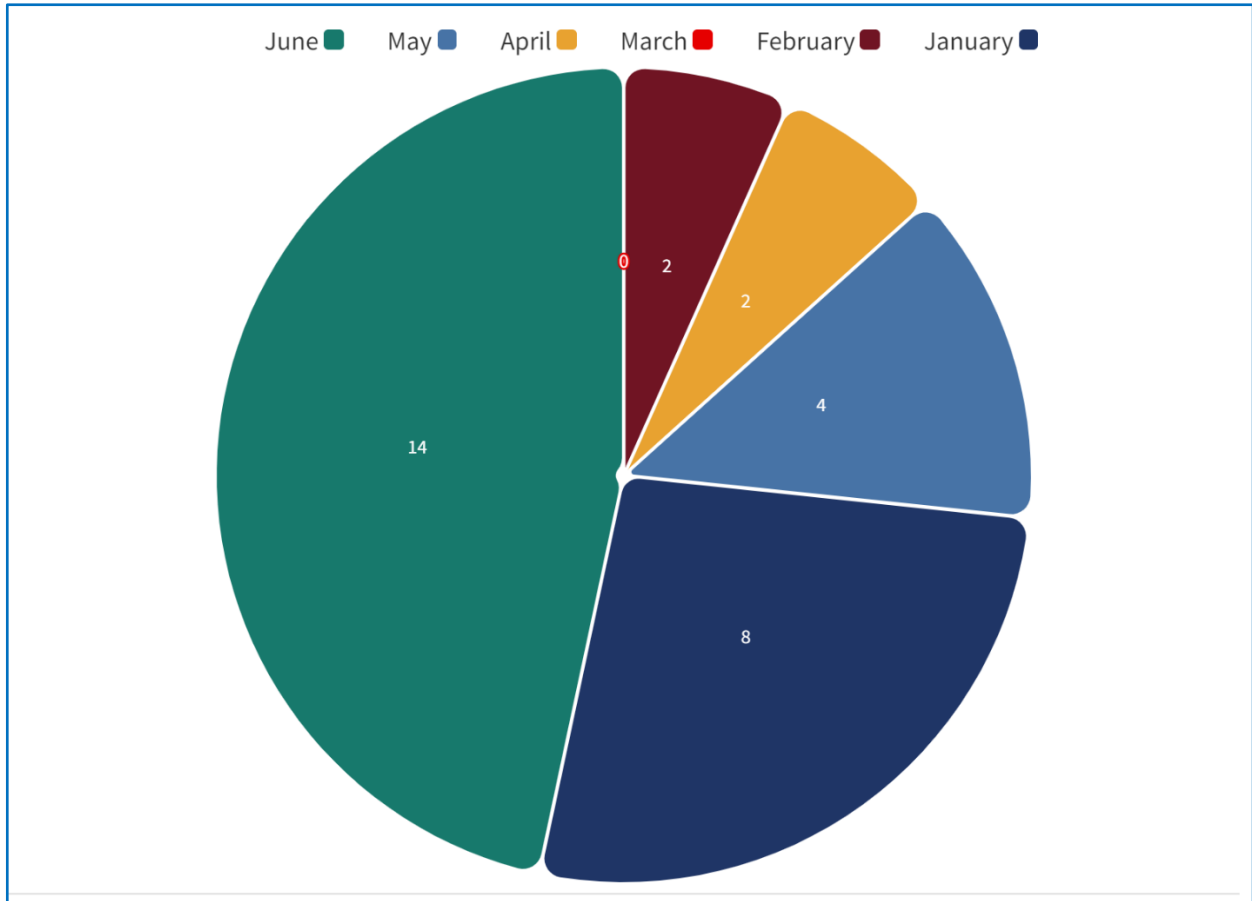
### Introduction

Since the beginning of 2022, Turkey has escalated its bombardment on areas in north and northeast Syria although it is a part of the Astana Talks that aim to achieve a de-escalation in Syria, and also a part of other separate agreements with each of the [US](#) and [Russia](#). Turkey’s strikes did not only target military objects, but also the densely populated areas, several critical facilities and oil, gas and power sources.

During the first half of 2022, 52 Turkish drone attacks targeted areas of north and northeast Syria in which three civilians were killed, including two children, and injured 20 others. In the second half of 2022, further 70 Turkish drone and warplane attacks killed 22 civilians among them a woman and injured 51 others, including 16 children. In the first half of 2023, 30 Turkish drone attacks caused the death of 16 civilians and the injury of nine others.

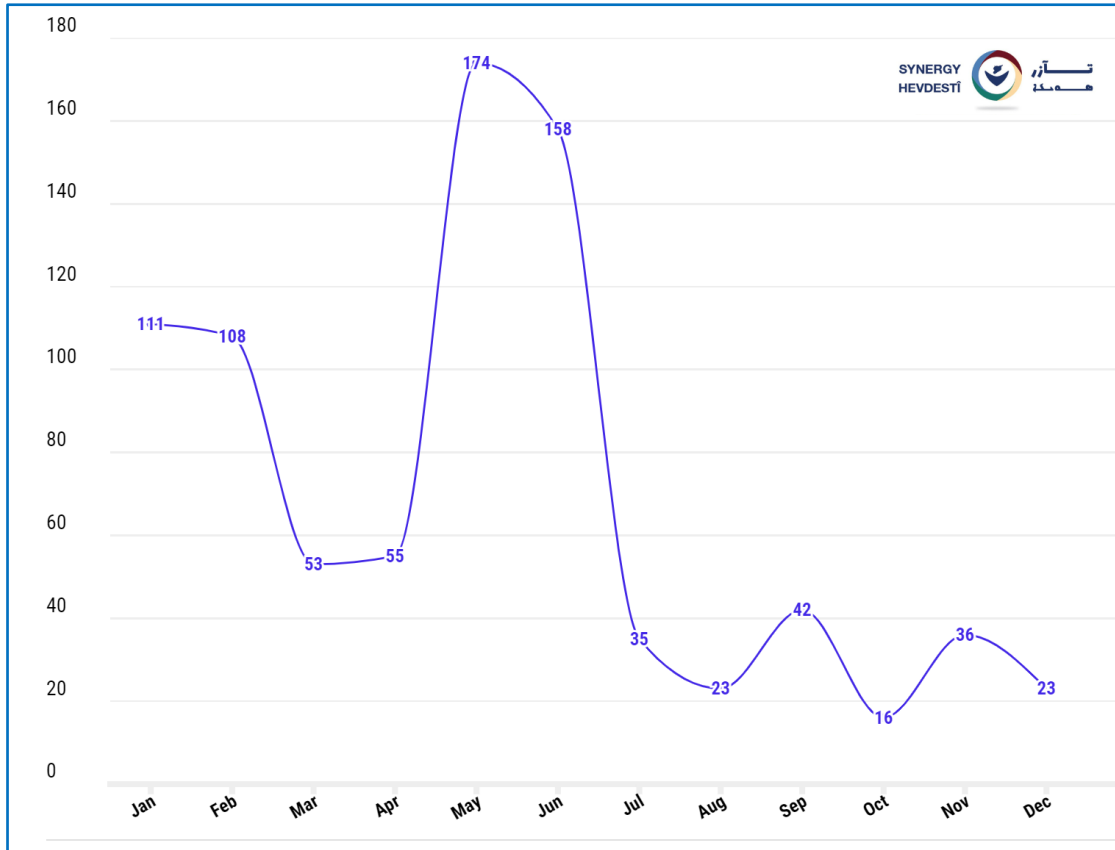


Total toll of the Turkish drone attacks on areas of north and northeast Syria during 2022.

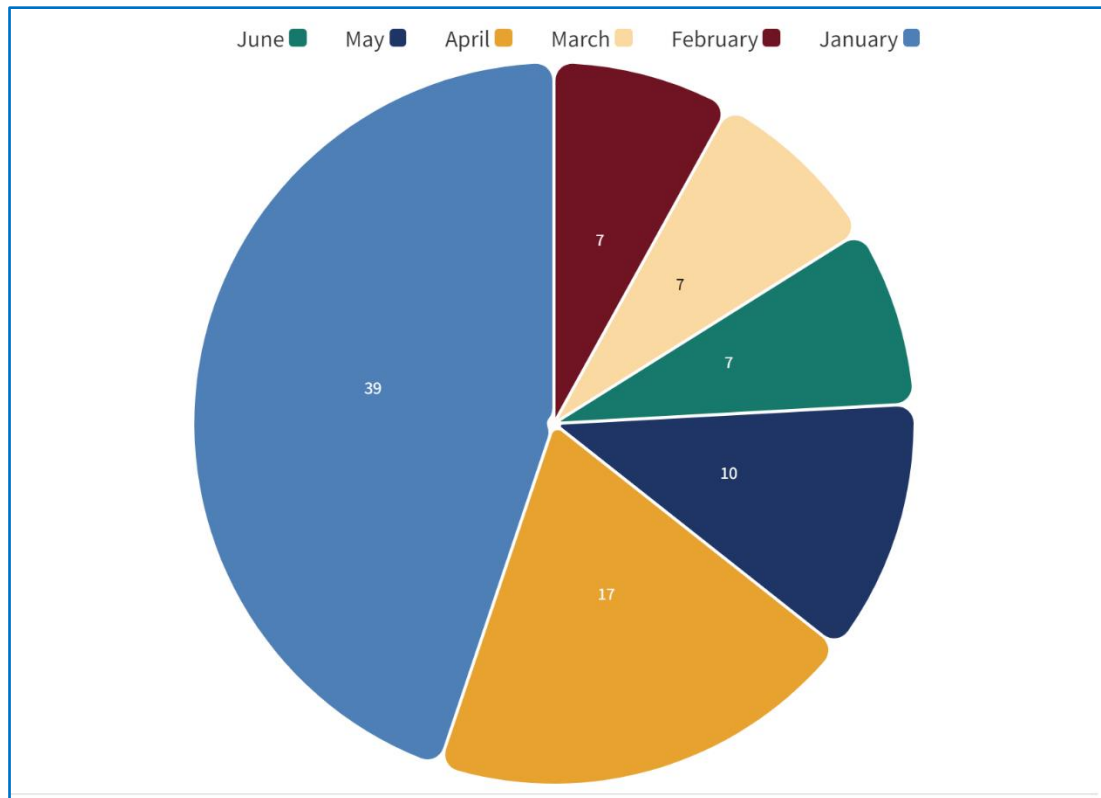


Total toll of the Turkish drone attacks on areas of north and northeast Syria during the first half of 2023.

Artillery and rocket shelling carried out by Turkey and the SNA’s factions on areas of north and northeast Syria during the second half of 2022 were four times the first half, as no less than 175 took place killing two civilians and injuring 11 others. The attacks escalated in the second half of 2022 amounting to 659 attacks during which nine civilians, among them a kid, were killed while 78 others were injured. In the first half of 2023, no less than 87 bombardment took place in which five civilians were killed and 16 others were injured.



Total toll of the Turkish artillery and rocket shelling on areas in north and northeast Syria during 2022.



Total toll of the Turkish artillery and rocket shelling on areas of north and northeast Syria during the first half of 2023.



On November 20, 2022, the Turkish airstrike targeted civilian objects, including a [school](#) and a hospital, equipped to offer medical services to children. The hospital was formerly used as COVID-19 care facility in Ayn al-Arab/[Kobani](#) located in Aleppo countryside. The Turkish airstrike also targeted grain silos in [ad-Darbasiyah](#) countryside located in al-Hasakah governorate and a power plant in the countryside of [al-Malikiyah](#)/Derik.

Turkey carried out successive airstrikes on at least two sites; the kids' hospital in Kobani and the power plant in al-Malikiyah/Derik. After shelling both sites for the first time, it hit the two sites again after medical teams, civilians and journalists gathered in the scene.

Targeting the primary school and the kids' hospital in Kobani coincided the [World Children's Day](#) that marks November 20 of each year and calls for the children's protection, health, and peace worldwide and devotes itself to defend, promote and celebrate the children's rights and render them to discussions and actions to build a better place for the children.

The scope of the Turkish attacks widened after mid-2022, becoming more aggressive. Turkish planes pounded several critical facilities and power, gas and oil sources rendering them inoperable and denying hundreds of thousands of people from energy. Millions of others were affected across Syria at the time when the region already suffers from dilapidated infrastructure primarily due to the ongoing conflict in the country since 2011.

**The advance in the scale of Turkish aggressions on areas in northeast Syria indicates Turkey's intention to destroy the region's economy and deprive the residents from their basic rights and services.**

The damage inflicted on the energy infrastructure has disastrously affected the civilians' lives in northeast Syria which has become a resort for hundreds of thousands of IDPs and has exacerbated the already existing humanitarian crisis. The attack on the power plant near al-Malikiyah/Derik has caused significant power cuts in many regions in al-Hasakah governorate. The same power plant feeds electricity to [Allouk Water Station](#), the only source for water in northern Syria that serves approximately 800,000 people in the region, notably in al-Hasakah City and Tall Tamer town, as well as their countrysides. Water is trucked from Allouk Station for the camps of [al-Hol](#), [al-Areesha](#), [Washokani/al-Twinah](#), according to the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#) (ICRC).

Targeting gas and oil facilities caused [acute fuel shortage](#) which has been an existing crisis in northeast Syria and has left civilians struggling to find cooking and heating fuel for winter.

**The Turkish attacks have already led to displacement. It is definite that the attacks, in case they continue, will strain the humanitarian response efforts that have already been exhausted by previous Turkish incursions.**

In a [report](#) issued on December 7, 2022, [Human Rights Watch](#) (HRW) stated "the [Turkish](#) airstrikes since November 20, 2022, are inflicting damage on densely populated areas and

critical infrastructure in north and northeast [Syria](#) and exacerbating an already catastrophic humanitarian crisis for Kurds, Arabs and other communities in the region.”

On December 21, 2022, Synergy Association for Victims released a [report](#) titled “The Increase of Turkish Attacks on Northeast Syria Threatens Civilians’ Lives and Jeopardizes their Basic Rights”, documenting the increase of Turkish military attacks against areas in north and northeast Syria between November 20-30, 2022, during which Turkish planes struck populated areas, several critical facilities and oil and energy sources and caused the death of 11 civilians, including a journalist and injured others.

Synergy joined a [statement](#) issued on November 29, 2022 and signed by 200 Syrian organizations that strictly condemned the continuous threats and hostilities in northern Syria. The statement calls on the UN Security Council to immediately intervene to stop the hostilities and take firm procedures to prevent the instability or any new military operations in northern Syria, notably that previous military operations have caused the displacement of tens of thousands of the indigenous people and documented myriad of human rights violations by international organizations and UN independent bodies on Syria.

## **Violating the Principle of Proportionality in Armed Conflicts**

The information documented by Synergy over 2022 and the first half of 2023 indicate that during its attacks on the Autonomous Administration-led areas in north and northeast Syria, Turkish forces did not consider the principle of proportionality under IHL. Data analysis illustrates that civilian casualties were heavy in incidents, where artillery and rocket shelling or drone and warplane attacks were carried out.

In July, 2022, Synergy documented the killing of three civilians and two SDF fighters, as well as the injury of 29 civilians and nine SDF fighters due to Turkish rocket and artillery shells on north and northeast Syria. Furthermore, in December 2022, one civilian was killed, and six others were injured while only one SDF fighter was killed.

On the other hand, the information documented by Synergy over the first half of 2023 shows that Turkish artillery and rocket shelling on areas in north and northeast Syria killed five civilians and injured 16 others while only two SDF fighters were killed and five were injured.

The same applies to victims of Turkish drone attacks supposed to be precise. Yet, Turkey did not consider the principle of proportionality in them either. Turkish drone attacks in November 2022 injured 27 civilians and 20 SDF fighters, while they killed six civilians and 25 SDF fighters.

On the other hand, Turkish drone attacks on areas in north and northeast Syria during the

first half of 2023 caused the death of 16 civilians and injured 9 others, while 23 SDF fighters were killed and seven were injured.

## Legal Liability and Recommendations

The Turkish government persistence in bombarding the populated areas violates the IHL's basic principles and amounts to violation of the laws of armed conflict. The laws of war strictly prohibit attacks targeting civilians or civilian objects unless they were being used for military purposes. The laws of war also prohibit indiscriminate attacks, which fail to distinguish between military and civilian targets.

Under International Law, Turkish Armed Forces must take all feasible measures to avoid, and in any event minimize, the loss of civilian life, injuries to civilians, and damage to civilian objects during military operations. This means they should strictly observe international standards and procedures with respect to their means and methods of warfare designed to prevent civilian casualties, and should robustly and transparently report airstrikes and enemy and civilian casualties.

In all circumstances, Turkey should promptly, impartially, and thoroughly investigate any civilian casualties that result from its operations. It should identify those responsible for civilian deaths resulting from violations of IHL and hold them accountable, provide compensation for wrongful civilian deaths and injuries and ex gratia payments for civilian harm.

Synergy highly condemns Turkish military attacks on areas in north and northeast Syria, calls for the end of attacks against civilians and civilian objects and respect the IHL. It further calls on:

- **The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic:** to release a special briefing on the violations accompanying the Turkish military attacks on areas in north and northeast Syria and publish a special report on human rights violations committed by all parties to the conflict in northern Syria.
- **The International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM):** to intensify collecting evidence processes in order to include all parties to the conflict and the violations perpetuated in northern Syria against civilians and civilian objects.
- **War Crimes Units in the countries that their enactments allow trials under the principle of universal jurisdiction:** to expand their structural investigations on international crimes in Syria to include those perpetuated throughout northern Syria by all parties to the conflict.

- **The United Nations Agencies and Humanitarian Organizations:** to increase relief and humanitarian efforts to achieve immediate respond to humanitarian needs ensued from military escalation, notably in light of targeting civilian objects and critical facilities and infrastructure.

## Methodology

This report documents the repeated Turkish attacks on areas in north and northeast Syria based on data analysis collected by our field researchers and on statements of witnesses, victims, survivors, and their families between January 1, 2022 and the end of June 2023, as well as the impacts of such attacks on civilians.

For the purpose of preparing this report, Synergy collected the statements of 28 witnesses, survivors and families of civilian victims of the Turkish attacks, documented their accounts and testimonies since we are aware of the bulk of our responsibility towards the victims. Our strategy adopts an approach that focuses on the victims'/survivors' experiences, perspectives and priorities as an essential part of our daily work, in addition to seeking multiple perspectives to develop thorough and analytical understanding of the events and adheres to the highest degrees of accuracy and integrity.

In addition to the interviews, Synergy reviewed a set of open sources that included information on the Turkish attacks on north and northeast Syria, cross-checked all the information and used much of it.

## Anxiety and Instability

Since May 2022, the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been [threatening](#) of a new military incursion into northeast Syria, an incursion that would be, if did, Turkey's fourth into northern Syria since 2016. Turkish drone attacks and shelling carried out by Turkish forces and the Turkish-backed Syrian forces have escalated against cities and towns in northeast Syria causing civilians casualties, including children.

All Turkish military operations in Syria since 2016 have been rife with violations. The repeated hostilities and threats accompanying those military operations in villages, towns and cities of northern Syria caused relative instability in these regions that have become a haven for the IDPs, who displaced from different Syrian stricken areas.

In early 2023, Turkey reiterated, its [threats](#) of a new incursion, according to the Turkish presidential advisor. Analysts attributed the Turkish statements to gaining support for the Turkish presidential [elections](#), that took place in May 2023, yet, the [US](#), [Russia](#) and [Iran](#)

warned in public against a renewed Turkish incursion into northeast Syria.

The population in areas of north and northeast Syria are experiencing constant concern, insecurity and instability, as their areas are subject to repeated artillery and rocket shelling, as well as drone and warplane attacks by Turkey since early 2022. These attacks have caused the deaths and injuries of dozens of civilians since the beginning of 2022 and increased the scale of illegal immigration in search of humanitarian asylum, most notably among the youths nonetheless all the difficulties they face en route, especially on the Turkish border, where cases of killing and torture took place against hundreds of Syrian asylum seekers over the last few years.

In a [report](#) published on June 8, 2023, Synergy documented the killing of eight Syrian civilians, including a child, and the injury of more than 10 others at the hands of the Turkish border guards (Gendarmerie) during the first quarter of 2023 by direct shooting, the use of torture and excessive force against Syrian asylum seekers and migrants who tried to cross into [turkey](#) illegally in areas in northern [Syria](#).

Since April 2022, [Press](#) outlets have described the intensification of Turkish airstrikes as the “[war of drones](#)”. In addition, following the intensification of drone attacks and artillery and rocket shelling on areas in northern Syria, Human Rights Watch in a [report](#) published in late 2022 stated that Turkish airstrikes have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the region.

Although political [analysis](#) linked between the increase of scale of the Turkish drone attacks on areas in north and northeast Syria and the Turkish presidential elections on May 14, 2023 in which Erdoğan won in the runoff on May 30, yet the frequency of attacks did not reduce. They rather continued after the elections, the last of which was targeting a vehicle belonging to a [civil institution](#) killing three civilian employees and injuring one.

## **Scares Not Erased By Time: Stories of Victims of Turkish Attacks on Northern and Northeastern Syria**

Synergy interviewed families of the civilian victims of the Turkish attacks on areas in north and northeast Syria since early 2022 until the end of June 2023 and documented their accounts and testimonies, as we are aware of the bulk of our responsibility towards the victims. Synergy’s strategy adopts an approach that focuses on the victims’/survivors’ experiences, perspectives and priorities as an essential part of its daily work and seeks multiple perspectives to develop thorough and analytical understanding of the events and adheres to the highest degrees of accuracy and integrity.

- **He left his education to support his family, but the Turkish bombing abducted him**

**“The news of my son’s death, Ahmed, utterly devastated me as a mother who has not seen her son for three months and left an incurable hurt. We were patiently waiting to see him at the end of every month, but his death deprived us from seeing him forever. Turkey killed my little son and assassinated his dream to go back to school one day. Our circumstances had forced him out of school and deprived him from his education,”** the 41-year-old Ahmed’s mother, Sheikha al-Ahmed, said.

Ahmed, who has not completed 11 yet, was killed in a Turkish drone attack that targeted a military vehicle belonging to the SDF on January 18, 2023 near *Ari* Mall in the east of Al-Qahtaniyah/Terbeh Sbiyeh City on the road linking between the two cities of Qamishli and Derik/al-Malikiyah, in the far of northeast Syria.

On August 15, 2022, being the biggest of his siblings, Ahmed al-Salem, who hailed from Fokhariya Village in the west countryside of Tel Hamis Town, left his school [he was then in the sixth grade] to join his uncle in *Ari* Mall and sell coffee and tea on a machine for a trivial wage in order to be able support his father who was infected with asthma.

Ahmed lived under the care of his uncle [in his house] for five months and worked tirelessly beyond his capacity and age to be able to support his sick father. His mother talks about the heavy burden of her son saying:

**“My son, Ahmed, was deprived from school to join his uncle to work due to his father’s illness and our worsening living situation while his peers were going to school. Driven by his love for knowledge and his constant inquiries about his school, he enrolled in an educational course in his workplace. I still remember a sentence he said to me in the last time I saw him in (Mom, would you let me go back to school next year if I decided to?) I replied (of course my dear, I would).”**

The news of Ahmed’s death in a Turkish airstrike shocked his mother who rushed to see her son thinking he had only had a broken leg. Unfortunately, it was much tougher and more severe. In this regard, the mother told Synergy:

**“My brother’s wife told me that Ahmed broke his leg while he was working in the Mall, but she did not tell me that he was injured in the strike. I immediately headed to Qamishli then to Derik/al-Malikiyah and headed to the hospital where my son was lying, but I was not able to see him. There I learned he was injured in the strike.”**

In the evening, Ahmed lost his life because of his injuries and the news weighed heavily on his mother's heart. She said:

**“I learned that my son died, and the news was completely devastating as a mother who had not seen her son for three months, leaving a scar that won’t be cured over time.”**

That same attack claimed the life of another civilian and seriously injured two other children, who were escorting their parents, in addition to another civilian.



Image of the 11-year-old victim, Ahmed al-Salem, taken on January 14, 2023, few days prior to his killing.

This was one of three stories in which children were killed due to Turkish attacks out of 41 stories that tell the account of civilians' loss in Turkish drone attacks.

- **Turkey Stole Our Children's Dreams**

**“My son Ahenk (15) was in the ninth grade. He loved sport. He was a goalkeeper in the Junior Team in a local football club in Qamishli City. But Turkey stole our kids’ dreams and left within us scars that time can’t erase.”**

Said Akram Hussein, the father of a victim of the offensive that Turkish forces conducted in the “[Industrial Zone](#)” in [Qamishli](#), on 6 August 2022, and in which two children were killed. The attack also critically injured the father of one of the deceased children along with another civilian.

Ahenk's father, Akram Khalil Hussein (50), recounted to Synergy the first moments of targeting the "Industrial Neighborhood" in Qamishli by Turkish forces. He said:<sup>2</sup>

**"By time it was evening on August 6, I was at home in al-Antariyah neighborhood in Qamishli when I heard a loud sound as if it was an explosion nearby. I was very anxious about my son Ahenk who had lately started working in a mechanic workshop in the "Industrial Zone" because it was summer holiday. The shop is owned by one of our relatives. I rushed to the shop to check on my son."**

Hussein's concerns increased as he got to the "Industrial Zone". The explosion was in the same street where his son and relatives were working. Hussein continued saying :

**"Only few minutes later, I got to the scene. It was too crowded. Bodies of the dead and the injured people were still on the ground next to the targeted vehicle. I looked among the bodies and found my son's body there covered in his blood. I came closer and checked his heart pulse. he had passed away."**

Crying, unable to stop, the father continued:

**"Although I knew he was dead, I took him to the hospital hoping that he might breathe again. But the doctors confirmed me he was dead. I was devastated from the calamity that befallen us."**



An exclusive image showing Akram Hussein holding his son's picture after he was killed in a Turkish attack on the "Industrial Neighborhood" in Qamishli, on 6 August 2022.

<sup>2</sup> The interview was conducted face-to-face in the witness's home in the al-Antariyah neighborhood, Qamishli on 19 August 2022





An exclusive image showing the victim Ahenk's mother holding his picture and looks in grief to another photo of him after he was killed in the Turkish attack on the "Industrial Neighborhood" in Qamishli, on 6 August 2022.

- **He got killed on his wedding day, and the celebration turned into a funeral**

On August 24, 2022, a Turkish drone targeted the heavily populated Souq al-Hal Street, in the centre of Tall Rifat Town, north Aleppo. This tragic incident resulted in the death of the young man, Hamza Ibo Brem, 21, who was in the midst of preparing for his wedding, scheduled for that same day. However, the Turkish airstrike turned his family's joy into mourning.

According to Synergy's documentations, the attack also claimed the lives of two other women, Fatma Ma'amo, 30, and Nafkhash Aliko, 28. Additionally, seven others were injured, including a child.



The images show the funeral of Hamza Brem, on August 25, 2022, a day after he was killed on his wedding day, which was turned into mourning, as a result of the Turkish drone strike on Souq al-Hal Street, in the centre of Tall Rifat Town, north Aleppo. Photo Credit: Local Activists.

- **Targeting Critical Facilities and Infrastructure**

The scale of Turkish military attacks escalated on areas in north and northeast Syria during the second half of 2022 and has climaxed since November 20 as Turkish planes pounded populated areas, several vital facilities and oil and energy sources, killing 11 civilians, including a journalist, and wounding others.

The recent Turkish attacks coincided with the declaration of operation “Claw-Sword” against northern Syria and Northern Iraq on November 20 by the Turkish Army, which alleged the operation was a retaliation to the [explosion](#) that took place in “Istiklal Street” in Istanbul on November 13, 2022, in which six people were killed and more than 80 others were injured. Ankara [accused](#) the SDF of being behind the blast. In turn, the SDF denied any involvement and no party has claimed responsibility for the blast that was carried out in the pedestrian Street in Ankara, the Turkish capital.

The Turkish operation was limited to carrying out airstrikes with dozens of drones and warplanes. This operation has been the biggest one since “Peace Spring” Operation that was launched in October 2019, during which Turkey occupied the areas between Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê and Tall Abyad in Northeast Syria.

The Turkish airstrike targeted civilian objects, including a [school](#) and a hospital equipped to offer medical services to children which was formerly used as COVID-19 care facility in Ayn al-Arab/[Kobanî](#) located in Aleppo countryside. The Turkish airstrikes also targeted a grain silos in [ad-Darbasiyah](#) countryside located in al-Hasakah governorate and a power plant in the countryside of [al-Malikiyah](#)/Derik.

The attacks killed 11 civilians, including a [journalist](#) while he was on duty in the countryside of al-Malikiyah/Derik, and wounded others. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CJP) [said](#) that “the same area where the journalist was reporting from had been the target of a separate airstrike in the same location just hours earlier.”

- **Turkish Aggressions Exacerbate Humanitarian Crisis**

On November 20, 2022, Turkish planes carried out at least eight airstrikes on Kobanî/Ayn al-Arab City, targeting different positions including [Mashtanour](#) Hill and [Kobanî Forest](#) (Daristana Kobanî in Kurdish) destroying a [school](#) and a hospital equipped to offer medical services to children which was formerly used as COVID-19 care facility.

Jihad Nebu, a journalist who works for a Kurdish regional media outlet, detailed to Synergy the Turkish attacks on Kobanî as he was close to the scene. He said:

**“In the early hours of November 20, 2022, Turkish airstrikes hit several sites in Kobanî, including “Mashtanour” Hill which was pounded with four consecutive missiles that left significant material damage in a civilian populated area, although no military positions exist there.”**



Two images showing the destruction inflicted to the hospital equipped for children in Kobanî due to the Turkish airstrike on November 20, 2022. Photo Credit: [Hawar News Agency](#).

The Turkish bombardment also targeted and completely destroyed the primary school of Koran Village in the east countryside of Kobanî, spreading fear and panic among the students

and villagers. The Turkish attacks deprived thousands of children from pursuing their education due to suspending school attendance in 19 primary schools in the countryside of Kobanî, which lies in the contact lines with areas under the control of Turkey and Turkish-backed opposition factions of the SNA. Kobanî is frequently targeted by Turkey and its allies.

A witness from Koran Village expressed to Synergy his intentions to migrate along with his family due to insecurity following the continuous Turkish attacks and threats on areas in north and northeast Syria, especially on [Kobanî](#), [Manbij](#) and [Tall Rifat](#) in northern [Aleppo](#). He said: **“My only son, who is in the third grade was deprived of his education because Turkey struck his school and therefore attendance was suspended in many schools in Kobanî. It is hard for me to convince him to stay indoors. He cries everyday asking to go back to his demolished school, and I therefore decided to migrate abroad with my family. We are not safe here as long as our neighbor Turkey speculates our children’s schools as a threat to its security.”**

Targeting the primary school and the kids’ hospital in Kobanî coincided with the [World Children’s Day](#) that marks 20 November each year and calls for the children’s protection, health, and peace worldwide and devotes itself to defend, promote and celebrate the children’s rights and render them to discussions and actions to build a better place for the children.



An image showing the destruction inflicted to Koran Primary School in the countryside of Kobanî due to Turkish airstrikes on November 20, 2022. Photo Credit: [The Board of Education- the Euphrates Region](#).

Another source/witness from Kobani<sup>3</sup> told Synergy that several sites located between Tall Abyad and Kobani were hit by Turkish airstrike, killing one and injuring another soldier from the Syrian Government Forces responsible for protecting the Syrian-Turkish border.

In the countryside of ad-Darbasiyah City, Turkish airstrikes targeted the grain silos in [Dahir al-Arab](#) Village, causing significant damage and targeting another populated area in [Abu Rasin/Zargan](#) Town, eastern Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê, as well as military points manned by the Syrian Government Forces.



An image showing impact of the Turkish bombardment on November 20, 2022, that targeted the grain silos in Dahir al-Arab Village in ad-Darbasiyah countryside. Photo Credit: [Baz News Agency](#).

On November 21, 2022, Synergy interviewed a witness from Abu Rasin/Zargan<sup>4</sup> who said that the Turkish airstrike killed three soldiers of the Syrian government forces in the village of Tall Harmal in the north countryside of Abu Rasin.

The Syrian National Official [SANA](#) News Agency said that several Syrian government soldiers were killed in the Turkish airstrikes on the Syrian soil in the countryside of Aleppo and al-Hasakah in the early hours of November 20, 2022.

Turkish attacks were more hostile in the region spanning between Qamishli-Qamishlo and al-Malikiyah/Derik, where Turkish planes targeted populated areas and critical infrastructure,

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<sup>3</sup> The interview was conducted virtually on November 25, 2022. The witness's information is withheld upon his request.

<sup>4</sup>The witness's information is withheld upon his request.

including the power station and some oil and gas fields. This progress in the scale of Turkish aggressions on areas in northeast Syria indicates Turkey's intention to destroy the region's economy and deprive its residents from their basic rights and services.

The power station in Taql Baql Village was also targeted with two consecutive attacks. One worker was killed in the power station and others were injured in the first raid and when civilians, who live nearby, reached the scene and started to rescue and ambulance the wounded, Turkish planes struck the scene for the second time killing 10 civilians, including medics and a journalist while he was on duty, and injuring 10 others. The power station got out of service and power was cut off in more than 60 villages in al-Malikiyah/Derik countryside.

The body of the journalist Essam Abdullah, Hawar News Agency's reporter, was found burned along with his camera in the same site, where it was targeted consecutively. A survivor whom Synergy interviewed said the victim was filming the impact of the first raid while the survivor along with others were attempting to rescue the wounded people. The [CPJ](#)<sup>5</sup> called on Turkish authorities to immediately conduct a full and transparent investigation into whether Hawar News Agency (ANHA)'s reporter, Essam Abdullah, and other civilians were targeted during Turkish airstrikes in northern Syria. Sherif Mansour, CPJ Middle East and North Africa Program Coordinator said, **“journalists are civilians and should be protected while doing their jobs.”**

Synergy talked to Saed Ali, 36, who is a survivor of the consecutive airstrikes that targeted the power plant in Taql Baql Village in al-Malikiyah/Derik countryside.

Ali was wounded in the second raid while he was checking victims of the first raid. He described the scene saying:

**“As soon as the power station was hit, some villagers and I rushed to the scene to save the workers. But while we were rescuing the wounded people, another attack took place, and I was injured in different parts of my body. I was transferred to the national hospital in Derik City.”**

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<sup>5</sup> The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) is an independent non-profit organization based in New York City. CPJ promotes press freedom in the world.



An image showing aftermath of the Turkish two consecutive drones attacks on the power plant in Taql Baql Village in al-Malikiyah/Derik countryside on November 20, 2022. Photo Credit: Hawar News Agency.

Since early November 20, the bombardment intensified significantly, as 108 incidents were recorded on different areas in north and northeast Syria. Abu Rasin/Zargan Town and its countryside in the east of Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê were also targeted by Turkish airstrike. In addition to continuous artillery and rocket shelling by Turkey and the Turkish-backed SNA's factions.

Synergy interviewed a witness whose house was partially destroyed due to the Turkish bombing during November 2022. She said:

**“A barrage of missiles hit our house. One of them hit the house directly and the other dropped in the house’s vicinity leaving huge material damage, and my elderly mother was injured in several parts of her body.”**

According to the witness, the intensity of the Turkish bombardment on Abu Rasin/Zargan prevented medical teams from the urgent intervention to rescue the wounded. She added:

**“The strikes also hit my brother’s house, located near ours, in addition to the whole neighborhood. None could help us due to the intensity of the bombardment. We were forced to protect ourselves and wait until the shelling stopped, then we transferred our mother to the ad-Darbasiyah-based clinic for treatment.”**





An image showing the indiscriminate bombardment on villages in the countryside of Abu Rasin/Zargan Town. Photo Credit: Local Facebook accounts.

A resident from “Bobi” Village, in the north countryside of Abu Rasin/Zargan Town, told Synergy:

**“Our village and the nearby villages like Dada Abdal, Miharmilah, al-Matmourah have been frequently subjected to artillery bombardment for three years, but the scale of the strikes has increased recently and staying here has become dangerous.”**

According to the witness, dozens of villagers and residents of the neighboring villages displaced to the camps of [Washokani/al-Twinah](#) and [Serê Kaniyê/al-Talae'](#) in [al-Hasakah](#) countryside as a result of the frequent Turkish attacks on their villages and farms.

- **He Has Lost the Will to Live**

On June 20, 2023, a Turkish drone targeted a vehicle driving two employees of the Autonomous Administration on the sub-road connecting Beyandûr Village and Tall She'eer Village near the highway linking Qamishli to al-Malikiyah/Derik.

The attack claimed the lives of the female co-chair of Qamishlo Canton of the Autonomous Administration, Yosra Darwish, and her vice-president, Liman Shweish, in addition to their driver Furat Rezqo, who was also a member of the Canton's Council. The male co-chair of Qamishlo Canon identified as Gabi Shamo'un was also injured.

Only three months before his death, Furat had joined the Cantons' Council to be able to support his family. In this regard, his brother Milad Rezqo told Synergy:

**“On that day, I heard that my brother was injured so I rushed to the Qamishli-based hospitals hoping to learn news about my brother. While I was screaming asking about my brother, one of our relatives said that Furat had lost his life and that his body was kept in the mortuary fridge in the hospital.”**

The incident devastated the victim’s brother and many of his relatives suffer from emotional deep trauma and are unable to lead their normal lives easily again. The victim’s brother said:

**“After my brother’s death, I lost the will to live. I am thinking seriously of immigration. Everything here reminds me of my brother who was an innocent victim of a strike.”**

- **Civilians are Subject to Bombing**

Since early July 2022, the outskirts of Ayn Issa Town, north of Raqqa City, had been subjected to artillery and rocket shelling carried out by the Turkish army and factions of the SNA, yet July 4 was the bloodiest on Hoshan Village, northern Ayn Issa, as missiles and artillery shells pounded heavily on the city and killed two civilians identified as Sheikh Mohammed, 52, and Bozan Osi.

The bombardment also injured the 16-year-old Khalid Jabal Ahmed, a minor, and Mohamed Bozan Sabri, 25.

On July 4, 2022, Turkish artillery targeted the village of Bayna, located in al-Shahbaa in northern Aleppo countryside, where 140,000 IDPs mostly from Afrin, reside. Two sisters aged 19 and 20 were injured in the attack and the injury of one of them was critical. Furthermore, the villages of Soghanaka, Umm al-Qura, Kafr Qares in northern Aleppo countryside were targeted with the same artillery. No information detailing the losses in these village came.

On July 2, 2022, two days earlier, Turkish artillery bombarded in the morning the two villages of Umm al-Qura and Masajek in al-Shahbaa region in northern Aleppo, damaging civilians’ properties, killing four sheep and wounding several others while they were grazing in a field.

Bombardment continued over July 2022 and intensified significantly on July 23, 24, and 25, especially in the countryside of Tall Tamr and Abu Rasin/Zargan northern al-Hasakah. The first distinct gross damages were the power cut from the region due to damage to overhead power lines of Tall Tamr power station located near Umm al-Kef Village. The power station has got out of service for 30 times due to the Turkish bombardment since the launch of the Turkish military operation “Peace Spring” in October 2019.

The shelling climaxed on July 24 in terms of the intensity and positions targeted on villages located in the northern countryside of Abu Rasin/Zargan on the contact lines between the SDF-held areas and those controlled by Turkish forces and the SNA’s factions. Tens of artillery and rocket shells were dropped causing destruction and significant damage to the indigenous

people's houses and injuring several civilians, including the 32-year-old Moayed Abdullah and his two children aged five and seven. At first, they were transferred to ad-Darbasiyah for treatment, but then they were referred to al-Hasakah since their injuries were serious.



An image showing a child injured with shrapnel by shells dropped on his village in Abu Rasin/Zargan in north of al-Hasakah.  
Photo Credit: Hawar News Agency

The bombardment also damaged the civilians' houses, and they were forced to evacuate and displace to safer places, such as in the case of Mjeibra Village located in the northeast of Tall Tamr, in the middle of the road connecting Tall Tamr, Abu Rasin/Zargan and the M4 Highway.

The people were forced to flee during the shelling on Abu Rasin/Zargan Town to save their lives and their children's from the intensity of the shelling. The 60-year-old Hussein Sarsouh, from Umm Harmala Village, was one of those reluctantly trying to displace along with his family towards al-Hasakah. However, on the way, he was injured in the face and his 12-year-old child had leg and back injuries. The two were transferred to ad-Darbasiyah-based hospital, then they were transferred to a hospital based in Amuda City.



*Image of the 60-year-old man and his 12-year-old son, after they were subjected to shrapnel by missiles while they were trying to displace from their village in Abu Rasin/Zargan countryside. Photo Credit: Local Activists.*

- **Everything Around Us Have Changed in Just Moments**

The violent shelling for three consecutive days, July 23, 24, and 25 of 2022 left clear destruction to the civilians' houses surrounding Tall Tamr and Abu Rasin/Zargan towns.

Hussein Mansour al-Kalash, 30, who hails from Mezri Village in the southeast of Abu Rasin was injured along with his mother due to the Turkish bombing and his house was directly targeted by Turkish artillery.

Al-Kalash told Synergy:

**“In the morning of July 24, 2022, we woke up on the sounds of artillery and rockets that have become part of our daily lives since the occupation of Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê. But this is the first time that our village is being targeted because it is located in the southeast of Abu Rasin/Zargan and is fairly far from the contact lines.”**

He added:

**“At around 9:00 am, Turkish forces and Turkish-backed factions bombarded my house causing significant material damages and injuring my elderly mother with a shrapnel in the abdomen and face. My car was also damaged and my four children and I experienced a state of panic and fear. Everything around us have changed in just seconds!”**

- **Displacement Towards Safer Areas**

On July 25, 2022, at the sunset, a Turkish artillery launched four missiles on Tall Ziwan Village, in the east of Qamishli, pushing scores of families to displace towards the adjacent Tanouriye [Kurdish *Tenûriyê*] Village or towards the nearby Qamishli City.

Dilovan Chato, a journalist who hails from Tall Ziwan, told Synergy:

**“Our village was subjected to artillery shelling from the direction of the border post in the Turkish side which is less than 3 km away from our village. The shelling spread terror among the locals who are approximately 55 families. Therefore, 80% of the villagers left and only those who had livestock remained given they could not leave it there alone.”**

Chato concluded saying:

**“The next day, after the shelling sopped, most of the villagers returned to their houses, but they were afraid of the recurrence of the bombardment against the village whose all its inhabitants are civilians.”**

On July 26, 2022, six women, among them three minors, were injured in the violent shelling as they were working in a farm near Tall Rif’at Town in al-Shabaa, northern Aleppo. The shelling also hit around 20 villages and positions and were targeted with scores of shells, according to Chato.

In the early hours of July 30, 2022, a violent bombardment started on areas in the west and north outskirts of Tall Tamr, in which artillery and rocket shelling were used by the Turkish side injuring 11 civilians, including the 4-year-old Layla Omar Salih who had shrapnel in the face, and four women identified as: Hilwa Izo Awad, 63, who got a shrapnel in the chest, Nofa Alawi al-Ali, 60, who had two shrapnel in the chest and the abdomen, Jori Omar Salih, 25 who had a shrapnel in the hand, and Safaa Ahmed Ali, 25.

Also among the injured persons were the minor girl Majida Khider al-Bibi, 16, her brother Hatem Khider al-Bibi, 24, Ahmed Mohammed al-Mohammed, 60, who was seriously injured in different parts of his body, and Omar Hussein Theyab, who had a shrapnel in the abdomen. Furthermore, Nae’ m Mohammed Wizo, 30 and Nawras Hamid Antar, 25, were slightly injured.

All of the above-mentioned injured persons received first aid care in Martyr Likerin Hospital in Tall Tamr Town, while some of them were transferred to hospitals in al-Hasakah for treatment.

- **Kobani: Dozens of Shells in One Day**

Tuesday's morning, corresponding to August 16, 2022 was not like any other morning in Kobani. Since 9:00 am, the Turkish artillery has started to pound the city center with multiple shells and other mortar shells for two consecutive hours.

Samer Othman, a journalist who hails from Kobani, said the city has been targeted to indiscriminate artillery shelling and drone attacks more than once since early 2022, and that its neighborhoods have been targeted at least four times.

Speaking on the bombardment on August 16, 2022, Othman said:

**“Arround 9:00 am on August 16, 2022, a loud explosion was heard in Kobani neighborhoods. Shortly after, another sound was heard, and the bombardment lasted until 11:00 am. More than 30 artillery and rocket shells dropped on Kobani neighborhoods and targeted a vehicle that was parked next to the Local Administration and Environment Body of the Autonomous Administration, the Kobani Mill, the new neighborhood in the city, the Martyr Payman Neighborhood, outskirts of Mashtanour Hill, and other various locations.”**

The indiscriminate shelling on Kobani neighborhoods killed the 14-year-old child Abdo Mohammed Haji and injured Khalil Jihad Sheikho, 2, Marwa Mohammed Hemo, 48, Abdo Darwish, 35, and Ali Ahmed Ebo, 20.

The witness Othman continued:

**“The purpose of the last attack was obvious to me. I believe they wanted to terrorize the civilians, push them to displace and evacuate the city. The increase of attack's intensity and its expansion to target other sites all conform this belief. Several eastern villages were also targeted, such as Qara Mogh, Gharib, Ali Shar, and Mazrdod. In addition to the western villages, such as Saftak, Boban, Kor Ali, Jareqli in which a post of the Syrian Government Forces was targeted with a Turkish warplane for the first time and many Syrian government soldiers were either killed or wounded.”**

The indiscriminate attack on Kobani forced many civilians to flee and head to safer villages and farms in the south countryside.

In this regard, the witness said:

**“At first, we witnessed minor displacement from the northern outskirts of the city towards the inner and southern sides. However, the situation soon escalated, and more families started to displace to the southern countryside. Residents were afraid**

**of other massacres to be carried out against their children since the indiscriminate shelling does not distinguish between a residential neighborhood or a military position. This prompted some to flee outside the city.”**

On September 27, 2022, the Turkish violent artillery shelling on several villages in Abu Rasin/Zargan killed two children and injured six members from the same family. A witness from the village said:

**“Turkish forces bombarded the populated village with artillery, killing two children and injuring six others from the same family. They were all transferred to ad-Darbasiyah-based hospital.”**

The witness added that on the same day, Turkish forces bombarded Dada Abdal and Noweihat villages and the outskirts of Umm Harmala Village among others in Abu Rasin/Zargan countryside, causing huge material damage to the people’s property.

One of the children’s relatives told Synergy:

**“The village was subjected to violent and indiscriminate bombardment, exactly at 5pm, causing fear and horror among the villagers. The artillery shelling targeted a car that was parked in front of a house and some children were playing nearby. This resulted in the injury of eight children from the same family, with two of them losing their lives immediately. Other people were seriously injured, and they were transferred to ad-Darbasiyah hospital in al-Hasakah countryside.”**



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HEVDESTÎ هه‌دهستی

**Hevdestî - Synergy Association for Victims, is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, aimed at educating and providing a platform and a space for victims to represent themselves and claim their rights. Synergy was founded on March 11, 2021, to seek justice for the victims of conflict in North and East Syria and to contribute to the process of accountability and justice.**

**We work to document all human rights violations in North and East Syria, and preserve evidence, documents and testimonies in order to contribute to the processes of truth-revealing, accountability and justice. In addition to build the capacities of the victims and advocate for their issues, with the aim of building a society demanding its rights.**

**We are committed to the highest degrees of accuracy and integrity, including seeking multiple perspectives to develop an in-depth and analytical understanding of events. We are cognizant of our responsibility towards the victims and witnesses who share their experiences with us. We are working closely with a wide range of actors in local and international civil society to achieve the greatest possible impact.**



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