



مركز توثيق الانتهاكات في سوريا
Violations Documentation Center in Syria

Cover Image: iStock

The Pillaging of the Cotton Yield in Northeastern Syria

**Farmer losses exceeded hundreds of
millions of Syrian pounds**

Violations Documentation Center in Syria / August 2020

Contents

- Executive Summary.
- Introduction.
- Chapter One: Conceptual and Legal Framework.
- * Section One: Jurisdiction of International Humanitarian Law
- * Section Two: Legal qualification of Turkish Intervention
 - Self-defense
 - Adana Agreement
- * Section Three: The responsibilities of occupying power.
 - Liability for compensation for damage
- Chapter Two: The Legal Framework for Violations
- * Section One: The crime of pillage and plunder in international humanitarian law
 - Protection of Civilian Objects.
- * Section Two: The Crime of Genocide
- * Section Three: Crop Theft in Syrian Legislation
- Chapter Three: Testimonies
- * Section one: The general framework
- * Section Two: Testimonies
- Recommendations

Executive Summary

The report “the Pillaging of the Cotton Yield in Northeastern Syria” presents detailed testimonies obtained by the Violations Documentation Center (VDC) for the affected farmers in Ras Al-Ain / Sri Kaniyeh area in Hasakah Governorate, northeastern Syria, after groups of the Syrian National Army under the supervision of the Turkish government laid their hands on the agricultural lands and steal the crops, namely the strategic cotton crop, causing huge material losses to farmers, exceeding hundreds of millions of Syrian pounds.

The Pillaging were not isolated incidents carried out by members of the national army, but rather came within a systematic plan during which the national army seized large areas of agricultural land exceeding hundreds of acres, and forced other farmers to harvest crops, in clear violation of the provisions of international humanitarian law, which provides for the protection of civilian objects and property.

The Turkish government bears responsibility for these violations according to the state’s responsibility for violations committed by persons or groups acting in fact on its instructions, or under its direction or control; members of the national army. Besides, it has the responsibility to protect civilians as an occupying power that must preserve all the rights and legal status of civilians such as their rights to life, to own property, to remain in their property, to keep their money, and to protect them from any harm or violation.

In addition to the testimonies, the report includes a theoretical section that includes the definition of violations according to the international humanitarian law applied in Syria according to the nature of the conflict, detailing the legal texts of the violations and guarantees guaranteed by the law to prosecution against the perpetrators, and concludes several recommendations, which are directed by the VDC to the Turkish government and the Syrian national army, and the international community to end violations and guarantee of non-recurrence, hold perpetrators accountable and compensate victims as an essential prerequisite for any future mechanism for reconciliation or transitional justice.

Introduction

The ongoing conflict had a profound impact on the rural population and agricultural production in Aljazira region in Syria, i.e. the governorates of Hasaka, Raqqa and Deir Al-Zour, which are considered the food source for the country, and it tops the list of producers of strategic crops including cotton and wheat. This region also contains the largest cultivated areas. However, the ongoing violence caused a significant recession of the cultivated areas and a decrease in production. Societies there witnessed a rise in poverty and unemployment rates accompanied by a severe shortage of public services such as electricity and drinking water

This led to the collapse of the local market and the purchasing power of the population which pushed the people to move or seek refuge outside the country.

Ongoing military operations led to mass exodus waves, sometimes amounting to thousands per day, such as the wave of displacement following the Turkish military operation “Peace Spring” in October 2019, which forced more than two hundred thousand civilians to leave their agricultural lands and properties seeking safer areas. Moreover, the war years coincided with droughts that destroyed hundreds of hectares of farmland, as well as the agricultural land fires - some were intentional- that struck in May 2019 wide areas in the governorates of Hasaka and Raqqa, and severely damaged the vital wheat crop, which plays a major role in achieving food security and community stability in the region.

The damages also extended to the cotton crop, which is the social and monetary crop that provides employment opportunities for 20% of the workforce in Syria, including cultivating, ginning, marketing, and manufacturing. It also constitutes the second export commodity after oil, and the third commodity after oil and wheat in terms of its contribution to national income. It also constitutes the raw material for ginning, spinning, and oils. Given its importance, the legislator singled it out with special legal texts including Law No. 222 of 1958 known as the “Law Regulating Cotton Cultivation”, and Law 21 of 2010 to regulate cotton cultivation and product development, which requires farmers to hand over the crop to the Cotton Marketing and Ginning Authority at a price determined by the Ministry of Agriculture, and the last one exercises control over all stages of production.

The violations covered in the report came to exacerbate the scale of the ongoing crisis that afflicted the cotton cultivation sector and its assets and most importantly, those working in it during the war years. The amount of production decreased from one million tons (in 2005) to only 1500 tons (in 2016) without recovering to this day.

On 15 January 2020, the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the Syrian Arab Republic, Mike Robson, emphasized the critical nature of the situation in northeast Syria. “If we do not provide vulnerable farmers with their needs for food production, they will lose their only source of income, and the number of food insecure people will increase,” said Robson.

Chapter One: Conceptual and Legal Framework

● Section One

- Jurisdiction of International Humanitarian Law

The Turkish presence inside the Syrian territories is subject to the principle of international humanitarian law, especially the law regulating the state of military occupation - or what is called "invasion", "liberation," "administration," or "occupation." The important thing is the actual presence on the ground. Article 51 of the UN Charter states that the use of force and threat by states to practice their legitimate right to self-defense, this includes the situation of occupation, does not prevent the application of international humanitarian law as the law governing the obligations and rights of belligerents regardless of the legitimacy of their use of force.

The Turkish presence in Syria is subject to the rules of international humanitarian law which places a legal obligation on the Turkish government to protect the population from some of the consequences of the war.

● Section two

- The legality of the Turkish intervention

A number of political biases place the Turkish intervention in Syria between two extremes: the exercise of the legitimate right to self-defense, or the commission of the crime of aggression. However, the justification of intervention does not affect the full responsibility of the Turkish government for any violation of the provisions of international humanitarian law during its operations or in the areas under its control.

- Self Defence:

The Turkish government justified its operations as a state of self-defense. Self-defense is one of the exceptions to the principle of prohibition of the use of force in international relations, which is stipulated in Article Two, Paragraph 4 of the UN Charter. The prohibition of the use of force in international relations is a general rule which has three exclusive exceptions that regulate the use of force and delineate its limits as a guarantee of the humanitarian interest and the international community. The exceptions are the right of peoples to self-determination, the mechanism of collective security under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, and the status of legal self-defense stipulated in Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security

“

”

There is an ongoing jurisprudential and political debate about the text of Article 51 and its interpretation between two directions. The first is the narrow interpretation, which proposes the exclusion of the broad interpretation of the exception and the literal commitment to the text of the article. The literal text of the article considers the only legal justification for the establishment of a legal defense case, is the state exposure to external armed aggression that stipulates literally "if it is used to force Armed "; without other forms of aggression that may threaten or violate international peace and security. The other forms of aggression may lead to the application of a collective security mechanism by the Security Council, still, it is not armed aggression that leads to the establishment of a legitimate defense situation according to the narrow interpretation.

The second approach is the broad interpretation that includes direct real aggression as well as potential aggression. In the potential aggression case, the conduct of the state is considered a state of preventive legal defense, or proactive legal self-defense, provided that the seriousness of the threat to which the state is exposed is proven, and that this threat is current and about to occur. This was affirmed by the Security Council in its resolution No. (487) of 1981, which condemned Israel's bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor as a violation of the United Nations Charter and the rules of public international law.

- Adana Agreement:

Ankara also relies on justifying its military operations, to the "Adana agreement", which is a secret security agreement signed by Turkey and Syria in 1998 and followed by several annexes that were previously described as secret. The Turkish argument is that the failure of the Syrian side to take the security measures and duties stipulated in this agreement gives Turkey the right to defend itself when its national security is threatened.

The importance of the Adana agreement emerged as a legal argument in the provisions of the Sochi Agreement or the Turkish-Russian Agreement on the East Euphrates region in October 2019, which emphasized in the fourth item of it the importance of the agreement and that "the Russian Federation shall facilitate its implementation."

● Section three

- The responsibilities of occupying power

International jurisprudence defines the state of occupation as: "a stage of the war that immediately follows the invasion, in which the warring forces are able to enter the enemy's territory and placing the territory under its effective control, after it exceeds indisputably, and after the armed conflict stops and calm prevails completely over the territories on which the fighting took place".

According to Article 42 of the Hague Regulations of 1907, "Territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army. The occupation extends only to the territory where such authority has been established and can be exercised."

Common Article 2 of the four Geneva Conventions states that the Convention shall also apply to any territory occupied during international hostilities, even if the said occupation meets with no armed resistance.

International law describes the Turkish presence in the Syrian territories as “occupation”, thus, the Turkish government has the duties specified in the Hague Regulations (Articles 42-56), the Fourth Geneva Convention (Articles 27-34 of 47-78), the provisions of Additional Protocol I and customary international humanitarian law.

International humanitarian law emphasized the responsibility of the occupying power to protect civilians and considered it an inalienable right, according to Article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, “Protected persons who are in occupied territory shall not be deprived, in any case or in any manner whatsoever, of the benefits of the present Convention by any change introduced, as the result of the occupation of a territory, into the institutions or government of the said territory, nor by any agreement concluded between the authorities of the occupied territories and the Occupying Power, nor by any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied territory.”

In addition to the provisions of international law, there are obligations under Articles 4-7 of the US-Turkish agreement to halt the military operation “Peace Spring”. In return, the United States suspended the sanctions issued on 14 October 2019 and imposed on the Turkish side to freeze assets, seize property and suspend entry of certain persons who contribute to the operation to the United States of America:

4. The two countries reiterate their pledge to uphold human life, human rights, and the protection of religious and ethnic communities.
5. The Turkish side expressed its commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of residents of all population centers in the safe zone controlled by the Turkish Forces (safe zone) and reiterated that maximum care will be exercised in order not to cause harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure.

- The responsibility of the Turkish government to compensate for the damage:

The responsibility of the Turkish government is not limited to the criminal part but extends to compensate for the damage resulting from the violation of the rules of international humanitarian law. This is a duty of the violating state as well as the duty of the individual who acts in breach of one of the rules of this law. International responsibility arises when violating one of the obligations of the international humanitarian law, which creates an obligation to compensation, repair, or redress. This was confirmed by the International Court of Justice, “The Court affirms in accordance with the principles of international law, and indeed the general concept of law, that any breach of obligations requires reparations.”

According to Article 75 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, "The Court may make an order directly against a convicted person specifying appropriate reparations to, or in respect of, victims, including restitution, compensation, and rehabilitation. Where appropriate, the Court may order that the award for reparations be made through the Trust Fund provided for in article 79."

The Fourth Hague Convention (article 3) of 1907 also stipulated the principle of compensation for damages resulting from violations of the laws and traditions of war. Furthermore, article 91 of the first protocol states that "A Party to the conflict which violates the provisions of the Conventions or this Protocol shall, if the case demands, be liable to pay compensation. It shall be responsible for all acts committed by persons forming part of its armed forces."

Chapter Two: The Legal Framework for Violations

● Section One

- The crime of pillage and plunder in international humanitarian law

The violations documented in this report constitute the elements of the act of pillage and plunder. These elements include an attack on civilian objects protected by international law. Although international law allows requisition for military purposes in narrow cases under certain circumstances, however, it prohibits plundering completely and strictly. (First Geneva Convention Article 50, Fourth Convention Article 33, Protocol 2 Articles 2-4 and Hague Convention Articles 46-47).

Article 50 of the First Geneva Convention states that "grave breaches shall be those involving any of the following acts if committed against persons or property protected by the Convention: extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly."

The Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia also considered "plunder of public or private property" a war crime. The same in Article 8 of the Rome Statute which classifies: "extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly;" as a war crime when it is committed as part of a plan or policy or as part of a large-scale commission of such crimes.

- Protection of Civilian Objects:

The "immunity of civilians" and the principle of "distinction" constitute the core principles in international humanitarian law. This means that the conflicting parties should distinguish between combatants and civilians, and target only the combatants.

This was confirmed by Article 48 of Protocol I: "In order to ensure respect for and protection of the civilian population and civilian objects, the Parties to the conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives and accordingly shall direct their operations only against military objectives." Civilian objects are all objects that do not constitute military objectives. and the military objectives "Combatants and objects" are "objects which, by their nature, location, purpose or use, contribute to military action of the enemy and whose capture, destruction or neutralization offers a definite military advantage".

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross study of customary humanitarian law, civilian objects are all objects that are not military objectives (the ninth rule) provided that Civilian objects are protected against attack, unless and for such time as they are military objectives. (tenth rule).

Given the importance of the cotton crop in the region, in addition to the dependence of the population on it as a source of income, the actions documented in this report consider a violation against the protection given to the objects and materials that are indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, provided that crops and agricultural areas which are designated for the production of foodstuffs, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation projects are indispensable to the survival of the civilian population and it is protected on this basis. This protection is linked to the fact that humanitarian law strictly prohibits starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare (Protocol I Art.54 and Protocol II Art. 14).

● Section two

- The crime of genocide:

The testimonies presented in this report raise questions on the acts of pillage, plunder, and the seizure of land are carried out systematically based on national and religious discrimination, targeting mainly the Kurdish component and the Yazidi component in order to implement demographic change in the region.

Establishing the motivation for discrimination behind these violations would constitute the criminal elements of genocide, which according to Article 2 of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide includes all acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.

Additionally, according to Article III of the Convention, the prohibition is not limited to perpetrators of genocide, but also includes conspiracy to commit genocide; direct and public incitement to commit genocide; attempt to commit genocide; complicity in genocide.

Besides, according to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 96 of 11 December 1946, perpetrators are punished, whether they are principals or accomplices, regardless of whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials, or private individuals, which means expanding criminal responsibility.

The provisions of the convention are binding even to states that are not parties to the convention as part of customary international law. This was confirmed by an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on 28 May 1951, then it was strengthened by a report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 3 May 1993, who considered the agreement part of customary law. This was also ratified by the UN Security Council.

The mentioned violations may also constitute the requisite elements of genocide as stipulated in the Rome Statute. Particularly, Genocide by deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction. Nevertheless, the conduct should take place in the context of a manifest pattern of similar conduct directed against that group or it is a conduct that can itself affect such destruction.

● Section three

- Theft of crops in Syrian legislation:

Despite the full and peremptory jurisdiction of international humanitarian law to characterize acts and assign responsibilities to perpetrators of violations in the report. Yet, it is useful to refer to the criminal provisions for crop theft in Syrian legislation.

Article (621) of the Syrian Penal Code defines theft as the taking of another person's property or services without that person's permission or consent. Article (622) includes the circumstances that aggravate punishment to a term of seven years' imprisonment with hard labor. The aggravating circumstances mentioned in the article are the act of theft during the night; by two or more persons together; by a person in possession of a gun or a narcotic substance; by a masked or disguised person; by using violence.

The act of stealing the cotton crop is likely to contain two or more elements of an aggravating circumstance such as multiple actors, wearing masks, or even stealing at night.

Regarding crops particularly, the Penal Code distinguished between two types of theft. The first one is the theft of harvested: which is liable to a term of one month to one year imprisonment and a fine and shall be increased to a term of six months to two years imprisonment and a fine in case of multiple perpetrators; or in case of transport the stolen goods on vehicles or animals (Article 631). The second one is the theft of crops Related to land: Article 632 imposes a penalty of two months to two years imprisonment when there are multiple actors or the stolen goods were transported in bags or containers, or on vehicles or animals.

As for the crime of arson, it is a felony with a comprehensive danger, to which the legislator has singled out a special chapter of the Penal Code, with severe penalties of no less than seven years, hard labor, and reaches death if the fire was deliberately and led to the death of a human being. While the forest areas were regulated by Law No. (6) of 2018, which singled out a special chapter that includes penalties for violating its provisions, which also in some articles lead to death if the fire was deliberate and led to the death of a human being.

Chapter Three: Testimonies

● Section One

- The General framework:

On 09 October 2019, the Turkish army and the Syrian National Army began a military operation in northeastern Syria targeting the areas of Tell Abyad in the Raqqa governorate and Ras al-Ain/Sri Kaneh in the governorate of Hasaka. Both areas were controlled by the "Syrian Democratic Forces" which is known as "Qasd". The VDC in Syria published earlier a detailed report documenting the violations committed during the course of the military operation and which amounted to war crimes.

The military operation, which coincided with the cotton harvest season, began with intense air raids, artillery, and missile strikes on residential neighborhoods and civilian objects, which prompted most of the locals and farmers to flee Ras Al-Ain, on the border with Turkey, to the south. As the ground incursion started, the national army began to seize the lands planted with cotton, whose owners fled to preserve their lives. On top of that, the army also seized the seeds and the agricultural lands of whose owners were still present in the area.

According to testimonies of farmers obtained by the VDC, the seized areas are very large that cannot be estimated with a specific number. The VDC itself documented more than 3200 dunums, still, it is not the total land area that was subject to seizure and plunder of crops, most of which were cotton crops.

International humanitarian law imposes on the parties to the conflict the rules that must be adhered to during the conduct of military operations. In order to ensure respect for and protection of the civilian population and civilian objects, the Parties to the conflict shall at all times distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives.

● Section two

- Testimonies:

The VDC interviewed four farmers from the Ras Al-Ain/Sri Canet area who asked that their identity not be disclosed for fear of retaliation after the Syrian National Army seized their lands, crops, and lands owned by their neighbors. The VDC team also spoke to a civilian activist from the same area for details of the violations committed by the national army factions there.

First: The witness (A.A) said: "The Syrian National Army seized agricultural land of 200 dunums to the east of the city of Ras al-Ain, at the villages of Lazka and al-Sukkariyah, which were planted with cotton."

He added: "The National Army harvested and seized the crop, without giving him any compensation or even asking his permission" He continued: "Besides seizing the crop and the farmland, they also stole the electricity transformers".

The witness, who belongs to the Yazidi group, estimated his losses arising from the seizures and pillage of more than one hundred million Syrian pounds (in the month of April 2020), considering that these actions prompted entire Yezidi villages to flee the area.

The testimonies reported by the VDC team with farmers whose crops were seized by groups from the Syrian National Army demonstrate that the rate of infringement of farmers' rights is increasing steadily.

Second: The witness (R.S) told the VDC team: The "Sultan Murad" division, which operates under the banner of the Syrian National Army, seized his 200 dunums of land planted with cotton, then members of the division harvested and sold the crop. They also seized 35 tons of cottonseed, 55 tons of diesel, six diesel engines, three loading-trucks, and a tractor.

He added that the same division seized other lands he owned with his father and brothers, The total area of these lands is 1,300 dunums in the villages of Shukria, Jan Tamr, and Bir Noah. They planted it with wheat.

Third: The witness (D.F) stated that Sultan Murad's division seized his cotton planted land, which is 8 km from the city of Ras Al-Ain and has a total area of 300 dunums in addition to another land located 10 km from the city and with a total area of 100 dunums.

He added: "They seized the whole cotton crop in the lands and harvested it. They also stole 20 thousand liters of diesel and 7 tons of sterilized wheat and 205 tons of sterilized beans in addition to two agricultural medicine sprinklers and a tillage engine. I estimated my losses with more than 500 million Syrian pounds. They also confiscated a large commercial store that I had opened recently".

The witness (D.F) emphasized that the National Army forces workers to harvest the cotton crop from the lands it seizes and then it will be transported to the cotton gins in the Tell Abyad region, where the cotton is processed before it is transported to Turkey and sold there.

Another witness said that the Sultan Murad division seized 1,100 dunums of agricultural land owned by him, including 150 dunums planted with cotton, in addition to a grain mill located in the village of Mashrafa. He added: "They stole from the mill the entire barley crop that is stored in it, in addition to 28 thousand liters of diesel. Currently, the mill is under the control of the Sultan Murad division (Al-Faruq Brigade) and they are operating it. "

Fourth: The local activist (M.H), who is from Ras Al-Ain, confirmed that "Hamzah division" and "Sultan Murad division" which are both parts of the Syrian National Army are responsible for the seizures of agricultural lands, especially those planted with cotton. He added that the people of the village of Mahmudiya, which is located between the cities of Ras Al-Ain and Tell Tamer, filed a complaint with the court in Ras Al-Ain against the seizure of their lands by the National Army, but the court expelled them and dismissed their complaints.

The VDC also obtained documentation of the violations of the aforementioned divisions by seizing dozens of agricultural lands and pillaging the crops. These documentations were saved in a separate database, including the names of the owners of the objects that were subjected to the violation. The VDC will not publish this information for fear of the lives of the concerned persons.

Recommendations:

● Turkish government:

- To emphasize independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Syria, and the cohesion of its social and demographic fabric. And to confirm that the Turkish presence in Syria is temporary and that the acts of appointing Turkish officials to govern the region; opening local offices of Turkish government institutions are regulatory measures and not within a long-term plan.
- To assume its responsibilities as an occupying power by protecting all private properties and issuing criminal regulations that prohibit pillage and punish those who commit it regardless if it is civilian or military. Additionally, to assume its responsibility for any repercussions of military operations on the spread of terrorism or the return of terrorist organizations - including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) - Moreover, to take all necessary measures immediately to ensure that foreign terrorist fighters are not infiltrated outside or inside Syria.

- To conduct a periodic evaluation of their armed groups, observing their compliance with international humanitarian law, and ensuring that pillaging, plundering, and seizing the properties of others are unlawful acts that require punishment, and investigate any credible allegations of violations by these groups, address violations, hold perpetrators accountable, and not just condemn the act.
- To address the phenomenon of impunity, that is, the absence of judicial consequences for the perpetrators of human rights violations. Instead, ensure to prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violations within the ranks of the Turkish army or the groups affiliated with it or working under its supervision, as well as those who planned and ordered to commit the violations.
- To take all possible measures to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian objects during military operations. Respect international standards and procedures designed to prevent civilian casualties; Report firmly and transparently the airstrikes and civilian and military casualties. Conduct prompt, impartial and comprehensive investigations into all cases where civilian casualties have occurred as a result of these operations; Provide urgent compensation for civil damages.
- To provide immediate, appropriate, and effective compensation for violations of economic rights resulting from Turkish military operations, and to find a mechanism to ensure the distribution of compensation effectively without contradicting the rights of those affected by resorting to the judiciary and demanding compensation.
- To create an administrative structure, through local units and civil society partners, that forms the nucleus of a qualified national administrative entity to administer the region. To obligate the military forces and the free police to cooperate with this administrative structure to control security, create an appropriate environment for economic recovery, mitigate the severity of the living crisis, and create a rational civil governance model that responds to the needs of the residents of the area.

● Syrian opposition:

- The National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces - Interim

Government:

- To deal with the repeated evidence of the involvement of armed divisions of the National Army in human rights violations; To condemn these acts; To demand investigations and accountability by international humanitarian law; To hold the Turkish occupation fully responsible for human rights violations in the areas it controls in Syria.

- To reaffirm that the solution to the Syrian conflict should focus on establishing a state of free and equal citizens, in light of a civil system; A state of institutions and law; A state of democracy in which there are no majorities and religious, ethnic, or sectarian minorities but respect for the collective rights of all components.

- To activate the role of military courts and the military police branch set up by the Ministry of Defense in the Syrian interim government, in the areas of "Peace Spring" operation, as oversight bodies to monitor the practices of the members of the Syrian National Army, and their compliance to the provisions of international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and the internationally approved rules of conduct.

- The Syrian National Army:

To take all possible measures to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian objects during military operations and respect international standards and procedures designed to prevent civilian casualties. To refrain from attacking civilian objects if they have not been used for military purposes, and to contribute to their protection. Immediate accountability of all perpetrators of violations.

● United States of America:

- To request the Turkish government to fulfill its commitment to protecting civilians under the bilateral US-Turkish agreement on halting the military operation "Peace Spring" in eastern Syria, according to which the United States suspended the sanctions imposed on the Turkish side for their military intervention in Syria.

- To sponsor, support, and facilitate dialogues between the Turkish government and the "Syrian Democratic Forces" / "People's Protection Units" and take advantage of the success of US diplomacy in reaching a ceasefire. Also, to work with Ankara to distinguish between the "Syrian Democratic Forces" and the "Kurdistan Workers' Party", designated as a terrorist organization, in order to reach a settlement between the two parties that allows for the establishment of a more comprehensive ethnic and religious governance structure in northern Syria which can be linked later to the conflict resolution and constitutional paths of the ongoing Geneva process under the auspices of the United Nations.

- To investigate the findings of the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria according to which the (Washington-led International Coalition) did not take the necessary precautions to distinguish between civilians and military objectives during the attacks on the town of Al-Shuhail east of Deir Ezzor in May 2020. Also the report of Amnesty International In June 2018 about the attacks launched by the coalition against ISIS in the city of Raqqa without taking adequate measures to protect civilians or the necessary precautions to minimize harm to them.

● **United Nations:**

- To refer the Syrian file to the International Criminal Court to consider violations that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity against civilians, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 377 of 1950, known as "Union for Peace" resolution, or through the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC, according to the powers granted to him Under which he can investigate the crimes allegedly committed in Syria through the Secretary-General of the United Nations or some of its members who are members of the ICC.

- To compel the parties to the conflict to adhere strictly to the provisions of Article 82 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions 1977, which provides for the necessity of appointing legal advisers to the armed forces, given these advisers constitute preventive legal oversight of the actions of the forces to which they belong, thus reducing Any violations that may occur while carrying out military operations.

● **The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO):**

To benefit from expertise; To develop agreements, codes of conduct and technical standards to fight hunger; To cooperate with local partners to establish agricultural cooperatives to provide advice, empowerment and support mechanisms; To focus on the agricultural sector as an absolute necessity to protect society from economic and social collapse; To eliminate the risk of famine that threatens large sectors of Syrians whose income has eroded over the years of the war, and can no longer afford the high prices of agricultural products.

● **The international community:**

- To work individually at the state level or within the regional framework to prosecute all military or civilian officials when there is convincing evidence of their possible involvement in gross, widespread and systematic violations of human rights in Syria; To apply economic sanctions against them and to freeze their bank accounts, under universal jurisdiction or the applicable national legislation.

- To unify the legal efforts to hold perpetrators and war criminals accountable in Syria, according to the established principle of "universal jurisdiction" in the European judiciary, which prevents impunity, and seeks to prosecute criminals on behalf of the international community, based on the principle of human solidarity to defend the interest of all peoples and states as a whole and to protect them by holding criminals accused of crimes against humanity as a whole accountable.

● Brussels Conference on “Supporting the future of Syria and the region”

To provide additional contributions to northern Syria in order to finance structural activities with a direct, sustainable and comprehensive impact in the region, to support the displaced and facilitate their return to their homes, to contribute to establishing stability, to work on increasing agricultural production and restore livelihoods, to rehabilitate basic agricultural infrastructure and support services, and to develop programs aim to increase self-reliance in societies recovering from years of war.



مركز توثيق الانتهاكات في سوريا
Violations Documentation Center in Syria

www.vdc-sy.net

لأية ملاحظات أو استفسارات يرجى التواصل معنا على الإيميل:
inquiry@vdc-sy.info

للإطلاع على تقاريرنا السابقة باللغة العربية
[/http://vdc-sy.net/category/reports_ar/monthly_reports_ar](http://vdc-sy.net/category/reports_ar/monthly_reports_ar)

للإطلاع على تقاريرنا السابقة باللغة الانكليزية
[/http://vdc-sy.net/category/reports/monthly_reports](http://vdc-sy.net/category/reports/monthly_reports)