



An updated analysis carried out by data specialists on behalf of the UN Human Rights Office has led to the compilation of a list of 92,901 documented cases of individuals killed in Syria between March 2011 and the end of April 2013, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay announced Thursday.

"The constant flow of killings continues at shockingly high levels – with more than 5,000 killings documented every month since last July, including a total of just under 27,000 new killings since 1 December," Pillay said. "Unfortunately, as the study indicates, this is most likely a minimum casualty figure. The true number of those killed is potentially much higher."

The latest study -- which updates an earlier one that compiled some 60,000 documented deaths up to 30 November 2012 -- was conducted using a combined list of 263,055 reported killings, fully identified by the name of the victim, as well as the date and location of the death. Any reported killing that did not include at least these three elements was excluded from the list, which was compiled using datasets from eight different sources.<sup>1</sup>

Each reported killing was compared to all the other reported killings in order to identify duplicates. The analysis used manual classifications and a data mining technique called an 'alternating decision tree' to identify the duplicate records. After duplicates were merged, the combined dataset was reduced to 92,901 unique records of conflict-related deaths as of 30 April 2013.<sup>2</sup>

The statistical analysts<sup>3</sup> who produced the report noted that, despite the possibility of some duplicate or erroneously reported deaths being included, this total is likely to underestimate the actual number of killings. This conclusion is based on the fact that 37,988 reported killings containing insufficient information were excluded from the analysis, and that there is a strong likelihood that a significant number of killings may not have been reported at all by any of the eight sources.

The analysis shows a dramatic increase in the average monthly number of documented killings since the beginning of the conflict, from around 1,000 per month in the summer of 2011 to an average of more than 5,000 per month since July 2012 (during the peak period from July to October 2012, the number exceeded 6,000 per month).

"This extremely high rate of killings, month after month, reflects the drastically deteriorating pattern of the conflict over the past year," Pillay said. "As clearly indicated in the latest report by the Commission of Inquiry on Syria, civilians are bearing the brunt of widespread, violent and often indiscriminate attacks which are devastating whole swathes of major towns and cities, as well as outlying villages. Government forces are shelling and launching aerial attacks on urban areas day in and day out, and are also using strategic missiles and cluster and thermobaric bombs. Opposition forces have also shelled residential areas, albeit using less fire-power, and there have been multiple bombings resulting in casualties in the heart of cities, especially Damascus."

While the study stresses that the accuracy of geographical patterns may be affected by variable reporting by the different data sources, it shows that the greatest number of documented killings has been recorded in the Governates of Rural Damascus (17,800), Homs (16,400), Aleppo (11,900) and Idlib (10,300); followed by Daraa (8,600), Hama (8,100), Damascus (6,400) and Deir ez-Zor (5,700).<sup>4</sup>

The sharpest increases since November 2012 were recorded in Rural Damascus and Aleppo with 6,200 and 4,800 new documented deaths respectively. Totals of more than 1,000

documented deaths have been recorded in a further six Governates since November 2012.

Some 82.6 percent of the victims documented so far are male, while 7.6 percent are female. The gender of the victim is not indicated in 9.8 percent of cases.

The analysis was not able to differentiate consistently between combatants and non-combatants, and around three-quarters of the reported killings do not record the victim's age.

Nevertheless, "the killings of at least 6,561 minors, including at least 1,729 children under ten years old – have been documented," the High Commissioner said. "There are also well-documented cases of individual children being tortured and executed, and entire families, including babies, being massacred – which, along with this devastatingly high death toll, is a terrible reminder of just how vicious this conflict has become."

"I urge the parties to declare an immediate ceasefire before tens of thousands more people are killed or injured," Pillay said. "Nobody is gaining anything from this senseless carnage. And States with influence could, if they act collectively, do a lot more to bring the conflict to a swift end, thereby saving countless more lives. The only answer is a negotiated political solution. Tragically, shamefully, nothing will restore the 93,000 or more individual lives already lost."

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> One extra dataset, provided by the Syrian Centre for Statistics and Research, has been added to those used in the previous study. The seven other datasets analysed in both reports were those provided by the the Government of Syria (up to March 2012 only), the Syrian Network for Human Rights, March 15 Group, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the Syrian Revolution General Council, the Syria Shuhada Website, and the Violations Documentation Centre. Not all datasets cover the entire period covered by the analysis.

<sup>2</sup> The total figure of 92,901 comprises 59,648 killings up to 30 November 2012 (as published in

the Preliminary Analysis on 2 January 2013) plus 6,347 additional killings in the same period, which were either documented subsequently, or provided by a new source (see 3, below), or revealed by refinements to the matching model, plus 26,906 new killings documented from 1 December 2012 through 30 April 2013.

<sup>3</sup> The analysis was carried out, on behalf of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, by the Human Rights Data Analysis Group, a non-profit organization comprising statisticians, computer scientists, demographers and social scientists with extensive experience in statistical analysis of data relating to human rights violations.

<sup>4</sup> The analysis of casualties reflects patterns of reporting killings and does not necessarily represent true patterns of violence. Having the highest reported killings in one Governorate could mean either that the Governorate is the most violent, or that the reporting mechanisms there are more efficient than elsewhere.

### **Additional links:**

- To see the full Updated Statistical Analysis of Documentation of Killings in the Syrian Arab Republic, [click here..](#)
- The original Preliminary Analysis, published on 2 January 2013, can be [viewed here...](#)
- To view the reports of the independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria, and other materials relating to the human rights situation in the country, [click here...](#)

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