



Syrian British Council calls for civilian protection in Idlib

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Over 73 civilians have been killed and more than 110 injured in atrocities committed by the combined airforces of Russia and the Assad regime over Syria's North-Western province of Idlib since Monday 22nd July. On Monday alone, five children and eight women were killed by Russian airstrikes on a busy marketplace in the Syrian city of Ma'arat al Numan, which resulted in the deaths of 43 civilians. These were in addition to multiple Russian bombardments over nearby residential homes. This was followed later in the evening by four children being killed, along with one woman, after regime and Russian airstrikes targeted another marketplace in the town of Saraqeb, resulting in the overall death of eight people in one single incident.

These atrocities are only the most recent however. The Assad regime, along with its ally Russia, have been subjecting Idlib's population of 3.5 million to a campaign of aerial bombings since April. More than 650 people, including 150 children, have been killed in this campaign, which has so far displaced 330,000 people who are currently sheltering under trees near a Turkish border that remains shut. Over thirty medical facilities have also been targeted since then, in what seems to be a deliberate campaign to inflict death, destruction and terror upon Idlib's civilian population.

The regime and Russia's actions in Idlib constitute war crimes that are in clear violation of the Geneva Conventions. Allowing these crimes to continue undermines global order, risks creating a second refugee crisis in Europe, and threatens the long-term security of all nations. The Syrian British Council calls on the international community to honour its legal responsibility to protect civilians and to uphold international humanitarian law. We call on the United Kingdom in particular, to initiate global action to stop Russia and the Assad regime from continuing to massacre civilians. Impunity for war criminals must not become the norm.

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The Syrian British Council is an advocacy body representing Syrians and UK-nationals committed to establishing a democratic and humanitarian law-abiding Syria.