

Press Release regarding the deterioration of the situation in Syria and attacks on civilians

Al Marsad is deeply concerned with the continuing conflict in Syria and calls upon the international community to provide an adequate response that prioritises a humanitarian intervention in order to protect the civilian population and stop the war.

Al marsad – Arab c human Rights Centre in the occupied Syrian Golan

Majdal shams, The Golan

18/06/2015

Al Marsad condemns the attack by the Al Nusra front on June 10th against the Druze community in the village of Qalb Luza in Idlib province which resulted in the deaths of 23 civilians including children, and the wounding and enforced disappearance of many others. The transformation of the peaceful revolution in Syria in 2011 into an armed conflict for the past four years has had cataclysmic consequences. The collapse of normal life and the continuation of the armed conflict between the regime forces and armed groups has inflicted immeasurable pain and suffering on the civilian population.

To date the estimated death toll exceeds a colossal 230 000 people and the displacement of a staggering 11 million people both inside Syria and in neighbouring countries causing an unprecedented refugee crisis. The regime forces and opposition forces continue to commit massacres and crimes against humanity by launching large-scale attacks on civilians through illegal means such as arbitrary killings, torture, rape and forced disappearances.

They also commit serious human rights violations and war crimes by targeting civilians, taking hostages, recruiting children for use in hostilities, torture, rape, sexual violence and the violation of special protection granted to hospitals and medical personnel and humanitarian spheres. Indiscriminate shelling amongst civilian populations has spread terror and caused huge loss of life, including by the use of government forces of chlorine gas, all of this forcing innocent people to flee their homes and search for security and stability wherever they can find it.

In a statement released by the recently established Hermon army, a direct threat was issued to the population of the Druze villages under the regime control in the Mount Hermon region for what they see as their support for the government in Damascus.

The Hermon opposition forces consists of several militia groups including; the brigade of mount Hermon, the Sham Islamic brigade, the al Nusra biragdes, the Omar brigades, the Crest brigades, the United Damascus brigade, the Usama Ibin Zed brigades, the movement of Islamic Martyrs of Asham, the brigades of lion hunters, and the knights brigade.

Al Marsad expresses its deep condemnation for the barbaric acts committed in the village Qalb Luzar that saw the loss of life of 23 innocent people and is deeply concerned at the further issuing of threats to civilians.

We call upon all parties to the conflict to adhere to the standards set out in international human rights and humanitarian law with regard to the protection of civilians. Parties to the conflict must also ensure the protection of prisoners of war and combatants sick or injured or those who have laid down their weapons and are no longer participating in the conflict.

We call upon all parties to the conflict to hold their members accountable for any violations of human rights law and humanitarian law, to allow medical personnel and independent experts to continue their work and cease all threats against civilians.

The gravity of the situation in Syria requires the United Nations Security council to urgently adapt a decision on international humanitarian intervention for protecting the civilian population and stopping the further escalation of conflict. Moreover, there's an urgent need for the referral of the Syrian situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in order to hold those responsible for their crimes accountable.

End