



**Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of
The Arab Republic of Syria- 2016**

Transmitted by Habitat International Coalition, NGO in Consultative Status with United Nations ECOSOC (Special Status, 1993), in cooperation with FIAN International for the Right to Adequate Food.

Website: www.hlrn.org

Email: hlrn@hlrn.org

Systematic Violations of Economic, Social and Culture Rights in the Armed Conflict

Habitat International Coalition's Housing and Land Rights Network (HIC-HLRN) and FIAN International remain deeply concerned over continuing gross violations by the all parties to the conflict in Syria of the civilians' human rights, particularly their economic, social and cultural rights, including their human rights to housing, property, land, food and water.

Introduction

The armed conflict in Syria has become a protracted and chaotic non-international armed conflict and civilians, Syrians of all backgrounds, have been subjected to war crimes, as well as other gross violations of their human rights, including murder, torture, rape, sexual violence and targeting civilians with indiscriminate aerial bombardments resulting in mass civilian casualties and displacement on a massive scale.¹

Five years of the conflict have progressed toward ever more-severe confrontation and polarization, which has led to the deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation for Syrians in country and in their refuge. The conflict among the armed groups in Syria is no longer confined to asserting political power, but has become a fight for hegemony over the cities and territories, as in the systematic, widespread destruction of infrastructure and entire cities such as Aleppo, Homs, Kobani and Eastern Ghouta. The alarming increase in casualties of the civil war has reached 470,000 persons killed, 6.36 million internally displaced and 4 million refugees, constituting 45 percent of the population is placed from their homes and the real population has decreased by 21 percent.²

The war has exacted social and economic serious harm on the people, specifically the vulnerable and marginalized groups, with a notable increase in the Syrian population living under the poverty line, from one third before the conflict to around half at the end of 2013, with about 4.4 million persons becoming extremely poor and unable to fully meet their basic needs.³ Specifically in southern Syria, 88% of the households are currently living in extreme poverty, lacking access to fuel and water, with 87% of the population in the south Syria depend on food aid as primary resources.⁴ The crisis has reversed Syria's human development achievements by 35 years.⁵

The World Bank has estimated the economic cost of the war in Syria at US\$35 billion, and a preliminary Damage Needs Assessment of six Syrian cities at the end of 2014 set the total damage \$3.6–4.5 billion. Housing accounts for 65% of the total damage. Aleppo is the city most affected with 40% of the estimated damage.⁶

The housing sector is gravely affected by the war in densely populated areas such as the periphery of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Dar`a. The war had affected 50 percent of the total housing stock (2,062,218 residences) already by May 2014.⁷

Over the past five years of Syrian conflict, government forces and other parties to conflict have embarked on systematic campaigns to demolish large swaths of urban

areas and destroy entire neighbourhoods in an effort to impose a collective punishment for the communities that support each opposing sides.

According to the Geneva Conventions, adopted in 1977, Destruction and appropriation of property defined as one of the grave breaches.⁸ However the paragraphs 2 (c and e) of Article 8 of the Rome Statute on the armed conflicts not of an international character forbid “intentionally directing attacks against buildings, material, medical units and transport, and personnel using the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions in conformity with international law”⁹ and “pillaging a town or place, even when taken by assault”¹⁰ and “destroying or seizing the property of an adversary unless such destruction or seizure be imperatively demanded by the necessities of the conflict.”¹¹

I. Systematic Bombing and indiscriminate bombardment

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian accused both of the state’s military forces, anti-government armed group, ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra with shelling and indiscriminately targeting populated areas. Government forces have conducted bombing raids that have dropped crudely made “barrel bombs” on populated areas, causing massive destruction and the collapse of buildings around their point of impact, leaving entire neighbourhoods in ruins and leading to a mass displacement of civilians.¹²

The looting and destruction of property has followed government shelling of homes and residential buildings wantonly and without military necessity. These acts have involved the destruction of property in general, or have targeted dissidents and supporters of the opposition.

In July 2012, government forces used explosives and bulldozers to destroy 300 homes in the Tadamun neighbourhood of the capital, Damascus, among the 1,000 buildings that government forces completely destroyed there. Also anti-government groups have launched attacks on government forces from that neighbourhood. Thus, both parties bear responsibility for the destruction of those areas and war crimes that have destroyed lives and put the civilian population in grave danger.¹³

Aleppo, Kobani and al-Ghouta (east of Damascus) are the most-populated areas that have become devastated from widespread and systematic attack, including the use of the chemical weapons against the civilian population causing mass casualties, to punish and terrorize civilians for supporting for one party to the conflict over another.

II. Punitive homes and properties confiscation policy

The “Islamic State” and al-Nusra Front militiamen are accused of confiscating houses and land belonging to Syrian families in al-Raqq`a, Dheir al-Zor and Idlib provinces. Most of the local families are Christians who were forced to leave their areas to villages in the eastern countryside. The militants have distributed most of the confiscated properties among its foreign recruits and militia leaders.¹⁴

In the meantime, the Assyrian and Armenian communities have accused the Democratic Union Party and Syrian wing of the Turkish Kurdistan Workers' Party of expropriating private property belonging to families in al-Ḥasaka province who have become internally displaced and driven away by the conflict. Such violations will cause substantial demographic changes that constitute the war crime of population transfer in international law, and will perpetuate other ethnic divisions and turmoil.¹⁵

The Kurdish community were suffering for decades from the discriminatory policies that the Syrian regime imposed.¹⁶ Among the accompanying violations has been the denial of Kurdish Syrians' access to their land and right to property. In the previous UPR review of Syrian, the Human Rights Council raised this case as one of the main issues in its 2010 observations on Syria. In the follow-up, the Syrian Arab Republic then rejected the recommendation (of Canada) that the state "comply with its legal obligations concerning the rights of minorities and guarantee the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of persons belonging to the Kurdish minority."¹⁷

In November 2016, Kurdish forces belonging to the People's Protection Units (YPG) confiscated three Assyrian villages on the Khabur River in al-Ḥasaka province to build training camps for their troops. The largest one of these is located in the village of Tal Nasri.¹⁸

According to the United Nations principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons, the Syrian regime, Kurdish forces and other parties to the conflict bear the responsibility to provide the necessary procedures and mechanisms to facilitate the process of housing, land and property restitution in an equal and fair manner.¹⁹

III. Destroying Palestinian refugee camps

The situation of 581,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria has become catastrophic as the civil war caused a grave deterioration of living conditions and faced additional threats. Their movement has been restricted to a greater degree than Syrian asylum seekers, as they lose access to vital services of UNRWA and their status complicates their legal situation further upon entry into neighbouring countries

Almost half of the Palestinian refugees in Syria (270,000) have been displaced either internally or outside the country. In addition, 3,089 Palestinians have been killed by the end of 2015 because of the conflict: 1,704 due to indiscriminate bombardment, 665 in attacks and clashes between the Syrian army and opposition forces, while 427 died under torture in the illegal detention by the Hafidh al-Asad regime.²⁰

Most of the Palestinian community in Syria agreed on maintaining neutrality and refraining from intervention in internal Syrian affairs. However, because of their strategic location, al-Yarmouk and Khan al-Shiekh camps, in particular, have been subjected to gross violations under indiscriminate bombardment and forced displacement, siege, arrest campaigns, frequent clashes and starvation. These tragic conditions caused over 70,000 Palestinians to flee to Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and

Turkey, where they are being singled out for increasing restrictions in seeking asylum. They have become the target of growing hostility within the host countries and communities that further disregard the obligation under international law to protect refugees.²¹

Due to the government's serial assaults on al-Yarmouk Camp, bombardment destroyed 40% of the built environment, completely destroying more than 20% of homes. Cannons and Gvozdika artillery were also among the weapons that the regime used, including incendiary missiles that would burn the home after destroying it. Frequent government bombings of Khan al-Shieh Camp between March 2013 and August 2015 left 40% of houses either completely destroyed and uninhabitable or partly destroyed and in need of urgent repair.²²

IV. Systematic blockage and starvation as a weapon of war

The internal conflict and the systematic siege by conflict parties flagrantly have violated the people's rights to basic services to meet their daily needs, including, water, electricity and medical supplies. In addition to witnessing armed conflict, besieged populations faced impossible costs of food and fuel due to inflation.

The UN General Secretary warned that Syrians were facing the "worst humanitarian crisis of our time" and the situation in Syria "haunts the soul." He observed that the use of starvation as a weapon during the conflict is a war crime.²³ Food and water are being weaponized with traditional weapons of war.

The Syrian cities and neighbourhoods subjected to these barbaric starvation tactics include 400,000 people besieged by all parties to the conflict in 15 areas across country and remain in urgent need of emergency assistance. Roughly half of these areas are controlled by ISIS militants, while 12,000 people have been subjected to starvation in areas controlled by opposition armed groups, and another 180,000 in areas controlled by the Syrian government.²⁴

The most affected areas are in Dheir al-Zor province, where 200,000 people are besieged by the "Islamic State" group.²⁵ Madaya, a village located in the northeast of Damascus, was besieged by government troops in 2015 and 2016, where most of the 40,000 people were women and children endured the ban on all commercial or humanitarian access. The two besieged villages of Fouaa and Kfarya, in Idlib province, have a combined population of around 20,000 held by opposition militiamen.²⁶ Most of the residents in these besieged areas are women and children, as well as residents unable to flee.

The Geneva Conventions III and IV establish the legal obligations of all states to protect the access of civilians and prisoners of war to food and water, prohibiting the use of deliberate starvation as a method of warfare.²⁷ Breaching these obligations constitutes a war crime under International Criminal Law. This breach can be considered as genocide or as a crime against humanity if proven that the denial of food was deliberate.²⁸

Furthermore, under International Human Rights Law, the right to adequate food and nutrition requires all States with an immediate obligation to provide, “at the very least, the minimum essential level required to be free from hunger.”²⁹ Equally, States have an immediate obligation not to discriminate access to food on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.³⁰ The prevention of access to humanitarian food aid in conflicts or other emergency situations also constitutes a violation of the human right to adequate food and nutrition.³¹

Similarly, sanctions and related measures, including multilateral and unilateral economic measures, should not prevent individuals and communities from acquiring essentials such as food items or agricultural inputs, as such actions constitute forms of collective punishment that harm the most vulnerable segments of society and are strictly prohibited in international law.

The broader international community, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and subsequent human rights instruments, have international obligations to take joint and separate action to achieve the full realization of the human right to adequate food and nutrition. This entails a joint and individual responsibility of States to cooperate internationally in providing humanitarian assistance in times of emergency and to strengthen the role and capacities of international organizations such as the World Food Programme, UNICEF and the FAO, and to ensure that aid is being delivered without influence or subjugation of those perpetrating conflict and human rights violations. In cooperating internationally, States must prioritize the realization of the rights of disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable population groups, such as women, children, people with disabilities, and elderly people. Moreover, they should avoid that food aid causes adverse impacts on local food production and small-scale food producers.

Also, states have an obligation under international law to cooperate internationally in providing humanitarian assistance in times of emergency and to support the role and capacities of international organizations to ensure the rights of disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable population groups, such as women, children, injured and sick persons, those with disabilities, and elderly people. The state is clearly not complying with its obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food and nutrition in all its components, including adequacy, accessibility, availability and sustainability.

V. Deterioration of the agricultural sector

The agricultural sector had suffered from high natural hydrologic variability and drought before the outbreak of the armed conflict. Although Syria had achieved self-sufficiency in wheat production, the country has experienced multiyear period of extreme drought that contributed to agricultural failures, economic dislocations, and population

displacement estimated at 300,000 rural families fleeing into the cities, also increasing the pressure on resources and public services.³²

Thus, some 1.3 million inhabitants of eastern Syria have been affected by drought, out of which 803,000 have lost almost all of their livelihoods and face extreme hardship. The disaster has had the most-devastating effects on the lives of small-scale farmers who now fail to make enough money to feed their families, and in light of recent conflict it can be assumed that this pressure has increased. Pastoralists also lost around 80% of their livestock between 2006 and 2009.³³

Five years of armed conflict have destroyed much of the country's agricultural infrastructure, displaced food producers and disrupted regional trade of food and agricultural inputs and food availability, and heavily affecting small-scale producers destroying their food systems. Meanwhile, while 9.8 million people in Syria are food insecure, with hunger afflicting more than half of the people remaining in Syria. Half of the livestock have been lost.³⁴

Small-scale farmers and pastoralists have suffered major income losses as result of limited ability to access to the land, reduced availability of irrigation water, reduced marketing opportunities for traditional export crops. Syria has undergone the collapse of veterinary, sanitary, and plant-protection services, increasing the uncontrolled movement of unvaccinated/untreated livestock and risks of disease in seed and planting materials from Syria into Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon.³⁵

Wheat has now become one of the unconventional weapons in the armed conflict between the Syrian army and the opposition, as it is an important strategic commodity that can impact the balance of power when wheat mills come under military control. Bread remains the main food for people of the Middle East.³⁶

Therefore, the Syrian army, "Islamic State" militants and armed opposition groups understand the importance of bread and fighting among each other to control land, water supplies and grain at every point in the wheat-production chain.³⁷

A third of the country's wheat production lies outside the government's control. The "Islamic State" holds the biggest share, including much of the country's breadbasket, the prime wheat-producing lands, which Syrians call al-Jazira, extends along the north and northeast, within al-Ḥasaka governorate.³⁸

Finally, all evidence confirms that armed conflict in Syria has become a war involving the seizure of land, rather than a fight over political power. Consequently, the economic, social and cultural rights of Syrian civilians is subjected to gross violations under the international human rights law, constituting also war crimes under the international humanitarian law.

VI. Gender and Land

During times of conflict and war, women and girls always suffer disproportionately, due to violence and displacement, with consistent reports of sexual and gender-based

abuse, as reported from inside Syria, within refugee camps and communities.³⁹ However, this disproportionate violence also manifests structurally and economically upon return to a country. It is critical that the rights of women to housing, social protection, and protection from discrimination are protected, respected and fulfilled by countries hosting refugees and the agencies supporting refugee communities, both UN and national-level external agencies. Many women, during and after a war suffer from difficulties in recovering land, as many are prevented from securing or restoring titles and/or inheritance rights. It is critical, both during and after a conflict, that the state protect women's rights to land, housing and property, and access to natural resources, respecting international legal instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Security Council resolution 1325 and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, as well as the provisions in the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Syrian Arab Republic had failed to respect, protect and fulfil fundamental human rights of persons within in its territory leading up to the crisis,⁴⁰ which obligation was an important requisite for preventing conflict in any state. Since the outbreak of civil war, no parties have upheld international human rights law or the complementary obligations under international humanitarian law for the protection of civilians caught up in such conflicts.

The UN general secretary has reminded that, respect for the rule of law implies that “all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires, as well, measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness and procedural and legal transparency.”⁴¹ Also, the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, implies that the duty to “investigate violations effectively, promptly, thoroughly and impartially and, where appropriate, take action against those allegedly responsible in accordance with domestic and international law.”⁴²

All parties to the conflict in Syria, including the state actors, armed groups and foreign forces, bear legal obligations and liability for the gross violations of the Syrian people's economic, social and cultural rights. Since the first UPR cycle, these practices have pushed whole communities and the very state to the brink of collapse through the destruction of infrastructure, housing, medical facilities, food systems, and water and power services that have exacerbated pre-existing hardships.⁴³

HIC-HLRN offers the following further recommendations for consideration in the Universal Period Review of Syria and urges that:

- All parties end the ongoing armed conflict and resolve their differences peacefully, resort to democratic means to determine the wishes of the people, and the establishment of a democratic Syrian state;
- All parties to the conflict respect international humanitarian law and cease the use of starvation and the manipulation of food and resources to produce it as a tactic of war. Any military actions that impede civilians and prisoners of war from accessing food and water shall be stopped;
- All parties end the policy and practice of population transfer for the purpose of acquiring land and altering the demographic composition of the territory under their control;
- All parties respect and protect the properties including customary property and all other forms of possessions of the displaced persons and provide all possible facilities to ensure the restitution and reparation mechanisms of their properties in post-conflict; special attention should be put in ensuring access to property to displaced women.
- The UN and its Member states scrutinize the practice of forced displacement and dispossession of Syrian civilians, especially minorities, and take proper action to prosecute the crimes and ensure remedy for the victims in accordance with international law; including reparation, restitution, rehabilitation and non-repetition.
- The Human Rights Council provide more recognition and endorsement of the “Housing and Property Restitution in the Context of Return of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons” (Pinheiro Principles) and their relevance to remedy in Syria;
- International cooperation align with the extraterritorial obligations of states to address the need for development and humanitarian interventions that support citizenship participation and local self-determination, including special attention to the rights of women;
- Emergency humanitarian, development and human rights approaches combine to address the root causes of violations of the human right to adequate food and nutrition by making use and supporting the implementation of the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crisis, endorsed during the 42nd Session of the Committee on World Food Security; including specific measures for the realization of the right to food and nutrition of women.
- Remedial effort coordinate to adopt strategies that allow the affected individuals and communities to recover their autonomy in feeding themselves in dignity and human rights, with special attention on the right to food and nutrition of women and children.

Endnotes:

- ¹“Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic,” 8th Report of Commission of Inquiry on Syria” (8th Col report), A/HRC/27/60, 13 August 2014, at: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session27/Documents/A_HRC_27_60_ENG.doc.
- ²Syrian Center for Policy Research, “Syria Confronting Fragmentation! Impact of Syrian Crisis Report” (February 2016), pp. 8, 61–62, at: <http://www.ara.cat/2016/02/11/1520927894.pdf?hash=3a186be3bc9bfb70d11f0241fd49d847f7f0042>.
- ³United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “UNDP’s Resilience-Based Response to the Regional Syrian Crisis, Impact of the Syria Crisis,” December 2013, at: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Syria_UNDP_response_brochure_Dec13_Final.pdf.
- ⁴“The Forgotten South: Food Security & Livelihoods in Southern Syria,” Executive Summary, CARE international in Jordan, January 2016, at: http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/Syria-Crisis-Forgotten-South-ExecSumm-small%2008022016_0.pdf
- ⁵UNDP, op. cit.
- ⁶Assessing Aleppo, Dar’a, Hama, Homs, Idlib, and Latakia over seven sectors: housing, health, education, energy, water and sanitation, transport and agriculture. World Bank Middle East and North Africa Region, “The Economic Effect of War and Peace,” *MENA Quarterly Economic Brief*, Issue 6 (January 2016), p. 11, at: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2016/02/10/090224b0841636e1/3_0/Rendere d/PDF/TheOeconomicOeffectsOofOwarOandOpeace.pdf.
- ⁷“Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic Macroeconomic Implications and Obstacles to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals” (New York: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2014), at: https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/e_escwa_edgd_14_tp-5_e.pdf.
- ⁸Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions, article 85 (5), adopted 1977.
- ⁹ICC Statute, Article 8(2)(b)(xxiv) and (e)(ii) (cited in Vol. II, Ch. 7, § 832). at: https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule30#Fn_50_1.
- ¹⁰ICC Statute, Article 8(2)(b)(xvi) (ibid., § 468). at: https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule52#Fn_71_5.
- ¹¹First Geneva Convention, Article 50 (ibid., § 53); Second Geneva Convention, Article 51 (ibid., § 53); Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 147 (ibid., § 53). at: https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule50#Fn_65_2.
- ¹²Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, “The use of barrel bombs and indiscriminate bombardment in Syria: the need to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law,” the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 12 March 2015, at: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColSyria/ColSyriaIndiscriminateBombardment12032015.pdf>.
- ¹³4th Col report, op. cit., p. 23.
- ¹⁴Yousef Sarbaz, “Islamic State militants confiscate civilians’ houses in Syria’s Deir-ez-Zor,” *ARA News* (28 February 2016), at: <http://aranews.net/2016/02/islamic-state-militants-confiscate-civilians-houses-in-syrias-deir-ez-zor/>; also, “Al-Nusra Confiscates People’s Houses, Properties in Syria’s Idlib,” *FARS News* (26 January 2016), at: <http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941106001092>.
- ¹⁵“Assyrians, Armenians in Syria Protest Kurdish Confiscation of Property,” *AINA News*, 02 November 2015, at: <http://www.aina.org/news/20151102170051.htm>.
- ¹⁶See HIC-HLRN stakeholder submission to first cycle of UPR of Syria. “Systematic Housing and Land Rights Violations against Syrian Kurds,” March 2011, at:
- ¹⁷“Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/19/11, 24 January 2012, p. 24, at: <http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?Open&DS=A/HRC/19/11&Lang=E>, and Addendum, at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/session12/SY/A_HRC_19_11_Add.1_Syria_E.doc.
- ¹⁸“Kurdish YPG Forces Setup Training Camps in 3 Assyrian Villages in Syria,” *AINA News*, 2 February 2016, at: <http://www.aina.org/news/20160204190217.htm>
- ¹⁹“Handbook on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons Implementing the ‘Pinheiro Principles’,” FAO, IDMC, OCHA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, March 2007, at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/pinheiro_principles.pdf.
- ²⁰“Detailed Statistics for Palestinian Victims who were killed from 2011 till 9-2015,” The Action Group for Palestinians of Syria Studies Department, 5 January 2016, at: http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/reports/special/12_2015_statistics.pdf
- ²¹Leah Morrison, “The vulnerability of Palestinian refugees from Syria,” *Forced Migration Review*, September 2014, at: <http://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/syria/morrison.pdf>; also, Ramzy Baroud, Palestinian

- refugees in Syria starving to death, report,” The Middle East Children’s Alliance, 14 January 2014, at: <https://www.mecaforpeace.org/news/palestinian-refugees-syria-starving-death-report>.
- ²² Violation Documentation Center in Syria, “A Special Report on the Siege of Yarmouk Camp in Damascus and Mo’adamieh City in Damascus Suburbs,” September 2013, at: <http://www.vdc-sy.info/pdf/reports/1379660373-English.pdf>; Also, Ibrahim Al Ali, “Khan Al Shieh A Camp under Fire,” A Documentary Report Monitoring Important Events at Khan Al Shieh Camp for Palestinian Refugees in Syria during the period from 15 March 2011 till 15 August 2015, Action Group for Palestinians of Syria (AGPS), 19 November 2015, at: http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/reports/special/khan_alshieh_camp_uf_en.pdf.
- ²³ “Starvation ‘as a weapon’ is a war crime, UN chief warns parties to conflict in Syria,” *UN News Center*, 14 January 2016, at: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53003#.VvJod9J95R0>.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ “Daily Brief: Deteriorating conditions in Deir-ezZor, Syria,” UNOCHA, 18 January, 2016, at: <http://www.unocha.org/media-centre/noon-briefing/daily-brief-18-january-2016-sharply-deteriorating-conditions-besieged-deir-e>.
- ²⁶ Zeina Karam, “Hunger grips millions across the Middle East,” *The Arab Weekly*, Issue 44, 19/02/2016, at: <http://www.thearabweekly.com/?id=3888>.
- ²⁷ Geneva Convention III, arts 20 and 26; Geneva Convention IV, arts. 23, 36, 49, 55 and 89.
- ²⁸ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, art. 8 (2) (b) (xxv).
- ²⁹ CESCR General Comment No. 12: The Right to Adequate Food, art.11.
- ³⁰ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art.2.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² Peter H. Gleick, “Water, Drought, Climate Change, and Conflict in Syria,” Pacific Institute, Oakland, California, July 2014, at: http://religioner.no/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/religioner.no_wcas-d-13-00059.pdf.
- ³³ Mahmoud Solh, “Tackling the drought in Syria,” *Nature Middle East*, 27 September 2010, at: <http://www.natureasia.com/en/nmiddleeast/article/10.1038/nmiddleeast.2010.206>.
- ³⁴ “FAO Response to the Syria Crisis, A call for increased support in agriculture,” *FAO*, 2015, at: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/FAO%20RSC_2015_web.pdf; also, “Syria: Better rains improve wheat production, but food security situation remains bleak,” *FAO*, 23 July 2015, at: <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/317282/icode/>.
- ³⁵ “Syria Crisis Challenges Facing Agriculture and Food Security,” *FAO*, April 2014, at: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/Syria-Crisis-Executive-Brief-03-04-14.pdf, also, “Impact of the conflict on Syrian economy and livelihoods,” Syria Needs Analysis Project, July 2013, at: <http://www.mapaction.org/component/mapcat/download/2960.html?fmt=pdf>.
- ³⁶ Annia Ciezadlo, “The most unconventional weapon in Syria: Wheat,” *Washington Post* (18 December 2015), at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-most-unconventional-weapon-in-syria-wheat/2015/12/18/781a0ae0-9cf4-11e5-bce4-708fe33e3288_story.html.
- ³⁷ Suleiman al-Khalidi and Maha EL Dahan, “Exclusive: War-ravaged Syria may face worst wheat harvest in 40 years,” *Reuters*, 28 April 2014, at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-wheat-crops-exclusive-idUSBREA3R0I120140428>; also, Suleiman al-Khalidi, “Fiercer Syria fighting hits main wheat growing areas: FAO,” *Reuters*, 19 November 2015, at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-wheat-idUSKCN0T816520151119>.
- ³⁸ Joanna Paraszczuk, “The ISIS Economy: Crushing Taxes and High Unemployment,” *The Atlantic*, 2 September 2015, at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/isis-territory-taxes-recruitment-syria/403426/>.
- ³⁹ Ghida Anani, “Syria Crisis: Dimension of gender-based violence against Syria refugees in Lebanon,” *Forced Migration Review* no. 44, September 2013, at: <http://www.fmreview.org/detention/anani.html>
- ⁴⁰ HIC-HLRN stakeholder submission (March 2011), *op. cit.*, *supra* 16.
- ⁴¹ “The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies,” Report of the Secretary-General, S/2004/616, 23 August 2004, at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2004/616.
- ⁴² “Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law,” Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution A/RES/60/147, 21 March 2006, at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/496/42/PDF/N0549642.pdf?OpenElement>.
- ⁴³ “Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic,” 4th Report of Commission of Inquiry on Syria, A/HRC/22/59, 5 February 2013, at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColSyria/A.HRC.22.59_en.pdf.