

Press release

Syria

Daraa : Ten days of massacres The international community must act immediately

<http://www.fidh.org/Daraa-Ten-days-of-massacres>

« *Syrian security forces continue to perpetrate severe human rights violations in the city of Daraa that amount to international crimes* », warned the Damascus center for human rights studies (DCHRS) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) today.

Tank-backed Syrian Security forces have taken siege over the city of Daraa for the past ten days, preventing residents from leaving their homes and resulting in very difficult humanitarian conditions. Security forces cut electricity, landlines, and mobile coverage before undertaking its attack on the city; furthermore, they have taken out water reservoirs on the tops of building by firing live bullets at them. Lack of food, water, and children's milk are serious concerns for residents in Daraa.

“The Syrian government is repeating the same actions and responses it undertook in 1982 during the Hama massacre. The government is collectively punishing Daraa and other cities that are protesting against Assad’s regime.” said Radwan Ziadeh, Director of DCHRS.

Security forces continue their attack on the city, snipers have been stationed on the rooftops of high buildings and are targeting any moving persons, and units composed of four-army forces have been using anti-aircraft machine guns to target densely populated neighborhoods, such as Al-Mahata and Daraa Al-Balad in the city of Daraa. *“Every single house around the Omari Mosque has been targeted”* said an eyewitness that DCHRS managed to talk with.

Another eyewitness in Daraa told DCHRS that army and security officers are preventing residents from leaving their homes or even from removing dead bodies from the streets. *“Dead bodies remain in the streets for more than 24 hours and then disappear.”*

Authorities strictly prevented the burial of any of the dead. *“We had three refrigerated trucks, that were used for shipping food in and out of Syria, in which we kept 80 bodies per truck, after three days security forces took the trucks and returned them empty,”* he said.

According to a very reliable source who works in the medical field in the Tishreen Military Hospital who spoke to DCHRS, on April 30 security forces moved 182 civilian dead bodies from Daraa to the Tishreen Military Hospital in Damascus. And on May 1, moved 62 civilian dead bodies from Daraa to the same hospital. A total of 244 dead bodies within two days of which several were children. The same source told DCHRS that the Tishreen Military Hospital has received 81 bodies of soldiers and army officers, most of them killed by a gunshot bullet to the back It is strongly suspected that these soldiers have been killed for their refusal to shoot civilians.

Security forces have arrested at least 700 people in the last ten days in Daraa. Armed security officers are storming every single house in the city Daraa arresting all males between the ages of

18-45. It has been reported that the detainees are being kept in the national football stadium. Some of the detainees have already been sent to Damascus.

“The international community should act immediately in order to urge the Syrian authorities to put an end to these crimes against civilians. Besieging cities and arresting and killing hundreds of civilians demands a stronger reaction from the international community than what we have seen thus far” said Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President.

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