

**Data analysis suggests over 60,000 people killed in Syria conflict** UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay

OHCHR Media Centre

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An exhaustive analysis carried out by data specialists on behalf of the UN Human Rights Office has led to the compilation of a list of 59,648 individuals reported killed in Syria between 15 March 2011 and 30 November 2012, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said on Wednesday.

“Given there has been no let-up in the conflict since the end of November, we can assume that more than 60,000 people have been killed by the beginning of 2013,” Pillay said. “The number of casualties is much higher than we expected, and is truly shocking.”

The preliminary analysis, which took five months to complete, was conducted using a combined list of 147,349 reported killings, fully identified by the first and last name of the victim, as well as the date and location of the death. Any reported killing that did not include at least these four elements was excluded from the list, which was compiled using datasets from seven different sources, including the Government. (...)

“Although this is the most detailed and wide-ranging analysis of casualty figures so far, this is by no means a definitive figure,” the High Commissioner said. (...) “Once there is peace in Syria, further investigations will be necessary to discover precisely how many people have died, and in what circumstances, and who was responsible for all the crimes that have been committed. This analysis provides a very useful basis upon which future investigations can be built to enhance accountability and provide justice and reparations to victims’ families.”

“This massive loss of life could have been avoided if the Syrian government had chosen to take a different path than one of ruthless suppression of what were initially peaceful and legitimate protests by unarmed civilians,” Pillay said. “As the situation has continued to degenerate, increasing numbers have also been killed by anti-government armed groups, and there has been a proliferation of serious crimes including war crimes, and -- most probably -- crimes against humanity, by both sides. Cities, towns and villages have been, and are continuing to be, devastated by aerial attacks, shelling, tank fire, bomb attacks and street-to-street fighting. In addition, the increasingly sectarian nature of the conflict, highlighted in the recent update by the independent international Commission of Inquiry on Syria, means a swift end to the conflict will be all the more difficult to accomplish.”

The analysts noted that 60,000 is likely to be an underestimate of the actual number of deaths, given that reports containing insufficient information were excluded from the list, and that a significant number of killings may not have been documented at all by any of the seven sources. The recording and collection of accurate and reliable data has grown increasingly challenging due to the conflict raging in many parts of the country.

The analysis -- which the High Commissioner stressed is “a work in progress, not a final product” -- shows a steady increase in the average number of documented deaths per month 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. (...)

“While many details remain unclear, there can be no justification for the massive scale of the killing highlighted by this analysis,” the High Commissioner said. (...)

“The failure of the international community, in particular the Security Council, to take concrete actions to stop the blood-letting, shames us all,” Pillay said. “For almost two years now, my staff and the staff of the independent Commission of Inquiry have been interviewing Syrians inside and outside the country, listening to their stories and gathering evidence. We have been repeatedly asked: ‘Where is the international community? Why aren’t you acting to stop this slaughter?’ We have no satisfactory answer to those questions. Collectively, we have fiddled at the edges while Syria burns.” (...)

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