



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Syria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 13 August 2012**

### **Information on risk to civilians regarding present security situation**

The *UNHCR* in July 2012 notes:

“UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres today expressed his growing concern for the dramatic numbers of people who are fleeing their homes in Syria. "With the spread of deadly violence, I am gravely concerned for the thousands of Syrian civilians and refugees who have been forced to flee," said Guterres...” (UNHCR (20 July 2012) *UNHCR gravely concerned about dramatic escalation of Syria exodus*).

A report published in July 2012 by the *United Nations Security Council* states:

“Strongly condemns the widespread, systematic and gross violations of human rights, acts of violence, going atrocities going atrocities and indiscriminate targeting of civilians by the authorities, and also condemns the human rights violations and crimes that members of the Government-controlled militia Shabbiha continue to commit against the Syrian people...” (United Nations Security Council (16 July 2012) *Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic*, p.2).

In July 2012 a report issued by the *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre* notes:

“As the fighting between government forces and the Free Syrian Army and Sunni Islamic militants has intensified so has the burden on the civilian population” (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (31 July 2012) *Syria: A full-scale displacement and humanitarian crisis with no solutions in sight*, p.8).

This report also states:

“The targeting of civilians prompted ICRC to publicly express its shock and to urge the parties to the conflict to distinguish between civilians and combatants” (ibid, p.8).

ICRC is an acronym for the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The *UNHCR* in July 2012 states:

“United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay on Friday expressed deep alarm at the increased threat to civilians in Syria as the conflict and violence escalates across many towns and villages, as well as the country's two biggest cities Damascus and Aleppo” (UNHCR (27 July 2012) *Navi Pillay Warns Of Consequences Under International Law As Syria Conflict Escalates*).

A publication issued in August 2012 by the *International Crisis Group* describing the ongoing security situation states:

“As an increasing number of areas were destroyed, the regime made fewer efforts to protect or support affected civilians” (International Crisis Group (1 August 2012) *Syria’s Mutating Conflict*, p.7).

In August 2012 *Human Rights Watch* states:

“Civilians in and around the embattled Syrian city of Aleppo are increasingly at risk from aerial attacks, artillery shelling and gunfire” (Human Rights Watch (10 August 2012) *Syria: Aleppo Civilians at Great Risk*).

The *United Nations News Service* in August 2012 states:

“The head of United Nations observers in Syria today spoke out about the ongoing fighting taking place in the Middle Eastern country, particularly in the city of Aleppo, and on its impact on civilians” (United Nations News Service (6 August 2012) *Syria - Amidst heavy fighting, head of UN observer mission voices concern over Aleppo*).

This article also notes:

“Syria has been wracked by violence, with an estimated 17,000 people, mostly civilians, killed since the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad began some 17 months ago” (ibid).

An *Amnesty International* report issued in August 2012 points out that:

“The international community has before it ample, credible documentation of the scale and gravity of violations committed, but it has so far failed to put any meaningful pressure on the Syrian authorities to halt their onslaught against civilians suspected of protesting or supporting the opposition” (Amnesty International (1 August 2012) *All-out repression, Purging dissent in Aleppo, Syria*, p.31).

## References

Amnesty International (1 August 2012) *All-out repression, Purging dissent in Aleppo, Syria*

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Attachment not included due to IT limitations

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Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (31 July 2012) *Syria: A full-scale displacement and humanitarian crisis with no solutions in sight*

[http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/8474B2AE5164B7DAC1257A4C004B6634/\\$file/syria-overview-july2012.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/8474B2AE5164B7DAC1257A4C004B6634/$file/syria-overview-july2012.pdf)

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

#### Sources Consulted

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European Country of Origin Information Network  
Freedom House  
Google  
Human Rights Watch  
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada  
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre  
International Crisis Group  
IRIN News  
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