

Syrie : violence sexuelle et violence liée au genre

Recherche rapide de l'analyse-pays

Berne, le 19 avril 2018

Impressum

Editeur

Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés OSAR
Case postale, 3001 Berne
Tél. 031 370 75 75
Fax 031 370 75 00
E-mail: info@osar.ch
Internet: www.osar.ch
CCP dons: 10-10000-5

Versions disponibles :
Français et allemand

COPYRIGHT

© 2018 Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés OSAR, Berne
Copies et impressions autorisées sous réserve de la mention de la source.

1 Introduction

Le présent document a été rédigé par l'analyse-pays de l'Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés (OSAR) à la suite d'une demande qui lui a été adressée. Il se penche sur les questions suivantes :

1. De quelles connaissances factuelles et statistiques dispose-t-on aujourd'hui sur la violence systématique exercée à l'égard des femmes par les membres des forces de sécurité de l'Etat syrien ? Existe-t-il de la documentation dans le domaine ?
2. Quelles sont les conséquences de la violence sexuelle et de la violence liée au genre sur les femmes concernées ? Qu'en est-il des effets sur la documentation de ces violences ?

Pour répondre à ces questions, l'analyse-pays de l'OSAR s'est fondée sur des sources accessibles publiquement et disponibles dans les délais impartis (recherche rapide) ainsi que sur des renseignements d'expert-e-s.

2 Violence sexuelle et violence liée au genre dans le conflit syrien

La violence sexuelle comme arme de guerre, les femmes touchées de manière disproportionnée. Selon la *Commission d'enquête sur la Syrie* mise en place par le Conseil des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies (HCR, mars 2018), la violence sexuelle est utilisée en Syrie depuis le début de la guerre de façon continue. Avec l'augmentation croissante au fil des ans du nombre d'acteurs armés impliqués, les formes de violence liée au genre se sont également diversifiées et intensifiées. Les premiers faits de violence sexuelle et de violence liée au genre ont été commis par les forces gouvernementales au cours d'opérations au sol, aux points de contrôle et pendant la détention des victimes. Suite à l'émergence de groupes extrémistes, dont *Daesh* et *Jabhat Fatah al-Sham*, les femmes et les filles sont soumises à un plus large éventail de violations des droits humains, notamment des exécutions, des restrictions à la liberté de mouvement, des restrictions vestimentaires et des châtiments corporels en cas de non-respect des normes imposées. Le rapport montre que des personnes issues de toutes les ethnies, confessions et convictions politiques ont été victimes de violence sexuelle. Toutefois, les femmes et les filles sont touchées de manière disproportionnée, quels que soient les auteurs et la zone géographique. Plusieurs sources (HRC mars 2018, AI juin 2017, HRGJ mars 2016, CEDAW juillet 2014, MADRE mars 2013) indiquent dans leurs rapports que la violence sexuelle est utilisée comme arme de guerre aussi bien par les forces gouvernementales que par les groupes armés de l'opposition pour intimider le parti adverse et détruire son identité, sa dignité et les structures sociales des familles et communautés.

Une stigmatisation énorme des victimes de violence sexuelle. Les sources consultées par l'analyse-pays de l'OSAR (HRC mars 2018, AI juin 2017, CEDAW juillet 2014, SNHR novembre 2017, LSE mars 2017, HRGJ mars 2016, MADRE mars 2013) rapportent toutes sans exception que les personnes violées et abusées sexuellement sont fortement stigmatisées par la société syrienne et par leurs propres familles. Selon le *Centre for Women, Peace and Security de la London School of Economics and Political Science* (LSE mars 2014), l'honneur de la famille est étroitement associé aux femmes dans la société patriarcale syrienne.

L'abus sexuel d'une femme jette donc, selon cette conception sociale, la honte sur l'ensemble de la famille et de la communauté. Les conséquences pour les survivantes de violence sexuelle sont dévastatrices, allant, selon la *Commission d'enquête de l'ONU* (HRC, mars 2018), de menaces de divorce et d'exclusion de leurs propres familles aux crimes d'honneur dans les régions plus conservatrices. Pour les femmes et les filles non mariées, les perspectives d'un futur mariage peuvent être ruinées. Beaucoup de victimes – hommes et femmes – taisent les faits par crainte de telles conséquences. Il leur est donc impossible de bénéficier en toute sécurité de traitements et de l'assistance psychologique nécessaires, même si ces soins sont disponibles. Dans certains cas, les femmes survivantes montrent des intentions suicidaires ; selon le HRC (mars 2016) et AI (juin 2016), certaines personnes finissent véritablement par mettre fin à leurs jours.

Le viol présumé peut également avoir des conséquences dramatiques. Selon le CEDAW (juillet 2014), il existe au sein de la population syrienne une croyance répandue selon laquelle toutes les femmes emprisonnées par des acteurs armés seraient violées, ce qui représente un énorme problème. Les femmes sont ainsi marginalisées par leur famille après leur sortie de prison et considérées comme « inaptes » au mariage. Dans certains cas, pour de simples soupçons de viol, elles sont contraintes au divorce, voire tuées. Le rapport cite le cas d'un homme ayant tiré sur sa fille au moment où elle se faisait attaquer par un groupe armé pour éviter la « honte » que jetterait un viol éventuel. Dans un autre cas, un homme a divorcé d'une femme qui avait été détenue par des fonctionnaires pendant deux heures à un poste de contrôle, parce que, persuadé qu'elle avait été violée, il estimait qu'elle n'avait plus une « bonne » réputation. LSE (mars 2014) rapporte également que des femmes incarcérées ont été rejetées par leur famille, qu'elles aient été violées ou non.

La violence liée au genre est un sujet tabou, l'enregistrement et la documentation sont difficiles. Selon LSE (mars 2017), la violence sexuelle à l'égard des femmes en Syrie n'est pas assez documentée, de nombreuses victimes n'osant pas en parler en raison du conflit en cours et de la menace de stigmatisation ou de la crainte de représailles. Le rapport de la *Commission d'enquête de l'ONU* (HRC, mars 2018), fondé sur 454 entretiens avec des victimes de violence sexuelle, des proches de victimes, leurs communautés, des spécialistes de la santé ou des représentant-e-s juridiques, considère lui aussi que la cause du silence est liée à la stigmatisation sociale et culturelle. Le rapport précise en outre qu'il faut souvent des mois ou des années aux victimes pour parler de ce qu'elles ont vécu, voire qu'elles ne parviennent jamais à le faire. Selon *Amnesty International* (juin 2017), *l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'homme* a recensé 7686 cas de violence sexuelle à l'égard des femmes, dont 432 à l'égard de filles mineures. Selon AI et la *Human Rights and Gender Justice Clinic* de la *New York School of Law* (HRGJ 2016), le nombre de cas non signalés est probablement beaucoup plus élevé, s'agissant d'un sujet hautement tabou.

3 Violence sexuelle exercée par les forces de sécurité de l'Etat syrien

Viols et abus sexuels commis lors de perquisitions à domicile, en détention et aux points de contrôle à l'encontre de femmes accusées de soutenir l'opposition. En 2013 déjà, MADRE a fait état de l'usage systématique de diverses formes de violence, notamment du viol et du viol collectif, à l'égard des femmes de la part du régime syrien et des milices proches du gouvernement, lors de perquisitions à domicile, aux postes de contrôle et dans

les institutions pénitentiaires. Selon le rapport de la *Commission d'enquête de l'ONU sur la Syrie* (HRC, mars 2018), des femmes soupçonnées de soutenir l'opposition ont été arrêtées arbitrairement, parfois à la place d'hommes de leur famille recherchés mais demeurés introuvables. Des proches et parentes de déserteurs, d'opposants réels ou présumés du régime et de membres de groupes d'opposition armés, ainsi que des femmes qui ont fourni une assistance médicale et de la nourriture à des membres de l'opposition ont été incarcérées ou enlevées. Elles ont été arrêtées lors de manifestations, lors de perquisitions à domicile, à des points de contrôle ou dans des offices de l'Etat, par exemple, lorsqu'elles voulaient renouveler des papiers ou percevoir leur salaire. D'autres ont été kidnappées dans la rue puis transférées dans des centres de détention, y compris dans des maisons abandonnées, des usines, des entrepôts ou des centres sportifs convertis en centres de détention non officiels.

Femmes détenues contraintes aux aveux par la violence sexuelle. La *Commission d'enquête de l'ONU* (HRC, mars 2018) cite dans son rapport de nombreux cas où les forces de sécurité ont violé et torturé des femmes au cours d'interrogatoires dans les centres de détention afin de les contraindre à avouer leur soutien présumé à l'opposition ou à fournir des informations sur le lieu où se trouvaient des proches de sexe masculin. Dans certains cas, des femmes ont été violées devant d'autres détenu-e-s voire devant leurs enfants. Les violences sexuelles commises contre les femmes et les filles ont été documentées dans 20 institutions du régime entre 2011 et 2016, dont celles d'Alep, de Damas, de Homs, de Lattaquié et de Quneitra.

La violence sexuelle exercée par les forces de sécurité de l'État syrien est systématique. Selon le rapport du LSE (mars 2017), le gouvernement syrien a fait un usage ciblé aux niveaux militaire et politique de la violence sexuelle pour mater l'opposition. Pour AI également (juin 2017), il est clair que le recours à la violence sexuelle par les forces de sécurité de l'État syrien est une stratégie pour mettre à mal l'opposition et briser toute la famille. L'utilisation par les soldats de stimulants et la distribution de contraceptifs aux détenues sont autant d'éléments confirmant le caractère systématique des viols, écrit l'organisation des droits humains en se fondant sur le reportage de la journaliste française Manon Loizeau. Les personnes interrogées par la *Commission d'enquête de l'ONU* (HRC, mars 2018) ont également fait état de la distribution dans les prisons de médicaments servant à suspendre les règles ou de moyens de contraception. Selon LSE (mars 2017), la violence sexuelle utilisée par le régime syrien présente des traits communs et un certain degré d'organisation, ce qui suppose la responsabilité de hauts fonctionnaires.

Humiliation infligée par diverses formes de violence liée au genre. La *Commission d'enquête des Nations Unies sur la Syrie* (HRC, mars 2018) rapporte que des membres des forces gouvernementales syriennes ont également fait usage d'autres formes de violence liée au genre pour humilier et briser les femmes. Les témoignages font état de femmes détenues contraintes de danser nues devant les fonctionnaires du gouvernement et de leur servir à boire. Dans d'autres cas, les membres des forces gouvernementales ont menacé des femmes de publier des images sur lesquelles elles apparaissaient sans le voile ou vêtues de manière non conforme au code musulman. MADRE (mars 2013) rapporte que, dans les rues de Karmal-Zeitoun, des femmes ont été forcées de marcher nues devant des chars d'assaut.

AI, juin 2017 :

«Seit Beginn der Revolution werden Frauen in Syrien systematisch entführt, in Gefängnissen des Regimes gefoltert und sexuell missbraucht. Nach ihrer Befreiung werden sie oft von ihren Familien verstossen.

Die sexuelle Gewalt, die von der syrischen Regierung gegenüber Frauen angewandt wird, ist ein wenig bekannter Aspekt dieses schrecklichen Krieges. **Das Regime von Bashar al-Assad zielt ganz bewusst auf die Frauen. Denn es weiss, dass die Inhaftierung einer Frau die ganze Familie trifft.** Mit Hilfe des Geheimdienstes oder von Milizen werden Frauen inhaftiert und danach sexuell missbraucht. **Die syrische Beobachtungsstelle für Menschenrechte hat 7686 Fälle gezählt, in denen Frauen Opfer sexueller Gewalt wurden, darunter 432 Mädchen, die jünger als 18 Jahre waren.**

Die wahren Zahlen dürften um ein Vielfaches höher sein. Oft wird aus einer solchen willkürlichen Verhaftung ein Fall des Verschwindenlassens. Doch die Regierung verneint, diese Frauen verhaftet zu haben, auch wenn Familien es bezeugen können.(...)

Eine Kriegswaffe

«Diese Form der Gewalt wurde zu einer Waffe des Regimes, um die Clans zu zerschmettern und den Widerstand zu brechen», bestätigt die französische Reporterin Manon Loizeau, die soeben einen Dokumentarfilm mit dem Titel «Silent War» beendet hat. (...) **Es ist offensichtlich, dass es sich um eine Strategie handelt. Die Soldaten verwenden Aufputzmittel und es werden Verhütungsmittel an einige Häftlinge verteilt»,** ergänzt Manon Loizeau.(...) **In der konservativen syrischen Gesellschaft sind Vergewaltigung und sexueller Missbrauch weiterhin extreme Tabuthemen. Dies ist der Grund, warum es so schwierig ist, die Misshandlung von Frauen in Gefängnissen zu dokumentieren.**

Im schlimmsten Fall werden die Frauen Opfer von sogenannten Ehrenmorden, um die «Würde der Familie wiederherzustellen ». **Andere begehen Selbstmord.** **«Als ich aus der Haft entlassen wurde, ging ich zu meiner Tante. Sie warf mir vor, im Gefängnis ein Objekt von beschämenden Praktiken gewesen zu sein und die Familienehre befleckt zu haben.** Sie zwang mich, nach Damaskus zurückzukehren. [...] Einige Monate später haben zwei junge Männer versucht, mich zu ermorden», erzählt die 19-jährige Zaina, die im Rahmen des Berichts von Euro-Med Rights befragt wurde.» Source: Amnesty International, Syrien: Gewalt und Tabus, juin 2017: www.amnesty.ch/de/ueber-amnesty/publikationen/magazin-amnesty/2017-2/gewalt-und-tabus.

CEDAW, juillet 2014 :

«For example, there is a prevailing belief that all women who are detained or imprisoned by armed actors are raped—an additional violation that does in fact occur, but not in all cases. Upon release from detention or checkpoints, and after house raids, women are often alienated from their families and viewed as “unfit” for marriage, and in some instances divorced or killed, because family members believe they were raped.²¹ In one recent case a man shot his daughter when an armed group approached her, to prevent the “disgrace” of rape.²² In another case, government forces detained and interrogated a woman at a checkpoint for two hours; her husband subsequently divorced her because he assumed she had been raped and believed she no longer had a “good” reputation.²³ (...)

Such fear of sexual violence committed by armed actors in Syria has unfortunately proven well founded, and cases of gender-based violence committed with complete impunity by armed actors are stacking up as the conflict progresses. Over the last three years, patterns of sexual violence perpetrated by both government and opposition forces have emerged. **Numerous UN bodies and representatives, as well as**

NGOs, have documented widespread and systemic gender-based violence, with the UN warning that the conflict in Syria is increasingly marked by torture and sexual violence used “as a weapon of war to intimidate parties to the conflict destroying identity, dignity and the social fabrics of families and communities.”²⁶ Over the last two years, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (the Commission) has consistently reiterated that the pattern and practice of sexual violence carried out in the conflict meets the standards for constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes.²⁷ In March 2013, the UN Secretary General reiterated the Commission’s finding that acts of sexual violence are part of a widespread and systematic attack by the government.²⁸

The Commission has repeatedly confirmed a pattern of sexual violence as a weapon of war during house searches and at checkpoints, committed by Syrian government forces and government-controlled militia (Shabbiha).²⁹ Specifically, the Commission also documented numerous reports of rape, including gang rape, and other forms of sexual violence committed against women and girls believed to be affiliated with the opposition.³⁰ Quelle: United Nations Committee to End all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Seeking Accountability and Demanding Change: A Report on Women’s Human Rights Violations in Syria Before and During the Conflict, juillet 2014, p. 5-6: https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1347436/1930_1406640014_int-cedaw-ngo-syr-17381-e.pdf.

HRC, 8 mars 2018 :

« Since its inception, sexual and gender-based violence has been a devastating feature of the Syrian conflict.¹ As the numbers of warring parties multiplied, so too did forms of sexual and gender-based violence, now documented in virtually every governorate countrywide, including rape, sexual assault, sexual torture, and sexual humiliation. While Syrians from all backgrounds suffer immeasurably as a result of sexual and gender-based violence, women and girls have been disproportionately affected, victimised on multiple grounds, irrespective of perpetrator or geographical area. (...) As the complexity of the Syrian conflict increased, so did the manner, form, and range of perpetrators committing sexual and gender-based violence. Initial incidents of sexual and gender-based violence were carried out by Government forces during ground operations, at checkpoints, and during detention of victims. The emergence of extremist groups, including the terrorist groups ISIL and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, has resulted in women, girls, and minorities being subjected to a wider range of violations including executions, restriction of freedom of movement, restrictions of dress, and subsequent corporal punishment for breach of the codes imposed. (...) Sexual and gender-based violence during conflict, as in times of peace, is consistently underreported. Challenges to documenting sexual and gender-based violations include the social and cultural stigma attached to such incidents. This greatly reduces the willingness of survivors to disclose sexual violence they endured. It frequently takes months or years for survivors to be able to discuss their experiences, if ever, given that they are often blamed for the events and for bringing shame to their families. Additional challenges to documenting such violations include the reduction in flow of refugees able to leave the Syrian Arab Republic, thereby reducing the access to potential survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. 6. Consequences for female survivors of sexual violence range from the very real threats of divorce and excommunication from one’s family, to honour killings, particularly in more conservative areas. For unmarried women and girls, the prospects of a future marriage can be ruined. Many survivors – female and male – also remain in denial, unable to safely access treatment and mental health services even if they are available. In extreme cases, female survivors describe suicidal feelings with some eventually taking their own lives. Male victims also suffer long-

term physical and mental health issues including depression, many times compounded by an inability to admit to others what they experienced, in large part out of fear that perceived loss of masculinity would prevent them from fulfilling traditional gender roles. (...) **House raids were characterised by arrests of men and sexual violence against women and girls, as well as killings of men, women, and occasionally children. These acts were often followed by looting and destruction of personal property.** 11. **Survivors of sexual violence and defectors of the Syrian army link rapes of women and girls during house raids to the arrest of men, with the rapes considered as punishment for rebellion and a way to deter opposition.** An interviewee described how during a ground operation in al-Harak (Dara'a), graffiti on the walls read "Your men in our prisons, your women on our laps", which she interpreted as retribution acts to male and female opponents of the Government respectively. 12. (...) While the main objective of house raids was to arrest men believed to be opposition supporters, raids provided the opportunity to quell the opposition in other ways. These included instilling fear through sexual violence, killings, and looting. **Inside their homes, women and girls not only witnessed the arrests and killings of male relatives but were also the primary victims of sexual violence aimed at causing maximum terror and humiliation to the population.** (...) In many instances, **women and girls were arrested during house raids and taken to Government detention facilities as a way to pressure their male relatives into surrendering. Residents of Homs city stated that Government forces raided houses looking for men and, when they could not locate them, arrested their mothers, wives, and/or daughters.** This was confirmed by army defectors, including a soldier who participated in a ground operation in Heit (as-Suweida) in January 2012. He was present when army soldiers broke into a house looking for an opposition supporter and when they found he had fled, raped his wife and three daughters, burned the house, and detained the four women. Such tactics were allowed to go unchecked by officers who, on occasion, were themselves the perpetrators of rapes. **Defectors who participated in ground operations in Aleppo, Dara'a, and Homs confirmed that women and girls were often arrested when their male relatives were not found.** In detention, many of these women and girls were subjected to sexual violence, including rape. (...)

Rape, sexual, and gender-based violence against women and girls in detention

Large numbers of female relatives of men perceived to be opposition supporters, or suspected of belonging to armed groups, were also arbitrarily detained. Female relatives of defectors, protestors, and providers of medical care and food to members of the opposition were equally targeted for arrest. The latter included daughters of arrested females. 28. In both the public and private spheres, women and girls were arrested by Syrian security and armed forces or by militia acting on behalf of the Government, leaving them little or no opportunity to escape, **even if only on the basis that their male relatives were wanted. These included arrests at demonstrations, at homes during ground operations and house raids, at checkpoints, and at government offices while attending to administrative matters such as renewing passports or, in the case of civil servants, while collecting their salaries. Others were abducted in the street and subsequently transferred to detention facilities, including unofficial detention centres located in abandoned houses, factories, warehouses, and sports centres.** 29. From the moment of arrest and throughout detention, many women and girls were subjected to different types of **sexual violence, including rape, sexual torture, sexual abuse, and humiliation, with most interviewees reporting a combination of these.** (...) **During interrogations, many women and girls are subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence to force confessions of their alleged support to the opposition or to extract information as to the whereabouts of their male relatives. Rape of women and girls has been documented in 20 political and military intelligence**

*branches between 2011 and 2016, namely in Aleppo (Air Force Intelligence branch), Damascus (Air Force Intelligence branches in Bab Touma and Mezzeh airport, branches 211, 215, 235, 248, 251, 282, 285, and 291), Dara'a (Military Security and Air Force Intelligence branches), Dayr az-Zawr (Military Security Intelligence branch), Hama (Military Security Intelligence and State Security Centre), Homs (Air Force and Military Security Intelligence branches), Latakia (Political Security branch), and Quneitra (Saa Saa branch). Rape of women and girls has also been documented in several other facilities including Azaz (Aleppo) Criminal Security branch, and the prison and hospital 601 at Mezzeh airport. 35. Often the perpetrator of rape has been a low-ranking officer. Numerous cases of rapes by high level officers have also been documented, as detailed below. (...) Medication preventing women from menstruating or suspected to be birth control was also reportedly distributed in some detention facilities. (...) At times, women were further humiliated by being raped in front of other detainees, both female and male. In 2012, two women detained at the Hama State Security Branch were raped next to one another by two officers, one of whom was a Lieutenant Colonel, on ten consecutive days. On one occasion, the same two officers raped the women in front of two naked male detainees, whose hands and feet were tied in the shabah position.³ One of the women remembered feeling so ashamed she did not dare make eye contact with the male detainees throughout the events. **Some women were also forced to dance or serve drinks to officers while naked. Others were threatened that photos of them unveiled or otherwise not deemed to conform to Islamic dress codes would be made public.**» Source: Human Rights Council (HRC), Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, "I lost my dignity": Sexual and gender-based violence in the Syrian Arab Republic, 8 mars 2018, p.4-5, 6, 7, 9: www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColSyria/A-HRC-37-CRP-3.pdf*

HRGJ, 2016 :

« Government forces and other armed groups have used rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war throughout the conflict.^{xv} In 2013, the UN treated 38,000 victims of sexual violence in Syria, and large numbers of victims also sought assistance as refugees in Jordan and Lebanon.^{xvi} Victims have included women, men and children.^{xvii} The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI) confirmed that Syrian government forces and government-controlled militia (Shabbiha) committed sexual violence as a weapon of war during house searches and at checkpoints.^{xviii} Human rights experts have documented numerous reports of rape, including gang rape, and other forms of sexual violence in these settings and in detention, committed by government forces against women and girls they believe are affiliated with the opposition.^{xix} According to one report, government forces abducted young women and girls at checkpoints, and returned them later to their families, intentionally exposing them as rape victims in order to subject them to shame and rejection.^{xx} 7. Upon release from detention or checkpoints, and after house raids, women are often alienated from their families and viewed as "unfit" for marriage, and in some instances divorced or killed, because family members believe they were raped.^{xxi}» Source: Human Rights and Gender Justice (HRGJ) Clinic, City University of New York School of Law, MADRE und The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Human Rights Violations Against Women and Girls in Syria, 24 mars 2016, p.2: www.madre.org/sites/default/files/PDFs/Syria%20UPR%20submission%20Final.pdf.

LSE, mars 2017 :

«Sexual violence against Syrian women by the regime has been overlooked mainly because very few survivors dare to speak out. In any culture and any conflict, reporting sexual violence is sensitive and entails risks. In the Syrian case, the fear is even more entrenched. In the Syrian patriarchal society, the honour of a family is closely linked to women. Sexual abuse of a woman brings shame to the family and to the entire community. Many former detainees – whether raped or not were rejected by their families. The protracted conflict, stigma, lack of access to survivors and fear of retaliation explain why this aspect of the repression has been largely under-reported. Still, the pattern of sexual crimes reveal that pro-regime security forces have been committing rapes in the midst of the conflict, intentionally and strategically, in circumstances and facilities under their authority and have moreover been targeting specific women. As rape has certainly not been opportunistic (besides a few exceptions), understanding how the government has been instrumentalising sexual violence militarily and politically enables us to grasp the regime's strategy to defeat and subjugate the opposition using sectarian discourse. Sexual crimes have been part of the regime's policy of repression and display some common patterns and a degree of organisation, which raises the issue of the responsibility of high-level officials.» Source: London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Centre for Women, Peace and Security, "You want Freedom? This is Your Freedom" Rape as a Tactic of the Assad Regime, mars 2017, p. 1-2: www.lse.ac.uk/women-peace-security/assets/documents/2017/wps3Forestier.pdf.

MADRE, 2013 :

«Over the last three years, shocking patterns of sexual violence perpetrated by both regime and opposition forces have emerged. Numerous UN bodies and representatives, as well as NGOs, have documented widespread and systemic violence, as the conflict in Syria is increasingly marked by torture and sexual violence used "as a weapon of war to intimidate parties to the conflict destroying identity, dignity and the social fabrics of families and communities."23 Over the last two years, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic has consistently found the pattern and practice of sexual violence carried out in the conflict to meet the standard of crimes against humanity and war crimes.²⁴ In March 2013, the Secretary General reiterated the Commission's finding that **acts of sexual violence are part of a widespread and systematic attack by the government.**²⁵ **The Commission has repeatedly confirmed a pattern of the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war during house searches and at checkpoints, committed by Syrian government forces and government-controlled militia (Shabbiha).**²⁶ **The Commission has collected numerous reports of rape, including gang rape, and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls believed to be affiliated with the opposition.** ²⁷ **In several instances, government soldiers and Shabbiha members reportedly entered homes and raped women and girls in front of family members, sometimes killing the victims afterwards.** ²⁸ **In October 2012, for example, government armed forces entered a private family residence near Aleppo, threatening to kill a woman's children, if she did not reveal where her husband was hiding.**²⁹ **When she refused to say where he had gone, she was held by the head, sexually assaulted, and then killed in front of her six children.**³⁰ **In Karm-Al Zeitoun there were accounts of women forced to walk naked in the streets.**³¹ **Additional reports note that family members of activists and opposition fighters are specifically targeted.**^{32.}»

Source: MADRE, the International Women's Human Rights (IWHR) Clinic the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), The Seeking Accountability and Effective Response for Gender-Based Violence Against Syrian Women: Women's Inclusion in Peace Processes, mars 2013, p. 6-7: www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/syria-report-pdf-iii-reduced-size.pdf.

SNHR, 25 novembre 2017 :

«Syrian regime forces used sexual violence as a method of warfare and a strategic weapon to submit the will of the Syrian people and terrorize them. In most cases, sexual violence goes hand-in-hand with raid, killing, abduction, and arbitrary arrest, as Syrian regime forces deliberately used this strategy in a widespread and systematic manner, knowing what follows these crimes including stigmatization to the victim herself and her community in light of a prevalent perception about lost honor and purity. In this light, sexual violence is a collective punishment practiced by the Syrian regime to tear the social fabric.» Source: SNHR - Syrian Network for Human Rights (Author), published by ReliefWeb: 24,746 Females Have been Killed in Syria since March 2011; Syrian Arab Republic: The Syrian Woman.... A Society's Shattered Half, 25 novembre 2017: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/sources/24746_women_have_been_killed_in_Syria_since_March_2011_en.pdf.