

# Human Rights Commissioner condemns attack on Syrian refugee camp

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21.06.2014 - Press release 

The Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid, Christoph Strässer, made the following statement today (21 June 2014) on the air strike on the Syrian Al-Shajara camp for internal refugees on 18 June:

I am horrified by the air strike on the Al-Shajara camp in southern Syria on 18 June in which numerous internally displaced persons, including many women and children, lost their lives. It is completely unacceptable that people in need of protection who are fleeing from conflict and have found provisional refuge in a camp are the victims of a military strike.

In this context I condemn in the strongest terms the use of barrel bombs in civilian residential areas. This devastating weapon has unleashed immeasurable suffering in Syria. Its arbitrary use is time and again causing the civilian population to flee within the country and beyond its borders.

The Syrian Government has an obligation to protect the Syrian population. Moreover, all parties to the conflict must observe international humanitarian law, in particular with regard to the necessary protection of the civilian population. For this reason I urge all parties to the conflict to refrain from drawing camps for internally displaced persons and refugees into the conflict, to refrain at all costs from attacking protected persons and to avoid preventing essential supplies from getting through to these people.

## Background information:

On 18 June, the Al-Shajara camp – a place of refuge for internally displaced persons in the south-west of Syria, some 2 km from the Jordanian border – was attacked by helicopter. According to reports, at least one barrel bomb was used. More than a dozen

civilians, and possibly as many as 50, died in the attack. At the time of the attack, approximately 400 refugee families are said to have been staying in the camp. Many of them resumed their flight following the strike.

~~UN (United Nations)~~ Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the attack in a statement on 19 June and urged that the civilian population be protected.

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