

Assad Uses Civilians Once Again as a Bargaining Chip in Negotiations

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Press Statement
Syrian Coalition
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[Original in Arabic](#)

The Syrian Coalition strongly condemns the barbaric attacks carried out by regime forces earlier today in the towns of Maaret al-Nouman and Kafranbel in rural Idlib, where over 50 civilians were killed and 100 more injured. These two heinous massacres are added to a litany of war crimes and violations of the truce committed by Assad's forces, and they represent a serious escalation as the regime returns to its policy of targeting crowded popular markets.

Such criminal attacks can only be understood to be a response to the opposition's High Negotiating Committee's (HNC) unwavering adherence to the rights of the Syrian people and the goals of the revolution.

The Coalition extends its condolences to the families of the victims and calls on the international community to break its silence and take real and urgent action in response to these vicious attacks.

The Syrian Coalition warns of the dire consequences of these attacks, as they not only represent violations of the truce, but also a continuation of the criminal strategy Assad has pursued in targeting civilians and using them as hostages as well as a bargaining chip in the negotiations.

The Syrian National Coalition reiterates its rejection of any attempts to use the humanitarian issues as a card during negotiations. The massacres the Assad regime has committed over the past two days provide yet further evidence of the legality of the HNC's decision to suspend participation in the Geneva negotiations and to postpone consultations.

Favorable conditions for the political process cannot be created whilst the Assad regime's killing machine continues to wreak death across Syria. The international community needs to realize that those who kill civilians cannot be partners in any transitional process.