Press Statement

A Horrific Massacre Against Dozens of Civilians in Atarib, Aleppo Countryside
On 04/24/2014, at about eight o’clock in the morning, warplanes targeted a highly crowded market in al-Atarib in the countryside of Aleppo. It was the rush hour when this market, al-Atarib Bazaar, is usually filled with dozens of vendors – shops selling meat and vegetables, street vendors who sell their goods in the streets and market aisles, and hundreds of civilian resident shoppers. Another missile landed in the middle of the market, even though there isn’t any military location nearby, leading to a horrific massacre of dozens of civilians; more than a hundred civilians were either killed or injured.

According to Dr. Abdul Rahman Obaid, a bone surgeon, the medical cadre in the vicinity simply could not tend to all victims. More than a hundred victims reached the field hospital, which is insufficiently equipped for such situations. This means most victims needed to be transferred to the Turkish or border hospitals.

He added:

“The medical staff were not able to treat all the cases for they were very difficult ones. Some of them needed amputation for their severely burned limbs, while most of the other surgical cases were transferred to other hospitals. Because of the high numbers of cases, we had to ask the Civil Defense to stop sending any others as we could not receive more, especially as there were dozens of victims with shrapnel in their head, abdomen or chest. As a result the number of martyrs was increased by a further thirty. This is not the final death toll, for there are more than ten cases that remain very critical.”

Paramedic Issa Obaid described the incident to VDC:

“Al-Atareb has witnessed bombardment with all types of missiles and weapons during the last ten days including explosive barrels, and various kinds of missiles - vacuum, artillery and surface-to-surface. Today at 08:30 am, with warplanes hovering over the city, we heard a big explosion. A few minutes later we found out that the market had been directly targeted at the time when most of the residents usually buy their daily groceries. Dozens of casualties arrived at the medical point, and bodies piled up in our hospital. More than fifteen bodies transformed into scattered pieces and the families of the victims were collecting the pieces of their sons’ bodies. Many people could not identify their sons because their bodies were greatly deformed. Among the victims were several women and more than five children, while the rest of the injured people and martyrs were people aged between 20 and 50 years. In the afternoon, the regime forces – who were situated in al-Fo’a village - began bombing the city at random again and cause the death of a woman. Early in the evening, warplanes launched another air strike on the city, causing no casualties.”
In the same context, activist Muhammad al-Shafe'I, who was 500m away from the massacre, stated to VDC:

“There was a Sukhoi fighter jet hovering over al-Atarib, and after a few moments the market was targeted by a missile. Minutes later, I rushed to the place where the missile fell, and when I arrived I saw that a whole building was leveled to the ground and destroyed completely. In the middle of the market, many bodies and more than three cars were completely burned as well. The market is usually crowded at that time when the vendors are selling fruits, vegetables, and meat and the residents are shopping for their needs. There has been no military headquarter for any fighting battalion, either in the area or close to it. The bombing also destroyed many shops and houses. The Civil Defense has tried to help and save the people under the debris but lack of equipment has increased the number of martyrs”.

The targeted place, al-Atarib
Until the date on which it is publishing this statement, VDC has documented 31 civilian martyrs from the Atarib strike, including three children and a number of women as well as adult males. To see the list of martyrs on our website, please visit the following link:

http://goo.gl/j1jlno