

*The Action Group for Palestinians of Syria*

*Palestinian Women in Light of the Syrian Crises*

*Documentary Report about Violations Occurred to  
the Palestinian Women in Syria from March 2011  
to August 2014*

## **Introduction**

*Palestinian women in Syria suffered almost double rather than the rest of other segments of Palestinian society, she is the mother, the sister and the wife, and therefore she was a widow, a bereaved and a wife of missing or detained.*

*In turn, she also has been exposed to arrest, kidnap or death, disability or even sexual violence, as a result of the ongoing conflict in Syria since the outbreak of fighting there in March 2011 between the parties of the Syrian crisis in a clear violation as outlined by the divine laws and ordinances that prohibited the killing of the human beings in general or exposing them to harm.*

*The third Common Article of the fourth Geneva agreements of 1949 stated on the protection of civilians during non-international armed conflict, in case of the outbreak of armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of the Contracted High Parties.*

*Each Party undertakes to apply a minimum sentences on people who do not participate directly in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those who cannot fight by sickness, wounds, or for any other reason, and shall, in all circumstances, be treated humanely, Without any adverse distinction founded on race, color, religion, faith, gender, birth, wealth, or any other criterion. (1)*

*In order to shed light on the violations against the Palestinian women in the camps and cities in Syria, the Action Group has monitored and documented some of the incidents, which occurred to them of all ages, including what led to the killing of many of them or being arbitrary arrested.*

*On the other hand, it must be noted that the customs and traditions prevailing among some segments of Palestinian society, such as fear of getting bad reputation or scandal prevented many families from reporting the disappearance of their daughters, abducted or assaulted by someone from the conflicting parties in Syria, which makes the documented numbers approximate.*

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*1. A range of international and regional conventions of refugees and others who are included in the scope of the Commission - a publication of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees - Regional Office in Egypt - Cairo - April 2006 - Third Edition, 2007. Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in time of war, Article III 1949 - p 174.*

## **Palestinian Woman in the Core of the Conflict**

*The war in Syria destroyed most of the Palestinian refugee camps in Syria, almost no family was safe of the damage that happened to the region, some of them were displaced and others have lost their sons, and others have been besieged inside the camps or those who entered prisons and detention centers on both sides of the conflict, even if somewhat unequally.*

*Therefore, women were not apart from its surroundings, as the Palestinian society in Syria is divided between 51% males and 49% of females, which means that she is roughly equivalent to half of the Palestinian society, so we can say that the rights of this large and important segment were vulnerable to abuse and the loss of protection that Human Rights and international conventions keen to provide to women and children during armed conflicts and keen to maintain it and considered prejudice is some kind of criminal acts (2).*

## **Distribution of Palestinian Women Victims**

*The Action Group for Palestinians of Syria have documented 323 victims of Palestinian women since the beginning of the clashes in Syria along the geographical Syrian territory, equivalent to about 13% of the total victims who were killed during the conflict between March 2011 until August 2014.*

*In Damascus city, in the neighborhoods of Damascus 6 victims were killed in Al Zahira, AL Mezze, AL Adawi and AL Kassa'a, while in the Palestinian camps in Damascus and its countryside, 115 victims were killed in the Yarmouk camp in addition to four victims in AL Hajar AL Aswad and Al Tadamoun near to it. In Husseiniyeh camp, 28 Palestinian women refugees were killed, in Sbeneh camp, 7 refugees, in Khan AL Shieh 11 women, in Jaramana camp 3 women, In Sayeda Zeinab 3 and in AL Wafedein camp 2 women.*

*In Damascus city, 50 victims about 28 of them in different areas of the East Gouta like Doma, Zamalka, Kafr Batna and Jobar, in Al Aedein camp in Homs 6 women victims in AL Aedein camp in Hama a 40- years woman and another woman in Al Raml camp in Latakia.*

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2. Civilized dialogue-number: 1029 - 2004/11/26 - 09:31 - Axis: women's rights and fully equality in all aspects.

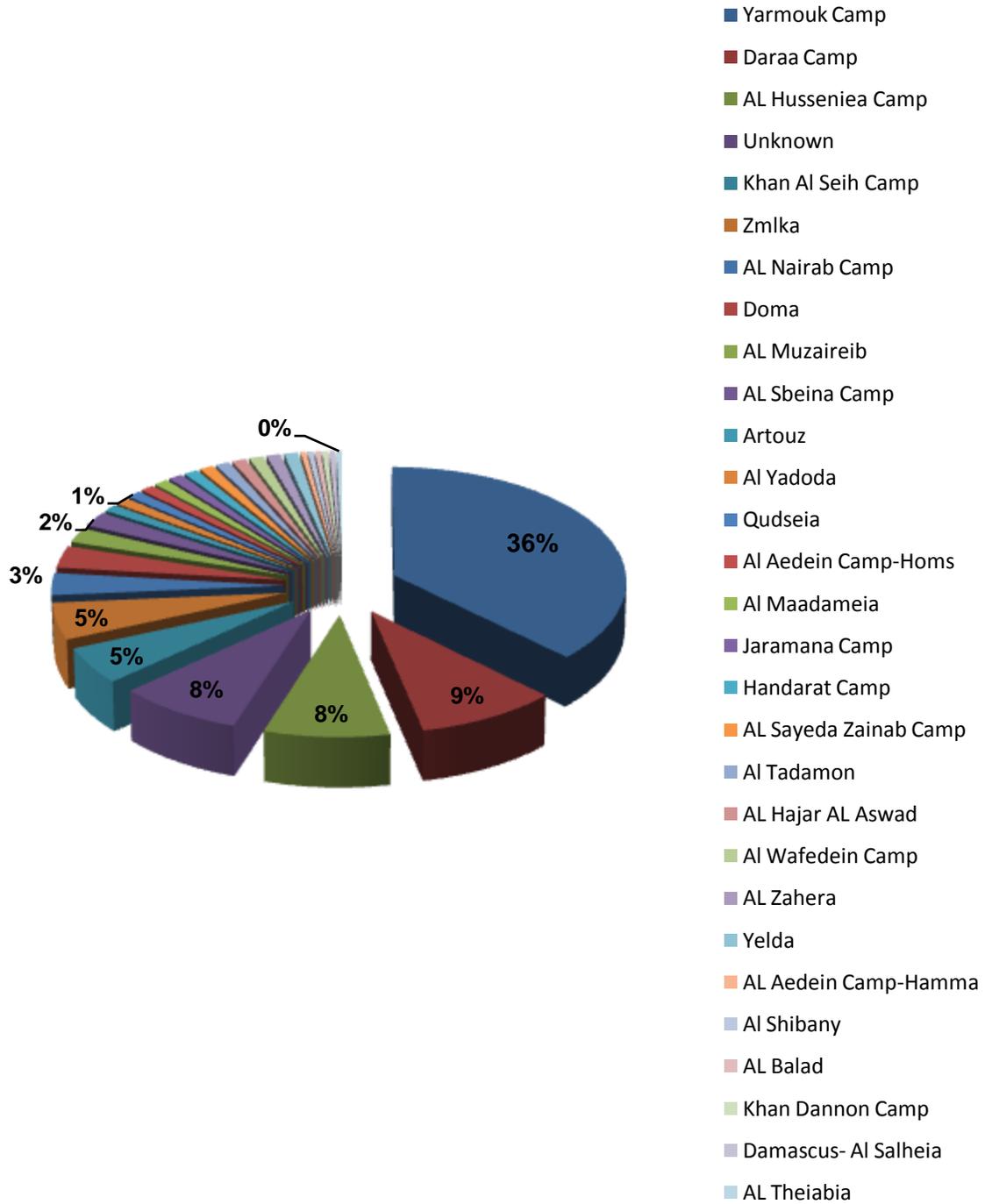
<http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=5930>

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*In Aleppo 10 victims, at a rate of 3 in AL Nairab camp, 3 in Handarat, 2 in Aleppo University, 1 in HAnano neighborhood and another one while she was waiting in the bread lines. In Daraa city 37 women, distributed as, 25 victims in Daraa camp, 6 in AL Muzaireib, 4 in AL Yadouda and 2 in Daraa AL Balad.*

*Outside Syria, about 20 Palestinian women were killed while they were trying to travel to Europe, 9 of them in Egypt, 6 in Malta, 3 in Greece, 2 in the Italian coasts after having health problems that led to their death such like Nihad Mohammed Al Shaeir who has severe asthma before reaching the shores on 9-3-2013. In Lebanon the refugee woman (R.A) was suicide and threw herself from her balcony from the third floor in a building in the Lebanese city of Sidon in 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2014.*

### Destribution of Women Victims According to the Place



## **The Violations Occurred to the Palestinian Women in Syria**

*The ongoing military operations between the parties of the conflict in Syria resulted in a set of practices that led to this relatively large numbers of victims among Palestinian women in Syria, including:*

### **Siege Victims:**

*The Yarmouk camp is suffering of a strict and stifling siege since July 2013, practiced by the military forces of the Syrian regular army, security committees, the national defense forces and Palestinian factions loyal to it such as PFLB-GC, Fatah al-Intifada, the Struggle Front, and others.*

*The siege has affected all aspects of life inside the camp and its repercussions appeared on the residents who refused to get out of it for various reasons such like adhere to house and to the camp or the inability to hire accommodation in safer areas.*

*The number of siege victims inside the Yarmouk camp has reached 155 victims until the end of August 2014, women accounted for nearly 35% of an average of 53 women of all ages, and for different reasons, the most prominent reason for the death of female child was dehydration and lack of medical care. On 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2013, an infant girl Jana Ahmed Hassan was died due to lack of suitable children milk after separating her of her mother, who left the camp and was unable to return to it because of the prevention of regular army checkpoint her from returning to the camp and the child did not accept for any other nursing. This was a move that is considered as a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law which stipulates that pregnant women and mothers of young children, especially nursing mothers, treated with special care (2).*

*The Palestinian refugee Hana Faisal Awad passed away on 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 after giving birth due to bleeding which led to anemia, while the old woman Aziza Mohammed Naeemi (92) years died as a result of being dehydrated.*

*The withdrawal of the medical staff from inside the camp and the UNRWA clinics closure inside the camp, deprived mothers inside the camps from the visit the maternal and child clinics for women vaccines during pregnancy and post-natal, and the slice of women with chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes mellitus, kidney disease, heart and arteries were clearly and remarkable harmed by the loss of necessary treatment, which led to a huge number of victims.*

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3. <http://www.icrc.org/ara/war-and-law/protected-persons/women/overview-women-protected.htm>

According to the Protection of Women under International Humanitarian Law 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2010-overview.

*The indirect consequences of the siege, is the deaths among the elderly aged people who suffer from the loneliness after family separation inside and outside the camp and the disruption of family bonds. In 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2014 a decomposing corpse of an old woman was found in a house in the camp, doctors said that the date of death back for more than six months.*

*It also have been monitoring many cases of abuse of women beaten and verbally degrading to human dignity and sexual harassment by members of the checkpoint after men were unable to exit to that point of the camp for many reasons, most importantly the fear of being arrested which made the trapped residents refuse to receive the aid, despite the urgent need to it. In 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2014 the Yarmouk camp residents issued a statement announcing their hunger strike and their refusal to receive food aid, in protest against the arrest of the regular army and the PFLP-General Command a number of women during receiving food parcels on the road of Beit Sahn checkpoint.*

*These actions are considered a clear violation of human rights, the announcement issued by the UN in 1973 on the protection of women and children in situations of emergency and armed conflict, the sixth paragraph states the inadmissibility of deprive women and children from the shelter, food or medical aid or other fixed rights, in accordance with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of human Rights, the international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on economic, Social and cultural Rights, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and other instruments of international law (4).*

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4. Civilized dialogue-number: 1029 - 2004/11/26 - 09:31 - Axis: women's rights and fully equality in all aspects. <http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=5930>  
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## **Bombardment Victims**

*All types of shelling formed one of the main instruments of death that befell the Palestinian women inside and outside the camps in Syria, The Action Group for Palestinians of Syria has monitored the death of 178 Palestinian victims as a result of the bombing, in the Yarmouk camp, which located 8 kilometers from the city of Damascus.*

*50 women were killed as a result of mortar shells and rockets that targeted the camp during March 2011 and mid-July 2014. On 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2013, four women from the family of Abbas and Al Rayyan (Khamisa Abbas, Azieah Abbas, Nariman Said Ryan and Soraya Ryan) were killed due to a mortar shell that was dropped on their house in Orouba Street at the Yarmouk camp. The targeting of the Yarmouk refugee camp with Grad rocket on 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 also resulted in the death of five women at once, including a mother and her two daughters (Afaf Mdrds and her two children Raghad and Shaza Fadloun).*

*In Husseiniyeh camp in Damascus city, 26 women were killed due to the bombing, 11 cases of them were killed due to the targeting of the camp by "MIG" warplanes on 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2013 (5).*

*In Sbeneh and Al Sayeda Zainab camps, 10 women were killed because of the bombing, 7 in Sbeneh camp and 3 in Sayeda Zeinab. In Al Aedein camp in Homs, 2 victims were killed in Wadi AL Thahab area in the city of Homs, while they were there.*

*In Khan AL Sheih camp, most women victims were killed due to the bombing, as 11 women were killed, where Ne'mat Khaled Haidar and her daughter Masa Fadel Eilouti were killed due to the targeting of Deir Amr UNRWA school on 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, also Raifa Faris was killed after the sudden bombing of the camp on Iftar Feast in 2013, as well as two sisters, Salwa and Doaa Abdullah in the same day in 2014 in the sudden bombing with artillery, while in Jaramana camp three women were killed, one of them Hana Al Kurdi, when a shell dropped on her house on 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2013.*

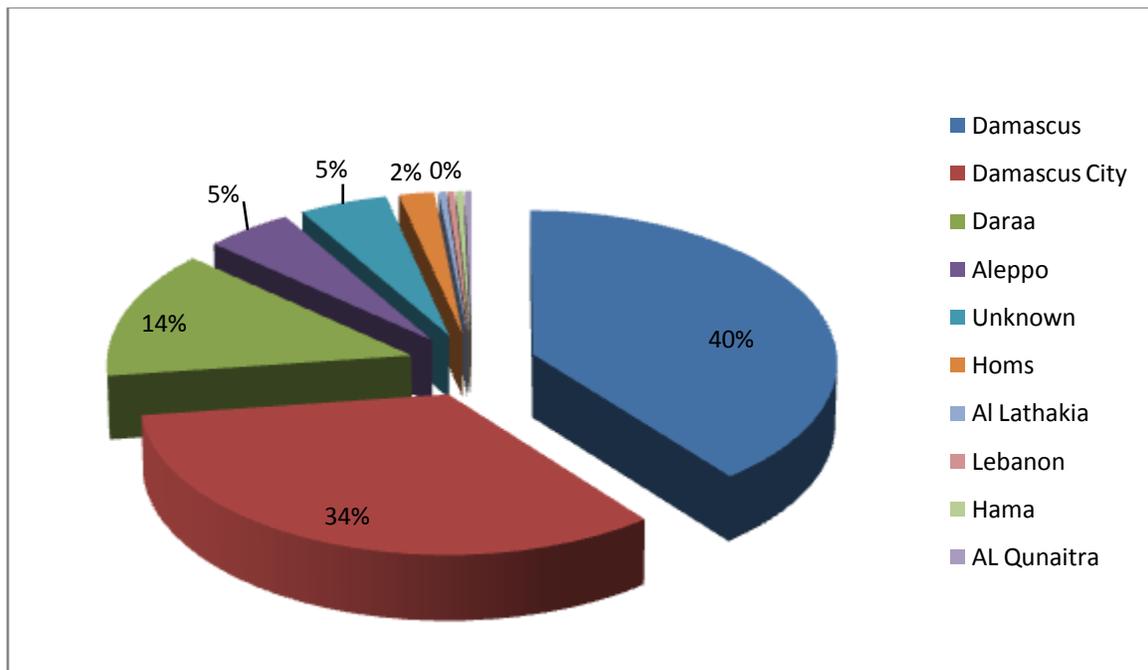
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5. Manar Mustafa, Shaimaa Raed, Nour AL Shoury, Reem Abdullah, Hanein Abdullah, Samar Abdullah, Hala Abdullah, Mona Abdullah, Jameila, Manal, Ghadeir Qudseia

*In Damascus city, 3 women in different neighborhoods were killed, in Damascus city 110 victims were documented in different areas; most notable are 16 victims in Zmlka city after being targeted with chemical weapon on 21<sup>st</sup> of August 2013 (6).*

*In the city of Daraa, its refugee camp and its towns, 44 women were killed as a result of the shelling with mortar and explosive barrels including 29 victims in Daraa camp and 7 victims in Muzeireeb town were killed due to bombing with explosive barrels on 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2014, 2 victims in Daraa city one of them the teacher Fadwa Lafi who was killed after targeting the school that she worked in on 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2012, and 4 victims in Yadodeh town.*

*In the city of Aleppo, 17 woman were kileld as a result of the shelling, Zainab Shuwaikh was killed in the bombing of Qadi Askar bakery in Aleppo, while all of Lamis Al Mughrabi and Samira Bakir were killed as a result of aerial bombardment that targeted the University of Aleppo on 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2013, while Zahia Kabra was killed in Al Neirab camp and Hanan Abdo in Handarat camp and Liqaa Mohamed Abdel-Rahim in the neighborhood of Hanano in Aleppo.*




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*6. The victims of the bombing with chemical weapon are 11 women from the family of Ghazi in addition to 5 from the family of Abu Zaid*

*The practices on the Palestinian refugees constitute a flagrant violation of human rights and principles of international law which banned "assault on civilians and shelling them with bombs" and banned the use of "chemical and bacteriological weapons during military operations" and considered it one of the most serious violations of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 , and the principles of international humanitarian law, and inflicts heavy losses on the civilian residents, including women, children and unarmed of self-defense, and will be the subject of a severe indictment (7).*

### **Victims of Bombing and Assassinations**

*The reasons which led to the death of more women victims were not only because of the bombing and the siege, but there are other reasons such as explosions.*

*The Palestinian refugee Sawzan Ali Al Haj was killed in a bomb attack on her home in the Yarmouk refugee camp on 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2012, also all of Amani and Maya Waleed Siam were killed after a car bomb explosion in a market in Artouz at Damascus on 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2012, in a similar incident in Yadodeh town near Daraa city passenger bus explosion bomb killed four women, they are: Kamla Hussein Ali, Iman Jamous, Aisha Alsrouje, and Heba Radwan Alsrouje, on 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2014.*

*The direct assassination or tortured to death have formed a way of the death of some victims, while the victim Faten Al Hashiem 40 years, from the Yarmouk camp, on 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2012 was found murdered in Al Jazeira neighborhood in AL Hajar Al Aswad near the Yarmouk camp and there were traces of torture on her body.*

*In the area of Mezze in Damascus, Asmaa Saleh Abu Bakr - Responsible of Internal Government Supervision of Syrian-Central Bank on 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2012, was directly shot with a pistol silencer (two shots in the head) in front of her young daughter.*

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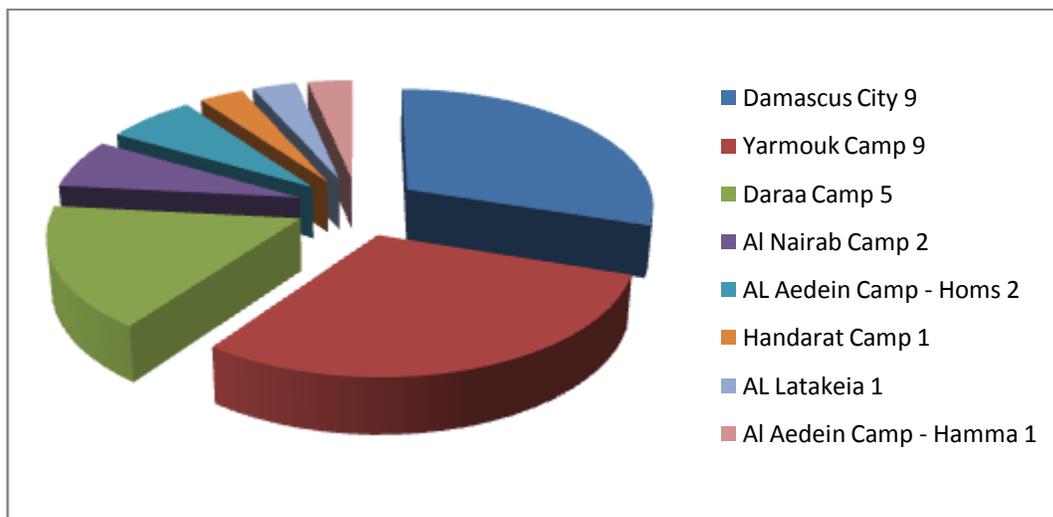
7. Civilized dialogue-number: 1029 - 2004/11/26 - 09:31 - Axis: women's rights and fully equality in all aspects. <http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=5930>  
Certified and published by General Assembly resolution 3318 of the United Nations (D-29), dated 14<sup>th</sup> of December 1974 article (1-2).

## **Victims of Snipping and Gunshot**

*The Action Group for Palestinians of Syria has documented the death of 34 Palestinian woman as a result of exposure to snipe or gunshot, 9 of them in different areas of Damascus city, while 5 women were killed in Daraa camp as a result of snipping and because of heavy spreading of snipers on rooftops and institutions surrounding the camp, which target everything moving there. In the Yarmouk refugee camp 9 Palestinians were killed as a result of snipping, while Fatima Ibrahim Ismail was killed after shooting her with four shots in the back by a sniper stationed at the Municipality of Yarmouk in Palestine Street, while she was in a taxi on 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2012. Those who have killed as a result of, gunshot, are two women, they are: Salma Al Masri and Aisha Abu Al Shokr 65 years, who was killed during the clashes that broke out in the camp while she was leaving on the morning on 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2013.*

*In the camps of Aleppo, three victims were killed, two of them in Neirab and the third in Handarat camp, on 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2013 Arabiea Zuhair Saed was killed due to wounded she attained because of the shooting on a passenger bus carrying a number of residents from Al Neirab camp at the junction of AL Thahabeia by an unidentified armed group.*

*In the middle region, the mother of two refugees children "Nada Hassan Abu-Saad, 22 years on 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2011 in Latakia city as a result of gunshot, also each of Fadia Abu Salem and Ibtisam Orabi from Al Aedein camp in Homs were killed on the road to Damascus Nabek after clashes that broke out during their presence there on 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2013, while Rama Hussein Rifai from Al Aedein camp was killed by snipping in Al Arbein neighborhood in Hama on 26<sup>th</sup> of August 2012.*



***Victims of Snipping and Gunshot***

## **Detention and Enforced Disappearance**

*There are detained women in every Palestinian refugee camp, who were arrested in the checkpoints that located at the gates and entrances of camps and cities. The Action Group has documented 31 Palestinian women who were arrested until the moment of preparing this report, but about 12 detained women were released later, 4 of them within one of the deals that took place between the regular army and the free army, while there are 19 Palestinian women, their fate is still unknown in the Syrian prisons.*

*The Action Group said that some prisoners are University students or activists, on 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2013, (S-A) has been arrested, a student in the College of Architecture, by members of the checkpoint that located in the entrance of the Yarmouk camp. While (S-A) was arrested on 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2013 in the University campus in Homs, where she was arrested for about two weeks. In this clear violation of the Universal Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, issued in 1974 in Article No. (5) thereof, which provided that these practices are criminal and considered criminal acts of all forms of repression, cruel and inhuman treatment of women and children, including solitary and torture "(8).*

*The evidence suggests that the number of detained women, to both sides of the conflict, is greater than this number, but it is secrecy for special reasons related to those cases.*

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8. Civilized dialogue-number: 1029 - 2004/11/26 - 09:31 - Axis: women's rights and fully equality in all aspects. <http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=5930>  
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### **Results and Recommendations:**

*Palestinian women in Syria have lost the protection guaranteed by laws and international conventions during the armed conflicts, by exposure to kill by all the methods that are used in hostilities, whether regular or internationally banned such as chemical weapons, as well as being subjected to arrest and enforced disappearance without being able to get a fair trial that is legally guaranteed to detainees, so it must be an immediate intervene at all levels, national, regional and international to ensure to restore her lost protection and to prevail the fate of the detainees and to work to maintain her dignity and rehabilitation because of the social and humanitarian status occupied by women within the communities.*