



Exorbitant Price of War

A Human Rights report documenting hundreds of injuries in Deir Ezzor governorate

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Executive Summary

Hundreds of thousands of people have been injured during the 10 years of the conflict in Syria. Many of the injured continue to suffer in their daily lives, from the inability to work, falling monthly incomes and difficulty of movement, in addition to the weakness of the medical sector and the absence of employment opportunities

This suffering has knock-on impacts for the families of the injured, with some of the children of the injured forced to leave school and go to work to meet the needs of the family. The medical bills can cost families large amounts of money, especially injuries that require significant follow-up.

The current developments in Syria leave a major burden on the injured, particularly with regard to the severe shortage of water, electricity and fuel services, which have been reflected on the functionality of services, transportation and hospitals. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is pressure on hospitals and medical centers. Furthermore, the impact of lockdown measures on employment and per capita income has increased the suffering, affecting even the basic needs of the population.

Justice for Life (JFL) has been working to document casualties resulting from the bombing, targeting of civilian sites, and remnants of war in Deir Ezzor governorate. JFL's team conducted a survey involving 335 injured people in Deir Ezzor governorate through direct interviews or by contacting the injured or their families. During the documentation processes, a number of the injured talked about the details of their injuries and the repercussions on their families.

According to information obtained by JFL researchers in a number of key areas in Deir Ezzor, healthcare for war-wounded people is very weak, especially with regard to the availability of prostheses, physical therapy, hospital equipment and medical personnel.

Warplanes, mines and snipers were a constant menace for civilians in Deir Ezzor. There was no safe place, and it was not always easy to know where the firing came from.

"During my brother's attempt to reach the grocery store to bring back daily items, he was shot in the head by a sniper, which caused brain damage and difficulty moving the right side of his body (right hand and foot), and he lost his memory several months after the injury," Ahmed, who like others in this report preferred to use a pseudonym, said.

Ammar, a 38-year-old resident of Deir Ezzor and now a displaced man in the town of Al-Abasira, said: "On 2 May 2015, a warplane targeted a building in the old airport neighborhood next to the Mosque of Othman bin Affan in Deir Ezzor city. I went with several people to help rescue the injured and saw several destroyed buildings. I heard the war plane return to the same site. I hid in the entrance to a nearby building. The warplane attacked again, and I was hit by shrapnel in my hand and taken by car to the Pharmex Field Hospital while I had already fainted. Doctors amputated my hand because it was in bad condition."

Khalil, whose foot was amputated by a mine explosion in 2019, said: "The accident changed my life and left me in a bad psychological and physical condition. I felt helpless and became more aggressive. I feel like people are looking at me with pity. I can no longer work. My family supported me, especially my eldest brother, who helped me to open a small grocery."

Justice for Life recommends the need to expand financial and psychological support for the rehabilitation and integration of war victims, including the establishment of special centers for prosthetics and physical therapy, the formation of associations that represent the demands and needs of the injured. There is also a need to work more rapidly to remove mines and explosive weapons remnants.

Introduction

In addition to the hundreds of thousands of Syrians killed during the decade-long war, hundreds of thousands of others whose homes or shops were targeted or who happened to be there at the moment of shelling or a landmine explosion¹ suffered life-changing injuries, including causing permanent disability. They now face significant problems and are not receiving the necessary psychological and material support². This is what many international reports³ have referred to⁴.

In the Deir Ezzor governorate, during the years of war and aftermath, hundreds of people were injured according to the documentation of Justice for Life, which for its part believes that the numbers are higher. The use of various weapons, targeting densely populated areas and the use of explosive weapons left a large number of victims, including grave injuries. The wounded and their families face the consequences of those injuries in the light of the lack of advanced medical equipment and specialized medical personnel.

¹ "No Choices Left to Us", Justice for Life, 2017.

<https://jfl.ngo/en/no-choices-left-to-us/>

² Escaping the bombing-Handicap international-2016.

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/handicapinternational/pages/2303/attachments/original/1475080189/Study_EWIPA-Syria-2016_Web_final.pdf?1475080189

³ Seven years of suffering: Syria facts and figures, WHO.

<http://www.emro.who.int/eha/news/seven-years-of-suffering-syria-facts-and-figures.html>

⁴ WHO and International Organization for Persons with Disabilities pay attention to the needs of people living with injuries and disabilities in Syria, 2017.

<http://www.emro.who.int/press-releases/2017-arabic/the-world-health-organization-and-handicap-international-draw-attention-to-the-needs-of-people-in-syria-living-with-injuries-and-disabilities.html>

Medical centers in Deir Ezzor were damaged during the war years, most notably the targeting of Aisha Hospital in Al-Bukamal in March 2015 and May 2017, battles between ISIS and government forces at the Assad Public Hospital on Deir Ezzor Road to Damascus in May 2016, targeting Nuri al-Saeed Hospital in September 2015 in Al Mayadin city, and the bombing of Al-Sa'i Hospital in Deir Ezzor in 2012.

Aerial bombardment using rockets and barrel bombs, remnants of explosive weapons and mines, particularly those planted on agricultural lands and travel routes, artillery shells and car bombs, have resulted in injuries such as complete or half-paralysis, amputation of limbs and loss of vision or hearing.

In terms of treatment expenses, the interviewed injured are divided into two parts: the first one, hospitals and medical points (funded by local or international organizations) or military factions have borne full or partial treatment expenses. The second one, beard the full cost of treatment, while most of the injured have not received financial assistance or psychological support, especially those who have lost their ability to work and have faced additional difficulties as a result of their injuries.

The casualties were not limited to those whose homes or neighborhood were shelled, and the casualties did not stop with the cessation of hostilities in Deir Ezzor, with both government forces on the one hand and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) completing their control over the south and north of the Euphrates River respectively, where the possibility of injury was high despite the suspension of the use of aircraft, helicopters and artillery.

In March 2021, a child was killed and another injured by an explosion of remnants of a projectile in Al Khraita town, which is controlled by Syrian regular forces, in the western countryside of Deir Ezzor.

In February 2021, a 13-year-old boy was killed in the village of Al-Baghuz, east of Deir Ezzor, while playing with the remnants of a projectile. On 2 January 2021, a person from Abu Hardoub village was seriously injured and his son was killed by a mine explosion in the area between the villages of Abu Hammam and Abu Hardoub, east of Deir Ezzor.

On 1 December 2020, a person from the village of Khasham in Deir Ezzor countryside was injured by a landmine while returning to inspect his house, resulting in the amputation of his leg.

Another landmine explosion took place and resulted in an amputation of a woman's leg in the village of Al-Kashkeya on 7 September 2020.

The people interviewed by Justice for Life were injured in different areas and for various reasons; one of whom was injured during a picnic with his family by a mine explosion resulting in the amputation of his leg.

A witness said he was hit by a mine on his way home, where he took a road in a neighborhood mostly populated by displaced people. Another man's leg had to be amputated after a mine explosion while playing football with his friends in desert, near his village.

Injuries by shrapnel from rockets or barrel bombs used in aerial bombardments were frequent, especially in the period prior to the cessation of hostilities. One of the people met by a JFL researcher was injured by the shelling of a mosque that he was passing by. Another said that he was injured during the purchase of bread immediately after the bombing of the bakery. A witness told a JFL researcher that he was injured in 2012 while participating in a demonstration after an unidentified mortar shell fell, injuring him and others.

Many children were seriously injured, including one who was shot in the head by a sniper while trying to reach a shop to fetch household items.

Civilians who contribute to the rescue operations resulting from the bombing have suffered a share of casualties. One person reported being injured while rescuing people from the rubble as the plane bombed the scene again - a so-called 'double tap' strike.

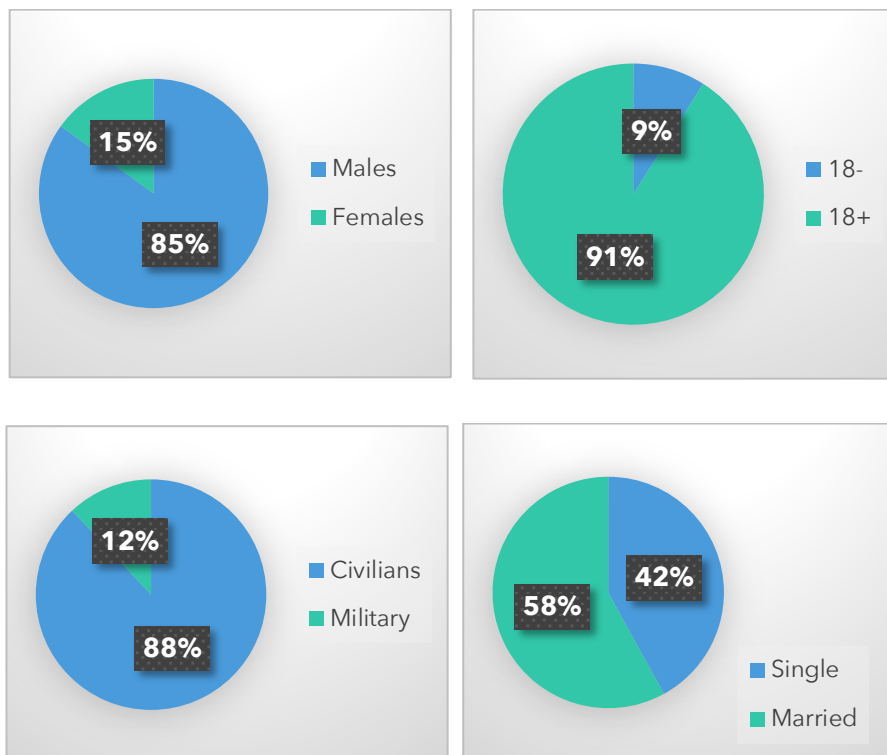
The current developments in Syria have been leaving a major burden on the injured, particularly with regard to the severe shortage of water, electricity and fuel services, which have been reflected on the functionality of services, transportation and hospitals. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is pressure on hospitals and medical centers. Furthermore, the impact of precautionary measures on employment and per capita income increased such a burden while living a crisis that is now affecting even the basic needs of the population.

Methodology

A group of 11 researchers, including volunteers, participated in the work. A member of the group was assigned to manage the process and conduct interviews within the reporting period, which lasted from November 2020 until the beginning of January 2021. The group was trained on how to conduct interviews, and database administrators reviewed all the collected information and testimonies immediately to overcome issues.

JFL analyzed the results of a questionnaire it conducted with 335 people who had been injured or their relatives in Deir Ezzor governorate, who in turn talked about all aspects related to their injuries and the resulting negative psychological and physical effects.

Out of the interviewed cases, 14% were women, 9% were under 18 years old, approximately (58%) were married, and 11% were formerly members of military factions.



In addition, 15 detailed qualitative interviews were conducted with injured persons and their relatives by JFL researchers. In them the victims stated how they were injured, who they believe to be responsible and the implications for their lives and those of their families.

All the names in the report are pseudonyms to maintain the personal security of witnesses.

Legal Framework

Rule 110 of the ICRC's study on customary international humanitarian law⁵ stipulates that “the wounded, sick and shipwrecked must receive, to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay, the medical care and attention required by their condition. No distinction may be made among them founded on any grounds other than medical ones”. In explaining the rule in the study, the duty to protect and care for the wounded, sick and shipwrecked requires that the means to do so, including allowing humanitarian organizations to provide care and protection, must be provided.

The injured, the sick and the shipwrecked may be distinguished only on medical grounds and may not be distinguished on the basis of race, religion, colour and social origin.

This rule is based on the Common Article 3 of Geneva Conventions of 1949, which states in the second paragraph that “the wounded and sick shall be collected and cared for.”

Paragraph (b) of Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁶ states that “persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community.”

Article 25 of the same convention in paragraphs (b) and (e) required work to provide all the health services that persons with disabilities needed, and to prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in health and life insurance”.

In article 26, it supports “the involvement and participation of persons with disabilities in the community and in all aspects of society.”

⁵ <https://www.icrc.org/ar/publication/pcustom>

⁶ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx>

Lack of Health Care Services for War-Wounded in Deir Ezzor

According to information obtained by JFL researchers in a number of key areas of Deir Ezzor, health care for war-wounded people is very poor, especially with regard to the availability of prosthetic limbs, physical therapy, hospital equipment and medical personnel.

Deir Ezzor City

There are four public hospitals all based inside the campus of Al-Assad Hospital located on the Deir Ezzor-Damascus road at the southern entrance to the city. Moreover, there is the military hospital in Ghazi Ayyash neighborhood near the security branches. Hospitals provide services including ambulances and surgeries. These hospitals face the same challenges others in the governorate do, especially with regard to the shortage of competent medical personnel.

These hospitals provide their services free of charge. The military hospital has a paid division, but its costs are nominal; for example, the cost of a caesarean section is (100,000 SYP)⁷. There is no center in the city or a rehabilitation center for war-wounded people, and anyone who wants to get an artificial limb has to go to the capital Damascus. There is a physical therapy centre at the Al-Assad Hospital and another belonging to the Red Crescent in the city. War-wounded people in the city receive assistance in the form of material assistance or relief rations, in addition to their eligibility to work in government departments.

⁷ Equivalent to \$28 at the USD exchange rate in March 2021.

Albu Kamal City

There are four functional hospitals in the city including Al Sukkareyya, Aisha that provide mainly services for the regular forces and affiliated militias. Due to the lack of preparedness of those hospitals, most of the cases are transferred to Al-Mayadin, which is about 85 km away, and Deir Ezzor, about 125 km west of Albu Kamal. Al-Bukamal lacks prosthetic centers and patients must go to Damascus in the case of having to install a prosthetic. There are special centers for physical therapy.

Military wounded are given preferential treatment over civilians in providing material and relief assistance and rehabilitation, especially militia elements.

Al-Mayadin City

After government forces took control of the city in late 2017, a number of public and private hospitals and health centers were reopened and rehabilitated.

The Iranian Hospital is a public hospital located west of the city. There is a health clinic in the center of the city and a hospital for the wounded militias located east of the city near the public bakery. The services of the hospitals and centers mentioned are limited to first aid and vaccines provided by the Health Directorate of the Syrian Ministry of Health. It lacks sophisticated medical equipment, and this pushes patients to travel either to Deir Ezzor or Damascus.

The other existing private hospitals are: Al-Hammad, west of the city, Al-Salam downtown, and Nouri al-Said in the east, in addition to first aid, simple surgeries are provided along with radiography and analysis laboratories. These hospitals are in operation around the clock. The work of staff is more disciplined than public hospitals.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is rehabilitating a public hospital in the former blood bank building and rehabilitating a women's clinic. There are no public centers specializing in physical therapy, nor for the installation of prostheses.

Al-Kasra and Al-Shuhail

Justice for Life reached out to sources in some areas of SDF control and asked them about the medical facilities available in two areas.

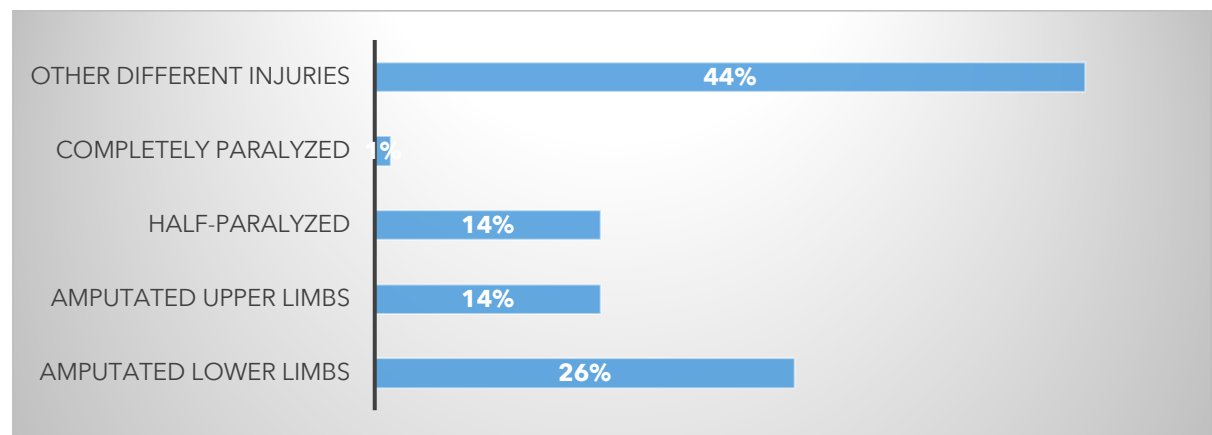
In the al-Kasra area in the western countryside of Deir Ezzor, there are two hospitals operating, a public one in the town of Al-Kasra that contains incubators for children and offers some surgeries. It includes a department for gynecological diseases and another for physical therapy. The other is a private hospital in a village; it is inadequately equipped, and the prices of services provided are high, for example, the wages of a Caesarean operation costs (\$100), which is currently over 400,000 Syrian pounds. There is no free or paid prosthetic center at al-Kasra.

In the town of Al-Shuhail, there are 3 hospitals, one of which is free of charge with simple equipment, and two private hospitals that provide better services, but are expensive.

Both areas lack some medical equipment and do not have specialized rehabilitation centers for the war-wounded. JFL sources said that there are threats to the lives of the population and increase the risk of injuries including mines, remnants of weapons, the spread of the use of weapons, cars and bicycle bombs. According to the source, more than 10 people were killed and more than 20 were injured during the year 2020 by the explosion of mines and remnants of war in towns in eastern Deir Ezzor.

Types of Injuries

Through the interviews conducted by Justice for Life with injured civilians and military personnel, more than 26% of them were with amputated lower limbs, 14% of them were with amputated upper limbs, more than 14% of them were half-paralyzed and about 1% were completely paralyzed. Among the remaining 44% were many different injuries including loss of sight, having difficulty walking and the inability to move an upper or lower limb.



During peaceful anti-authority demonstrations in Deir Ezzor in 2011 and 2012, demonstrators were targeted not only by direct gunfire, but also some demonstrations were hit by mortar shells that killed and injured civilians.

"A mortar shell fell on the demonstration I was in, where I lost one eye and the other was damaged. Doctors, despite all the attempts inside and outside Syria, were unable to save my second eye, which I lost after a while. Gradually I lost my sight completely," said the witness, Abbas, a media activist who was participating and documenting the demonstrations.

While standing in the queue at a bakery in al-Hamidia neighborhood in Deir Ezzor city, Mahmoud was hit by shrapnel. He said: "The warplanes targeted the bakery, and a number of people were killed. A number of pieces of shrapnel penetrated my body. Doctors were able to extract them except one that still remains and causes me to limp while walking."

"During my brother's attempt to reach the grocery store to bring back daily items, he was shot in the head by a sniper, which caused brain damage and difficulty moving the right side of his body (right hand and foot), and he lost his memory several months after the injury," Ahmed says.

"After my family was displaced due to the fights between ISIS and the SDF, I went back to check on my house. A mine exploded during the inspection of one room, blowing both my feet off," said the witness Yasser, a teacher with six children. "I think that ISIS combatants, who controlled the area, are responsible for planting the mine in the house."

Khatun, who was displaced with her family from their town under the control of the Syrian government forces, was hit in the hand by a rocket that targeted a house next to the one they were staying in, in the town of Ma'adan, west of Deir Ezzor. She says, "My daughter, who was then 3 years old, was paralyzed in the lower limbs and my hand is unable to carry heavy objects."

Targeting civilian-populated areas by warplanes and helicopters, as well as places of worship and medical facilities, has had serious consequences on civilians.

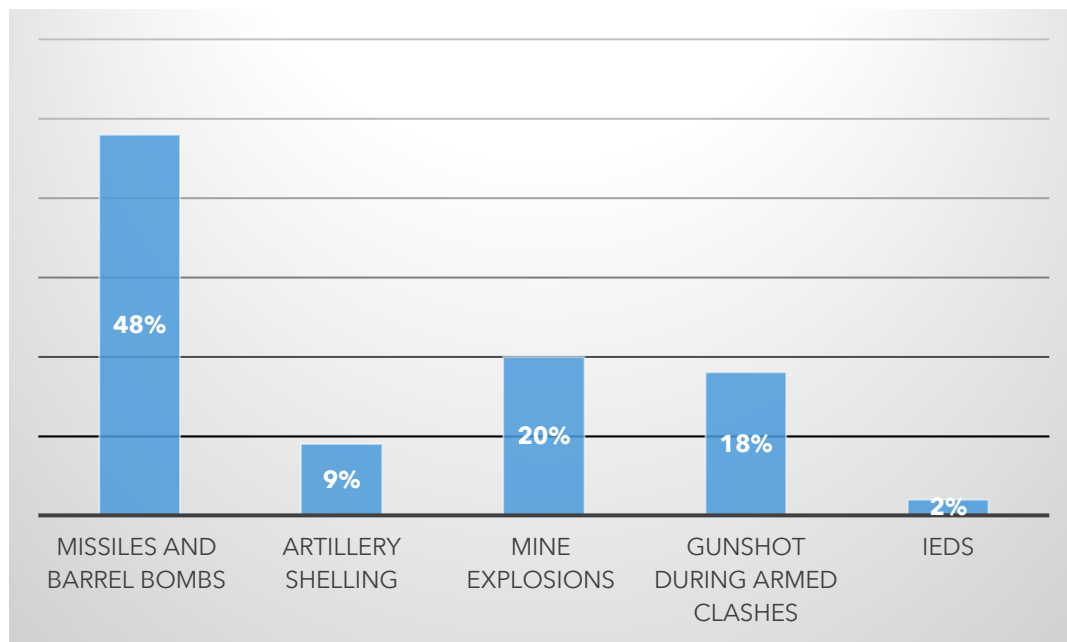
"I was sitting in front of the house when a plane targeted a mosque next to our house where my right hand was hit by a shrapnel. The only solution was to amputate my hand as the injury was severe," said Ali, who was 14-years-old at the time of the injury.

The recruitment of children into armed factions and the lack of experience of some fighters in dealing with weapons also led to many injuries. Khaldoun described an injury to his brother. " He suffered a serious injury to his leg and left thigh after a fighter no older than 15 years old in an armed opposition faction fired his rifle. It led to severe muscle damage to the leg and damage to his left foot."

Reasons for Injuries

According to interviews conducted by Justice for Life, the reasons for the injuries varied according to the most commonly used and destructive weapons of the targeted areas. Some types of weapons have been increasingly used over a certain period of time, such as warplanes, which during the five years between 2012 and 2017 have gradually reduced. During this period, the casualties of mine explosions and projectiles from the remnants of war, which were increasing with the waves of displacement at one time and returning at another, depending on the security situation.

The use of missiles and barrel bombs caused injury of 48% of those surveyed, with 9% by artillery shelling. Mine explosions were responsible for 20%. 18% were injured by gunshots during armed clashes between the main parties to the conflict or between local rival groups. 2% were injured by car bombings, bicycle bombs, or IEDs.



Ammar, a 38-year-old resident of Deir Ezzor and now a displaced man in the town of - Al-Abasira, was injured on 1 August 2016:

"On 2 May 2015, a warplane targeted a building in the "old airport neighborhood" next to the Mosque of Othman bin Afan. I went with several people to help rescue the injured and saw several destroyed buildings. I heard the warplane flew back to the same place. I hid in the entrance to a nearby building. The warplane attacked again, and I was hit by shrapnel in my hand and taken by a civilian car to the "Pharmex Field Hospital" while I had already fainted. Doctors had to amputate my hand because it was in bad condition as they told me later."

"I used to go with my cousins to graze sheep in the desert near our town. One day we were playing football and there was a strong explosion. I felt a lot of pain in my foot, but I didn't lose consciousness immediately. I was taken to a hospital in the town where my foot was amputated." Bassem, who is from the town of Al-Shamitia in the western countryside of Deir Ezzor, said.

"On my way back home, I took an unusual route. It was a neighborhood whose residents had not come back yet after they were displaced by the fighting between ISIS and the Syrian Democratic Forces. A mine that appeared to be a remnant of one of the parties exploded, and I was transferred to al-Kasra hospital for some first aid, after which I was transferred to the Private Euphrates Hospital in Raqqa City," Jaber said. Jaber, from al-Kubar town in al-Kasra district of the western countryside of Deir Ezzor, is married and has three children. He was no longer able to move his right hand after being injured by the explosion.

Marwa was injured and one of her sons was killed by an air strike on their town in 2016.

"Our town was heavily bombed because of the presence of ISIS headquarters. One day, I heard the sound of a plane in the air, followed by the sound of a missile. I only remember that I saw the fire burning in the house. I was hit by shrapnel in my eye and had second-degree burns in different areas of my body. I needed more than one surgical operation that was not available in Deir Ezzor at the time."

After armed opposition factions took control of a number of eastern neighborhoods of Deir Ezzor, Syrian forces imposed a siege on these neighborhoods, causing a severe shortage of basic materials.

Ahmed said: "My little brother went to fetch the daily essentials and had to pass by the public park, an area that forms a link between several neighborhoods, but it is within the range of a sniper of the regular forces stationed in a mountain near Al Ummal neighborhood behind the Mufti Mosque. The passers-by are forced to run quickly to survive from being targeted. My brother tried to cross but he was shot directly in the head by a sniper. A number of people tried to drag him out and take him to the hospital, but the sniper targeted everyone who tried to help him."

Ahmed finally managed to drag his brother out with the help of someone and take him to the hospital.

"After his surgery, the doctor told us that my brother died clinically. My brother remained in a coma for three days, and then the doctor told us that if he had been transferred to another hospital with better facilities, it could save his life," Ahmed said.

Ahmed and a number of young men carried the injured boy 5km to avoid Syrian Army checkpoints. Then, he was taken by a car to a hospital in the city of Al-Mayadeen, east of Deir Ezzor. He woke up about a month later, but the right side of his body was paralyzed.

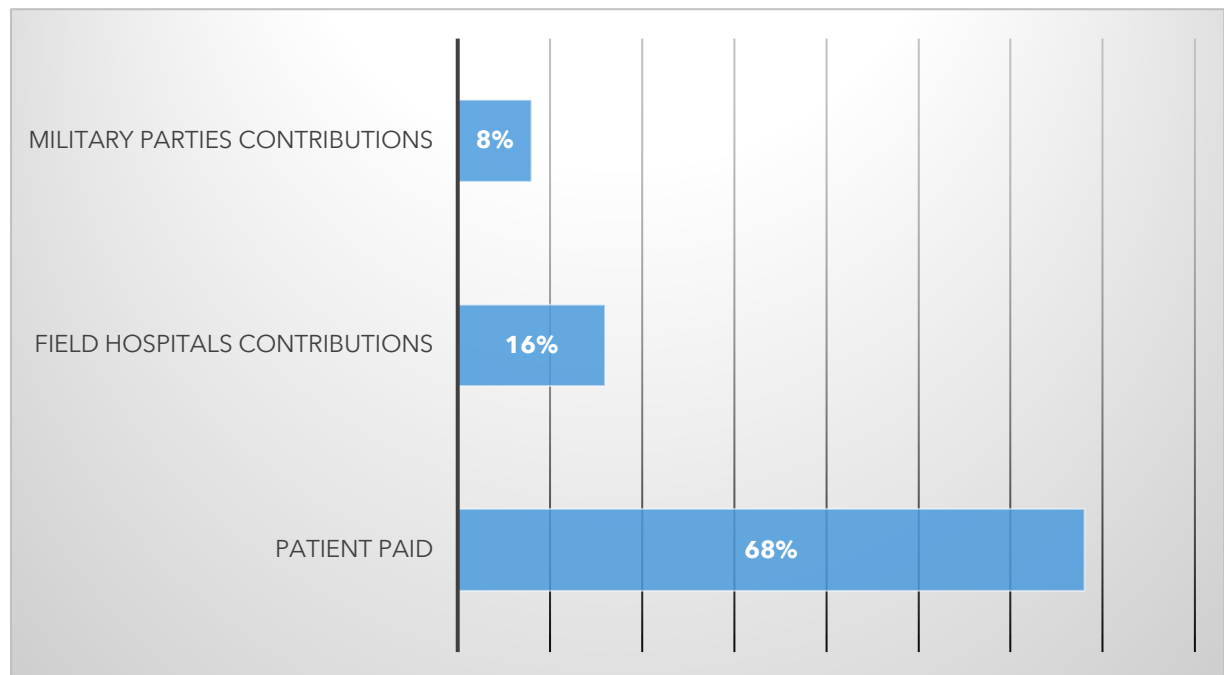
Khalil, a former member of the opposition armed factions until 2014, was injured twice by shrapnel as a result of air strikes; the first time near Al-Siaseyya Bridge in Deir Ezzor and the second on Al-Jaish Street in Al-Mayadeen city. Then, he joined the SDF in late 2017.

"I was transferred to participate in the campaign to liberate the town of Al-Baghuz from ISIS. While crossing a farm, a mine exploded, causing me to be directly injured in one of my feet and later amputated in a hospital in Hasakeh city," Khalil said.

The Injuries' Consequences

The vast majority of those injured and interviewed by JFL received medical intervention immediately after the injury, although these interventions are sometimes insufficient for a shortage of medical materials or specialist doctors. None of those surveyed received psychological support after the injury as a number of the injured spoke about the psychological consequences and their impact on them and their families. The majority of treatment expenses are paid by the injured or their relatives, while field hospitals and military parties have contributed to the cost of treating some of the injured.

Treatment expenses incurred by the patient or his or her relatives were 68.13% of the total interviews conducted by JFL researchers. Some private actors and medical organizations contributed to the expenses, but in very small proportions. Field hospitals contributed 16.13% and the military parties also contributed 8.67%.



The injuries have led to physical and psychological repercussions for those injured. The cost of performing urgent surgeries and the subsequent operations required by some cases in addition to treatments have been a major burden on the patients and their

families. On the one hand, they face the inability to move, loss of work, limited mobility and employment opportunities, which in some cases may be non-existent, and on the other hand they face psychological problems.

Uroua, who was injured in April 2017, says: "My family has borne the expenses of my treatment, which amounted to 400,000 Syrian pounds which was too high for my financial situation. My life changed completely after the injury and I am now forced to use crutches, and this is causing me physical and psychological pain, as well as walking, standing and using the motorcycle that used to be my means of moving. My wife is now working to help secure family expenses." "People working for local organizations contacted me and explained my health status in detail, but no one helped me," he said.

"I used the chair to help me walk. I didn't get any kind of support. I paid 700,000 Syrian pounds⁸. My son left school and now works in a barber shop and my wife works as a seamstress," said Yasser, who was injured in 2018 and became unable to work or do a lot of his duties.

Khalil, whose foot was amputated by a mine explosion in 2019, says

"The accident changed my life and caused me a very bad psychological and physical condition. I felt helpless and became more aggressive. I feel like people are looking at me with pity. I can no longer work. My family supported me, especially my eldest brother, who helped me to open a small grocery."

Marwa suffered shrapnel in her eye that led to a retinal detachment.

"After the first surgery, my condition improved slightly and the doctor supervising my case advised me to travel to Damascus to complete the necessary surgeries and treatment to repair as much damage as possible."

⁸ Equivalent to \$1300 at the USD exchange rate in 2018.

It was not easy to get out of Deir Ezzor during ISIS control. Those wishing to leave were taking dangerous routes through the desert and walking long distances.

"My family and my husband's family helped me because getting out through smuggling is financially costly, and I moved from Abu Khashab village to the village of Al-Sa'wa in the western countryside of Deir Ezzor, then to the city of Hasaka and to Damascus."

Marwa had two eye surgeries within a year, and she had to inject her eye to strengthen the eye nerve, as well as take medications and an eye drop that she has to use permanently. This forces her children to work in Damascus to cover the expenses of the house and treatment.

"My children and I are now working after we return to Deir Ezzor because of the high cost of living in Damascus, I have to see a doctor in Damascus every three months to inject my eyes."

Abbas, who lost sight as a result of the pressure of a shell falling near the demonstration in which he participated, said:

"My father sold part of the land he owns to secure my treatment costs abroad. Three months of treatment outside Syria is no longer useful to me, and we have finally surrendered to the status quo,"

"I lost part of my body. I am afraid I can't get married and start a family in the future where my movement is restricted and the job opportunities in front of me are very limited. This is in addition to the financial cost of 200,000 Syrian pounds⁹ as a treatment cost," said Basem, who lost one of his feet in 2016 mine explosions.

Ali did not imagine that he would lose a part of his body.

"My mental state deteriorated. My parents stood by me in the first period until I started to get used to using the other hand and I was determined to do so because I don't want anyone to help me out of pity."

⁹ Equivalent to \$350 at the USD exchange rate in 2016.

Jaber's life changed completely after the injury. He was working in construction and now that his hand is paralyzed, he can no longer do so and works in a clothing store.

"My 10-year-old son's life has also changed. He dropped out of school and started working in a car repair shop to help pay the house bills."

Challenges Faced by the War-wounded in Deir Ezzor

1. Limited financial and psychological support to people injured as a result of the war
2. High cost of treatment required by some injuries, especially given the lack of free medical centers and the reliance on private hospitals and clinics.
3. Poor medical capacity as a large number of specialist doctors have migrated to safer areas and the equipment and medicine needed to intervene or continue previous treatment plans are not available.
4. The difficulty of moving to areas controlled by the Syrian Government, which is relatively preferable in terms of the presence of specialists and hospitals, for security or financial reasons.
5. The impact of daily difficulties for the injured and their inability to meet their needs with the severe lack of economic opportunities available to them.
6. The impact of injuries on the families of the injured, the most prominent of which is children dropping out of schools in search of work to help pay rent and bills.
7. The lack of local entities capable of advocating the demands of war-wounded people.
8. The continued presence of mines and remnants of war, which threaten to increase the number of injured people.

Recommendations

JFL recommends to:

Civil society organizations

- Expand psychological and financial support for the rehabilitation and integration of war victims, including the establishment of special rehabilitation centers for war victims and others for the installation of artificial limbs and physical therapy.
- Allocate suitable and stable employment opportunities for the war-wounded.

War-wounded

- Work to form collectives to raise their joint needs and support them at different levels.
- Cooperate with credible local and international human rights organizations to document the injuries they have suffered.

Syrian Government and SDF

- Establish special offices/centers for the registration of war-wounded to provide them with the necessary financial and medical support either directly or in conjunction with competent organizations.
- Allocate a budget to provide support to the war-wounded, in particular, all those related to the provision of necessary treatments and surgical procedures.
- Facilitate access to services and educational and health facilities for war victims and their families.
- Work more quickly to clear mines and remnants of war to avoid further casualties.

Deir Ezzor since 2011

Deir Ezzor governorate has gone through various stages since 2011 that have directly affected the civilian population, with the start of the popular movement in the governorate in April 2011 and the large-scale arrests of participants and sympathizers by Syrian security forces, events have taken an upward trend, sometimes accelerating and sometimes slowing down.

After the first incursion by Syrian government forces into Deir Ezzor city and the countryside in August 2011 to suppress popular anti-authority movements, protests gained momentum, especially after security forces killed a number of protesters, including children¹⁰. In mid-2012¹¹, Syrian forces, backed by the Syrian Army's elite Republican Guard and the 4th Division, stormed the governorate for the second time using heavy weapons¹², warplanes¹³ and helicopters¹⁴, and arrested and killed¹⁵

¹⁰ "He Has Been Killed Through No Fault" , Justice for Life, 2018.

<https://jfl.ngo/he-has-been-killed-through-no-fault/>

¹¹ "Al Joura and Al Qusour The Forgotten Crime", Justice for Life, 2017.

<https://jfl.ngo/en/al-joura-and-al-qusour-the-forgotten-crime/>

¹² "The Story of Death of the Activist Abdulrahman Mashhour", Justice for Life, 2018.

<https://jfl.ngo/story-death-activist-abdulrahman-mashhour/>

¹³ "A Voice I Can Never Forget", Justice for Life, 2018.

<https://jfl.ngo/en/a-voice-i-can-never-forget/>

¹⁴ "The Entire Family Was Killed", Justice for Life, 2018

<https://jfl.ngo/en/the-entire-family-was-killed/>

¹⁵ "Al Joura and Al Qusour The Forgotten Crime", Justice for Life, 2017.

<https://jfl.ngo/en/al-joura-and-al-qusour-the-forgotten-crime/>

hundreds of civilians, including activists. After this incursion, fighting between Syrian forces and armed factions continued until the end of 2017.

During the five years (2012-2017), armed opposition factions and extremist forces took control of large areas of the governorate and fought numerous battles with government forces and their militias, where opposition factions took control of the eastern neighborhoods of Deir Ezzor (Al-Hamidia- Sheikh Yassin-Ganamat...) as well as areas in the eastern and western countryside, including the cities of Mayadin and Albu Kamal.

In July 2014, after months of fighting, ISIS took control of opposition areas and expanded its control to include more neighborhoods in the city, blocked the road leading to Deir Ezzor airport and obstructed its operation, and imposed a suffocating siege on the city's government-controlled neighborhoods for more than two years.

From mid-2017 to the end of the same year, the governorate witnessed a complete change in control, where Syrian forces, supported directly by armed militias affiliated with them and foreign ones, in addition to the Russian Air Force, were able to regain control of areas south of the Euphrates River, which includes the rest of the neighborhoods of Deir Ezzor city and the cities of Mayadin and Albukamal and its towns¹⁶. The SDF took control of areas north of the Euphrates River with the support of the U.S.-led International Counterterrorism Coalition. Then, in March 2019, it completed its control of the group's last stronghold in the town of Al-Baghuz, east of Deir Ezzor on the Syrian-Iraqi border, dividing the governorate into two banks by the controlling parties.

¹⁶ "The Black September Of Deir Ezzor", Justice for Life, 2017.

<https://jfl.ngo/en/the-black-september-of-deir-ezzor/>

The entire governorate, including both parts, faces major problems related to security, living situation, freedoms and civil society activity. The controlling forces continue to practice arbitrary detention¹⁷, enforced disappearance, torture¹⁸ in prisons, seizure of property¹⁹, prosecution of civilian activists²⁰, denial of access to civil documents²¹, inadequate access to employment opportunities, restrictions on the movement of the population, and poor handling of the issue of remnants of war and mines used by a number of parties to the conflict.

¹⁷ "Deir ez-Zor: Dozens Arbitrarily Arrested during SDF's "Deterrence of Terrorism" Campaign", Justice for Life, 2020.

<https://jfl.ngo/en/deir-ez-zor-dozens-arbitrarily-arrested-during-sdfs-deterrence-of-terrorism-campaign/>

¹⁸ "The Death of a Woman from Deir Ezzor as She was Arrested in Philistin Branch" , Justice for Life, 2020.

<https://jfl.ngo/en/the-death-of-a-woman-from-deir-ezzor-as-she-was-arrested-in-philistin-branch/>

¹⁹ "Seizure of Property in Deir Ezzor", Justice for Life, 2020,

<https://jfl.ngo/en/seizure-of-property-in-deir-ezzor/>

²⁰ "Deficient Participation", Justice for Life, 2020.

<https://jfl.ngo/en/deficient-participation/>

²¹ "Loss of Evidentiary Documents in Syria.. Awaiting Fundamental Solutions", Justice for Life, 2020.

<https://jfl.ngo/en/loss-of-evidentiary-documents-in-syria-awaiting-fundamental-solutions/>