



عمران  
للدراسات الاستراتيجية  
**OMRAN**  
FOR STRATEGIC  
STUDIES

# Indicators of Security Stability in Syria and Refugee Return:

## An evaluation of Select Cases

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**Indicators of Security  
Stability in Syria and  
Refugee Return:**  
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**Omran Center for Strategic Studies**

## **Omran Center for Strategic Studies**

An independent think tank and policy research center focusing on presenting an objective understanding of Syria and the region to become a reference for public policies impacting the region.

Omran began in November 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. It publishes studies and policy briefs regarding Syrian and regional affairs in the areas of politics, economic development, and local administration. Omran also conducts round-table discussions, seminars, and workshops that promote a more systematic and methodical culture of decision making among future leaders of Syria.

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# Table of Contents

<b>I. Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>II. Introduction.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>III. Indicators of Assassinations and Explosions .....</b>	<b>14</b>
1. Governorates of al-Hasaka, Deir Ezzor and Daraa.....	14
1.1 Summary of Qualitative Data by Month .....	14
1.2 Quantitative data by governorate .....	19
1.3 Quantitative data according to operation type and methods used.....	22
1.4 Analytical Summary.....	23
2. Opposition Control Areas .....	27
2.1 Quantitative data by month.....	27
2.2 Quantitative data by governorate .....	47
2.3 Quantitative data by method used .....	52
2.4 Analytical Summary.....	53
<b>IV. Indicators of Extrajudicial Detentions and Abductions.....</b>	<b>55</b>
1. Cities of Jasim, Douma, al-Bukamal and Raqqa .....	55
1.1 Quantitative data by actor.....	55
1.2 Quantitative data by actor.....	57
1.3 Quantitative data by time period .....	58
1.4 Quantitative data according to city .....	61
1.5 Analytical Summary.....	65
2. Cities of Jarablus and Afrin .....	66
2.1 Quantitative data according to actor .....	66
2.2 Aggregated quantitative data.....	67
2.3 Data per period of time.....	69
2.4 Quantitative data per city.....	70
2.5 Analytical summary.....	71
<b>V. General Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>73</b>

## I. Executive Summary

- Utilizing a qualitative approach, this report covers four security related indicators that **significantly influence** refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) decision to return to their original homes. Presenting a wide range of figures and trends, the four indicators that are covered within this report are: assassinations, explosions, extrajudicial detentions, and abductions. As the Syrian crisis grows more complex, security and stability are the main pillars that lead to recovery and safe return of those displaced. By covering the four security indicators, this report attempts to present both the individual and societal perspective that may feed into policy aiming for recovery and progress.
- The report examined occurrences of assassinations and explosions in the governorates of al-Hasaka, Deir Ez-Zour and Daraa during two time periods: last 6 months of 2019 and first 6 months of 2020. During this period, 308 explosions and 72 assassinations were logged. Methods used varied from gunfire in 213 incidents, IEDs in 94, car bomb in 39, mines in 25, grenades in 9 cases, as well as other methods. The total number of casualties reached 1,008 including 490 military personnel and 518 civilians. Daraa, Deir Ezzor, and Al-Hasaka, the selected case studies in the report, expose the failure and weakness of the regime, and to a lesser extent the Autonomous Administration (AA). The number of explosions and assassinations were high within these governorates, due to the unsecure environment and the various actors that included local, foreign and militia actors, each with a separate agenda. **The instability and dangerous situation have had an adverse effect on the safe return of refugees and internally displaced individuals.**
- In opposition-controlled territories, incidents of assassinations and explosions within the studied timeframe amounted to: 1,209 casualties, the included 890 civilians and 319 military personnel. IEDs were used in 93 cases, while car bombs were used in 69. As revealed through the analysis from the Euphrates Shield and Afrin territory, the “Wrath of Olives-Ghadab al-Zaytun” operation room held a leading role in the

adoption of assassinations within the two areas. There was also a substantial rate of extrajudicial detention and abduction incidents within the monitored areas. The figures highlight the failure of security agencies in protecting their local environments from breaches and their inability to identify methods used by perpetrators. The **fragile security environment has raised skepticism** on whether there could be a safe return of refugees.

- In the cities of Jasim, Douma, al-Bukamal, and Raqqa, 73 abductions and extrajudicial detentions occurred, including 15 in Jasim, 20 in Douma, 20 in al-Bukamal, 18 in Raqqa. 23 of the operations were committed by foreign actors, resulting in 182 casualties, 19 incidents committed by local actors, which resulted in 117 casualties, and the perpetrators of an additional 31 incidents are unknown, but resulted in 89 casualties. The total number of casualties is 388, including 188 civilians (109 which are from reconciled areas) and 56 military personnel, including 12 from the ranks of the AA's People Protection Units (YPG), 20 from civil defense, 2 from the AA, and one person from the Military Security branch. These figures illustrate the **decline in security and stability**. Perpetrators vary between local and international actors. This further highlights the deterioration and inefficiency of security actors.
- In the cities of Afrin and Jarablus, there were 169 extrajudicial detentions and abductions; 37 in Jarablus and 132 in Afrin with 355 casualties. The "Wrath of Olives" operations room expanded to 17 operation rooms. The incidents focused primarily on targeting and killing members of the Syrian National Army. According to reported data, the highest number of incidents took place in January 2020. Known actors were responsible for 141 extrajudicial detentions, while 28 remain unknown. The majority were identified in Afrin, which highlights the failure of security actors to maintain a secure environment.
- The data and analysis resulted in a number of recommendations concerning efforts to aid in Syrian refugee and IDP return. The main recommendation is for decision-makers to avoid general policies that do not explicitly define the necessary terms of security and stability. In order

to achieve the level of detail necessary, key stakeholders must agree on legal, administrative, and political conditions that will insure a the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of Syrians.

## II. Introduction

Security, stability, and early recovery are dependent upon one another in a political transition and reformation. As highlighted throughout history, security and stability are essential and were predominately achieved by instilling a new political order that removes the main sources of conflict. Syria is no exception, as the need for a political transition grows more urgent. Although security and stability are a focus point for key stakeholders, the growing fragmentation and chaos has only expanded the various layers to attaining security. Also contributing, the prolonged political process, including the constitutional committee, have laid a confusing path with unclear outcomes that would lead to a stable political climate in the near future. The current outlook does not clearly outline when a secure and stable environment will be set for Syrian to return.

As the Syrian conflict reaches a “precarious freeze,” it has become increasingly apparent that the security borders separating the three zones will be consolidated, which are the zone influenced by Turkey northwest of the Euphrates, the zone controlled by the Autonomous Administration (AA) in cooperation with the United States, and Assad regime-held areas, secured with Iranian and Russian influence. Despite the divisions, security and stability are critical in moving forward with early recovering and attaining social stability, whether inside Syria or in neighboring regions. **This report will focus on four particular indicators of security; assassinations, explosions, extrajudicial detentions, and abductions.** A variety of cities from a wide range of backgrounds were selected as case-studies to cover the different areas of control in Syria.

Strategically selected, the case studies attempt to present a general picture of Syria’s current security condition. The first and second section of the report, presents an overview of data collected concerning explosions and assassinations over the course of a year, starting from the beginning of July 2019 until June 2020. explosion The sections cover the three areas of control through case studies from the following areas; in the Deir Ezzor and Daraa governorate are covered for Assad regime-held territory, areas in Deir Ezzor

and Al-Hasaka governorate are covered for the AA region, and cities in Idlib, Aleppo, Raqqa, and Al-Hasaka are covered to represent the situation in opposition-controlled areas.

To measure indicators for assassinations and explosions, a tailored-approach was to collect and analyze data. Forms were utilized to record information on explosions and assassinations, including date, location, type of incident, target, targeting method, status of the target, and the actor. The results and consequences of each event were also recorded. After collection, data was cleaned and cross-checked, after which a cross-regional analysis was formed on the security conditions, stability, and how it relates to the topic of safe and neutral return.

The report relied on the following sources:

- 1) Accounts of activists in areas under observation or those following security operations on social media platforms.
- 2) Accounts and official websites of agencies and local media that cover events in those governorates.

The other two critical indicators of safe return, detention and abduction, were analyzed through case studies from the three particular zones of control. In regime-held areas, the city of Jasim in Daraa, Douma in Damascus, and Al-Bukamal in Deir Ezzor were selected. All three have been under the control of the regime since 2018. For opposition-controlled areas, the city of Jarablus and Afrin in Aleppo were selected. Both fell under opposition control in 2018, after Operations Euphrates Shield, therefore fitting into the same framework. The timing of control and the sensitivity of the situation in Afrin allows for the security situation to be compared with regime-held case studies.

For this purpose, a tailored form was designed to monitor these incidents and analyze their data as indicators of stability and safe return over half a year starting from October 2019 until the end of March 2020. The form of detention and abduction was designed as follows: (Date – location – type of operation – status of the target – number of those targeted – parties in control

– places of observation – targeting party – gender of the target). In terms of sources, the report relied on private interviews with well-informed individuals whom are familiar with the details of the events in the monitored areas. In addition to relying on:

1. The observation points affiliated with the Information Unit at Omran Center in northern Syria.
2. The special security report issued by Ihsan Relief and Development offices inside Syria.
3. The official social media sources of the targeted parties.

### III. Indicators of Assassinations and Explosions

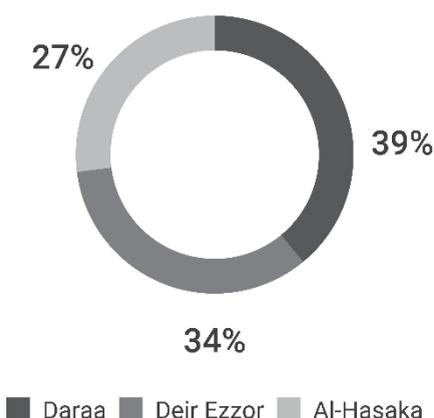
#### 1. Governorates of al-Hasaka, Deir Ezzor and Daraa

##### 1.1 Summary of Qualitative Data by Month

**In the second half of 2019**, July witnessed the largest number of incidents with 41 reported attacks; 16 in Daraa, 14 in Deir Ezzor, and 11 in al-Hasaka, as illustrated in figure 1. These incidents included 21 assassinations and 20 explosions. IEDs were used in 19 operation, gunfire in 15, one by a sniper, and 6 vehicle bombs and mines. The number of casualties of these incidents reached 132, 93 of which were military personnel and 39 civilians. As illustrated in figure 1. Daraa governorate witnessed the largest number of incidents (16 incidents), and the number of casualties included 37 military personnel and 13 civilians.

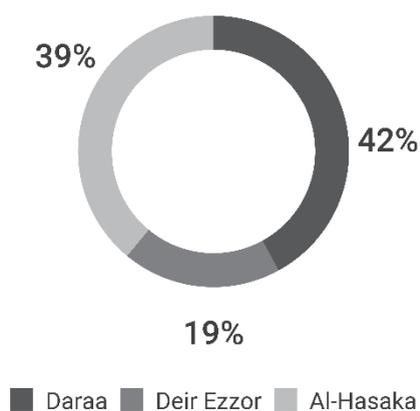
In August 2019, 31 assassinations and explosions were committed. 13 in Daraa, 12 in al-Hasaka, and 6 in Deir Ezzor, as illustrated in figure 2. The incidents included 24 assassinations and 7 explosions. 15 were committed through gunfire, 7 through vehicle bombs, 6 with grenades, and one with a mine. There were 80 casualties, 25 military personnel and 55 civilians.

**July operations by governorate**



**Figure (1): Distribution of Operations in July by governorates**

**August operations by governorate**



**Figure (2): Distribution of Operations in August by governorates**

In September 2019, 23 incidents were reported: 15 in Daraa, 6 in Deir Ezzor, and 2 in al-Hasaka, as shown in figure 3. Of the 23, one was an explosion and 22 were assassinations. Methods included; 12 by gunfire, one sniping, 8 IEDs, 3 vehicle bombs, and one mine. There were 52 casualties, 36 military personnel and 14 civilians.

In October 2019, 29 attacks were recorded, 11 in Daraa, 11 in Deir Ezzor, and 7 in al-Hasaka figure 4. These incidents included 21 assassinations and 8 explosions. Methods utilized included 7 IEDs, 11 by gunfire, 8 vehicle bombs, and 3 mines. There were 74 casualties, 35 military personnel and 39 civilians. Deir Ezzor and Daraa governorates had the same number of incidents in that month, but attacks in Deir Ezzor resulted in more fatalities, and the killing 18 military personnel and 14 civilians.

**September operations by governorate**

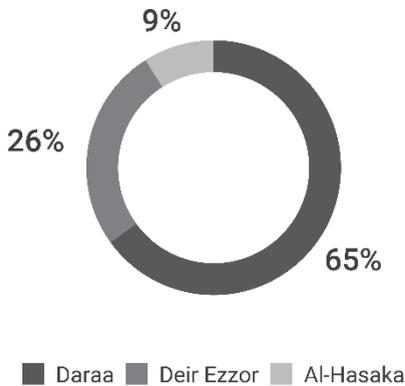


Figure (3): Distribution of Operations in September by governorates

**October operations by governorate**

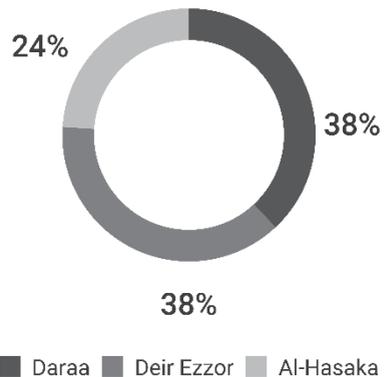


Figure (4): Distribution of Operations in October by governorates

In November 2019, 17 attacks were recorded, 11 in Deir Ezzor, 5 in al-Hasaka, and one in Daraa as illustrated in figure 5. The attacks included 12 assassinations and 5 explosions. Methods used included 8 by gunfire (including one sniper operation), 3 vehicle bombs, 2 IEDS, 2 hand-grenade explosions, and 2 mines. Casualties included 17 military personnel and 129 civilians. Notably, the number of incidents increased in Deir Ezzor compared to the decreased number in Daraa.

In December 2019, 24 attacks were committed as follows; 3 in Daraa, 19 in Deir Ezzor, and 2 in Al-Hasaka, as illustrated in figure 6. The attacks included 4 explosions and 20 assassinations. Methods used in these incidents were: 10 by gunfire, 6 IEDs, 3 vehicle bombs, 4 hand-grenade explosions, and 2 mine explosions. This resulted in 70 casualties, 43 military personnel and 27 civilians.

**November operations by governorate**

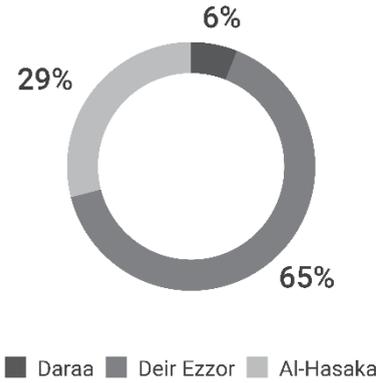


Figure (5): Distribution of Operations in November by governorate

**December operations by governorate**

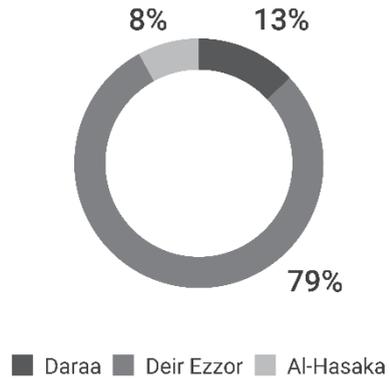


Figure (6): Distribution of Operations in December by governorate

### Concerning the first half of 2020

In January 2020, 31 attacks occurred, 14 in Daraa, 17 in Deir Ezzor, and no incidents in al-Hasaka governorate as illustrated in figure 7. The attacks included 27 assassinations and 4 explosions. As for the methods used in these incidents, they were 9 IEDs, 20 by gunfire, one vehicle bomb, and 3 mine explosions. There were 92 casualties, 60 military personnel and 32 civilians. The analysis reveals that the number of incidents in Daraa governorate and Deir Ezzor were close; while in al-Hasaka there were no attacks during this period. Additionally, it is important to note that the **number of assassinations increased during this period**, compared to explosions, and the number of military casualties was twice of civilian.

In February 2020, there were 38 attacks, 12 in Deir Ezzor, 2 in al-Hasaka, and 24 in Daraa as illustrated in figure 8. The attacks included 29

assassinations and 9 explosions. Methods used were 24 by gunfire (including one sniper operation), 10 IEDs, and 4 mine explosions. There were 66 casualties, 28 military personnel and 38 civilians. During this month, **the highest number of incidents was in Daraa**, and 2 were documented in al-Hasaka.

#### January operations by governorate

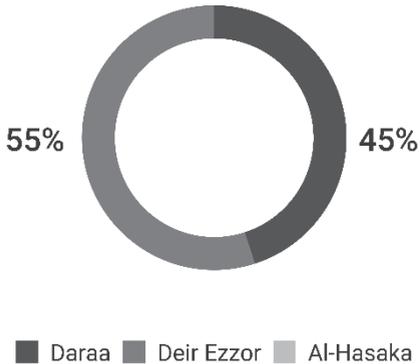


Figure (7): Distribution of Operations in January by governorate

#### February operations by governorate

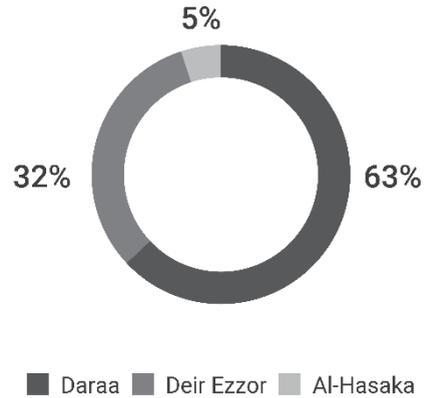


Figure (8): Distribution of Operations in February by governorate

In March 2020, there were 23 incidents; 11 in Daraa, 11 in Deir Ezzor, and one in Al-Hasaka, as illustrated in figure 9. These incidents included 21 assassinations and 2 explosions. Methods used were 2 IEDs, 16 by gunfire (including one sniper operation), one vehicle bomb, 2 mine explosions, one operation carried out by a suicide bomber, and one poisoning operation. There were 47 casualties, 19 military personnel and 28 civilians. The analysis shows that the number of incidents in Daraa governorate is close to that in Deir Ezzor; while there was one attack in al-Hasaka within the specified period.

In April 2020, there were 39 incidents; 21 in Daraa, 17 in Deir Ezzor, and one in Al-Hasaka, as illustrated in figure 10. These incidents included 31 assassinations and 8 explosions. Methods used in these incidents were 8 by IEDs and 27 by gunfire (including one operation where a firearm was used with a cold weapon), one vehicle bomb, and 3 mine explosions. There were

50 casualties, 23 military personnel and 27 civilians. A clear shift from the month prior, a larger number of incidents were committed in Daraa, followed by Deir Ezzor and Al-Hasaka within the specified period.

**March operations by governorate**

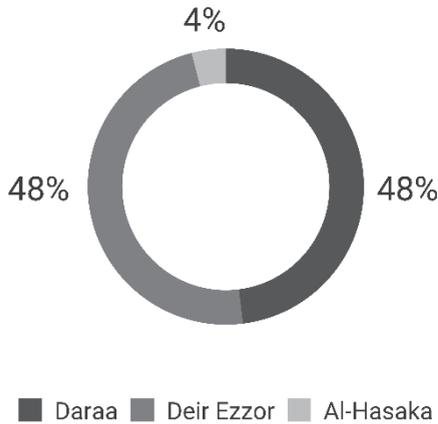


Figure (9): Distribution of Operations in March by governorate

**April operations by governorate**

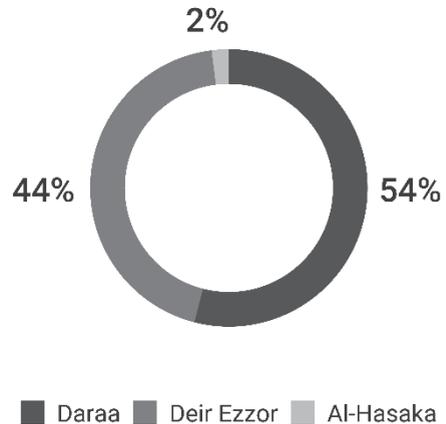


Figure (10): Distribution of Operations in April by governorate

In May 2020, 61 incidents took place; 27 in Daraa, 29 in Deir Ezzor, and 5 in Al-Hasaka, as illustrated in figure 11. The incidents included 57 assassinations and 4 explosions. Methods used were 12 IEDs, 41 by gunfire, 3 vehicle bombs, 4 mine explosions, and one hand-grenade. There were 132 casualties; 59 military personnel and 73 civilians.

**May operations by governorate**

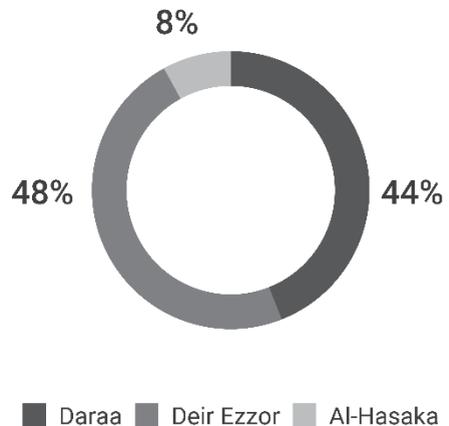


Figure (11): Distribution of Operations in May by governorate

During the monitoring period, the majority of incidents were committed in Deir Ezzor governorate, followed by Daraa, and then Al-Hasaka, but most of the incidents during May 202 occurred in Daraa governorate. Generally,

there was an increase in the number of incidents within the three governorates compared to prior months.

In June 2020, 21 incidents occurred; 11 in Daraa, 8 in Deir Ezzor, and 2 in al-Hasaka, as illustrated in figure 12. All incidents during the specified period were assassinations. Methods included 12 by gunfire, one by IED, 3 by vehicle bombs, and one by suicide bomber. There were 67 casualties; 53 military personnel and 14 civilians. The majority number of incidents occurred in Daraa, which also had the highest amount of fatalities. This was then followed by Deir Ezzor and Al-Hasaka.

**June operations by governorate**

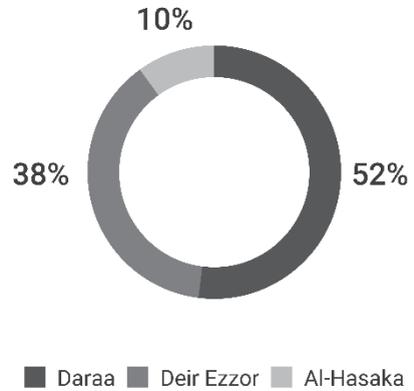


Figure (12): Distribution of Operations in June by governorate

## 1.2 Quantitative data by governorate

**Al-Hasaka governorate witnessed 50 incidents:** 26 explosions and 24 assassinations. The methods used, included 9 by gunfire, 13 IEDs, 22 vehicle bombs, 3 hand grenades, one suicide bomber, and one mine.

There were 221 casualties; 69 military personnel and 152 civilians. The number of incidents per month were as follows: 11 in July 2019, 12 in August 2019, 2 in September 2019, 7 in October 2019, 5 in November 2019, 2 in December 2019, zero in January 2020, one in February 2020, one in March 2020, one in April 2020, 5 in May 2020, and 2 in June 2020, as illustrated in figure 13. The YPG were pursued by 25 of the 50 incidents, making them main target. Civilians endured 22 incidents and the regime 3. 2 of which were civilian related regime targets, and one operation against the regime military.

### Operations by month in al-Hasaka

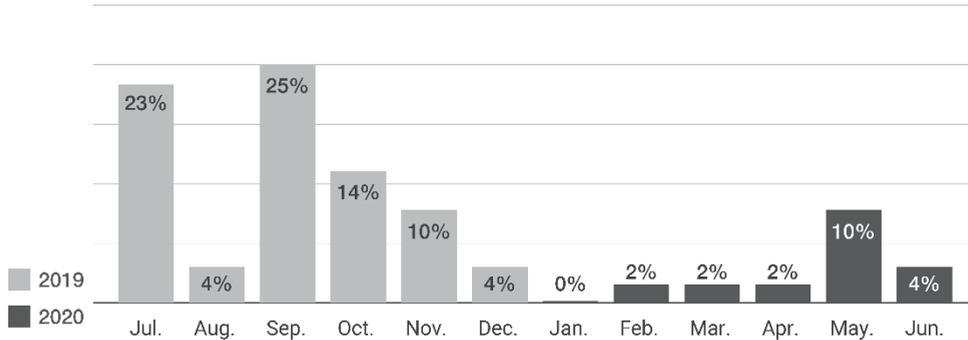


Figure (13): Distribution of Operations in al-Hasaka

**The Deir Ezzor Governorate** witnessed 162 incidents, 123 of which were assassinations and 39 explosions. The methods used in the incidents varied, 50 were IEDs, 15 vehicle bombs, and 72 by gunfire, including one sniper operation, 6 hand- grenade explosions, and 21 mines. There were 444 casualties 444, 253 military personnel and 191 civilians. The 162 incidents were distributed as follows: 14 in July 2019, 8 in August 2019, 6 in September 2019, 11 in October 2019, 11 in November 2019, 19 in December 2019, 17 in January 2020, 12 in February 2020, 12 in March 2020, 17 in April 2020, 29 in May 2020, and 8 in June 2020, as illustrated in figure 14. 59 attacks targeted the YPG and 26 targeted the regime. 18 incidents occurred against military targets and 8 attacks targeted civilians related to the regime, 8 attacks committed against Iranian forces, and 2 targeted militias affiliated with the regime.

## Operations by month in Deir Ezzor

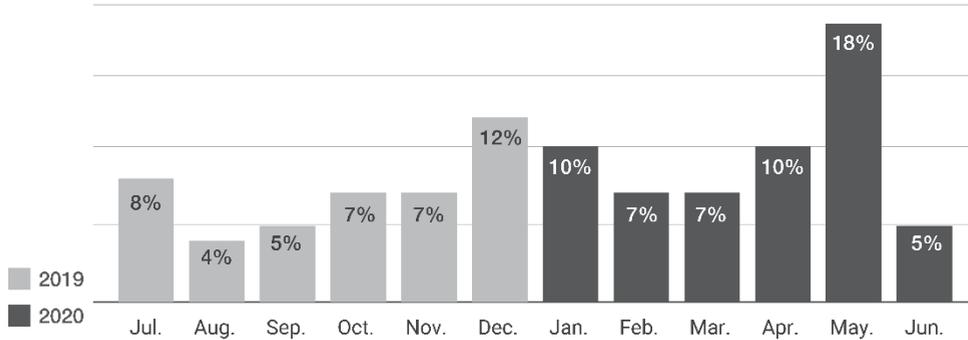


Figure (14): Distribution of Operations in Deir Ezzor

**The Daraa governorate witnessed 168 incidents, 161 of which were assassinations and 7 explosions. The methods used in these incidents varied, there were 132 by gunfire, 31 IEDs, 2 vehicle bombs, including 4 sniper incidents, 2 mines, and one poisoning operation. There were 343 casualties: 168 military personnel and 175 civilians. The 168 incidents were distributed as follows: 14 in July 2019, 13 in August 2019, 15 in September 2019, 11 in October 2019, one in November 2019, 3 in December 2019, 14 in January 2020, 24 in February 2020, 12 in March 2020, 21 in April 2020, 27 in May 2020, and 11 in June 2020, as illustrated in figure 15.**

### Operations per month in Daraa

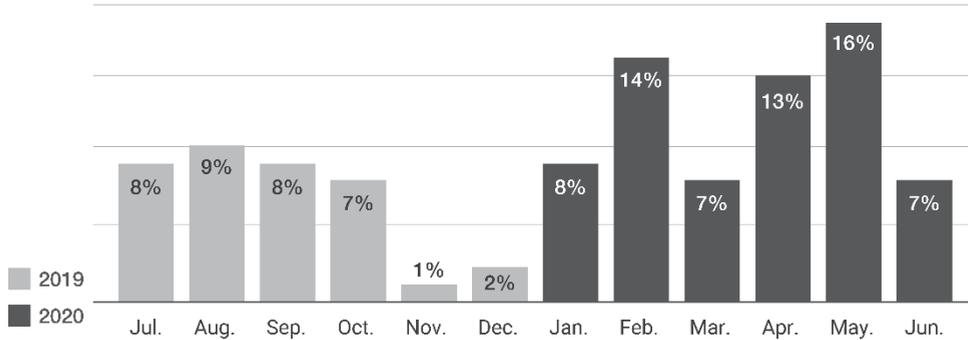


Figure (15): Distribution of Operations in Daraa

### 1.3 Quantitative data according to operation type and methods used

Within the monitoring period, there were 308 assassinations and 72 explosions. The distribution of assassinations by governorate is shown in Table 1. The number of casualties from assassinations were 368 military personnel and 324 civilians. The number of casualties of the explosions was 122 military personnel and 194 civilians. Assassination incidents **increased** steadily in Daraa governorate compared to the other governorates observed.

Upon analysis of the methods used within the monitoring period, it was uncovered that IEDs were used in 94 incidents. The number of casualties from IEDs was 234 military personnel and 70 civilians. There is a common pattern of IED use in the governorates with Deir Ezzor ranking first, then Daraa, and then al-Hasaka.

Operation by gunfire accounted for 213 cases in the three governorates. The number of casualties by gunfire was 188 military personnel and 191 civilians. It can be noted that **shootings are more frequent in Daraa** compared to other governorates. These incidents included 5 by sniper, 4 of which were in Daraa and 2 in Deir Ezzor. 3 of the snippings targeted military personnel and 2 civilians.

Vehicle bombs were used in 39 incidents and the number of casualties was 66 military personnel and 151 civilians. Hand grenades were used in 9 incidents, and resulted in 6 military and 50 civilian casualties. As for incidents with the use of mines, they were 25, and resulted in 23 military and 1 civilian casualty.

Additionally, there was one poisoning operation in Daraa against former opposition figures, that resulted in the death of 3 civilians. Cold weapons were also used in one operation, along with gunfire in Daraa, and resulted in 2 military personnel deaths.

Governorate	Assassinations	Explosions	Incidents per Method Used						
			IEDs	Gunfire	Vehicle bomb	Hand Grenade	Mine	Poison	Cold Weapon
Al-Hasaka	24	26	13	9	22	3	2	0	0
Deir Ezzor	123	39	50	72	15	6	21	0	0
Daraa	161	7	31	132	2	0	2	1	0
Total	308	72	94	213	39	9	25	1	1

Table (1) shows the distribution of assassinations by governorate

## 1.4 Analytical Summary

Between July 2019 to June 2020, 380 assassination and explosion incidents occurred, with 308 explosions and 72 assassinations, as shown in figure 16. The methods used to carry out these incidents included, 213 by gunfire, 94 IEDs, 39 vehicle bombs, 25 mine explosions, 9 hand-grenades, 2 suicide bombers, and one poisoning, as illustrated in figure 17. Within the specified period, the number of casualties was 1008, 490 of which were military personnel and 518 civilians, as shown in figure 18.<sup>(1)</sup> 84 were against the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the People's Protection Units (YPG), 175 against the Syrian regime, 132 against civilians affiliated with the

<sup>(1)</sup> Victims include the dead and wounded.

regime, 43 regime military targets, 111 against civilians; 2 against militias affiliated with the regime, one against the Russian Military Police, and 8 against forces affiliated with Iran (2 against the Revolutionary Guards, one against Hezbollah, one against Iraqi Hezbollah, and one against Baqir Brigade,) as further illustrated in figure 19.

**Explosions and Assassinations**

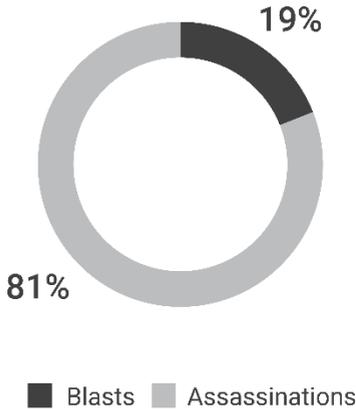


Figure (16): Distribution of Operations by the type of operation

**Methods used in Operations**

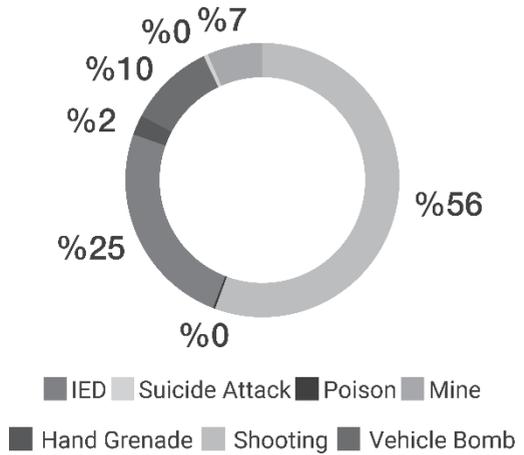


Figure (17): Distribution of Operations by the type of method used

The report shows that perpetrators of 83 incidents were identified, whereas 297 remained anonymous. The 83 incidents with identified perpetrators, included 56 by ISIS, 7 believed to be ISIS, 16 by the “Popular Resistance”,<sup>(2)</sup> and 4 by the Syrian Regime. May 2020 witnessed the largest number of incidents (61 incidents) compared to other months. The incidents took place in the second half of 2019 were as follows: July 41, August 31, September 23, October 29, November 17, December 24. As for the first half of 2020: January 31, February 38, March 25, April 39, May 61, June 21, as illustrated in figure 20

<sup>(2)</sup> Popular Resistance to Liberate Syria <https://bit.ly/37Omw61> - <https://bit.ly/2HNJDTt>

### Victims of Operations

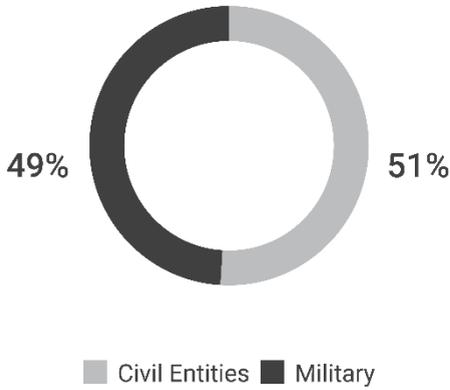


Figure (18): Distribution of Operations by the type of target

### Taregts of Operations

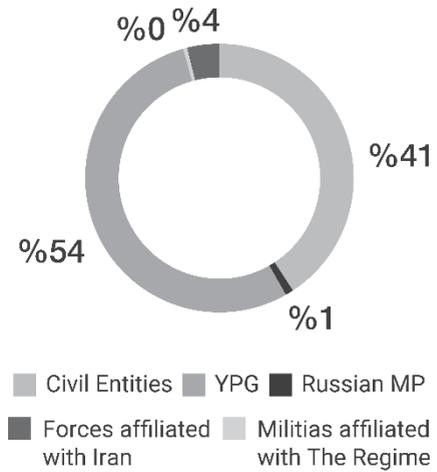


Figure (19): Distribution of Operations by the type of targeted party

### Operations by month

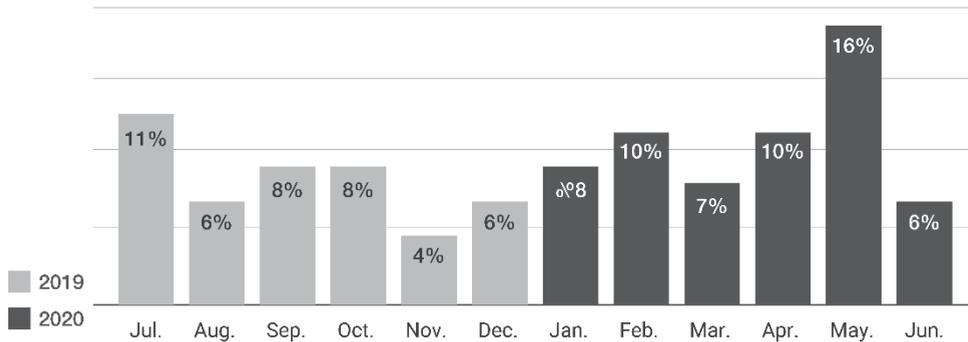


Figure (20): Distribution of Operations by month

Regarding the number of casualties, they were as follows: in July 132, August 80, September 50, October 74, November 146, December 70; and for the first half of 2020: January 92, February 66, March 49, April 50, May 132, June 67. Therefore, the total number of casualties within the specified period reached 1,008. According to the data, Daraa governorate had the highest number of incidents (168), while 162 incidents occurred in Deir

Ezzor and 50 in al-Hasaka during the monitoring period figure 21. The number of casualties by governorate were as follows, in Deir Ezzor 444, in Daraa 343, and in al-Hasaka 221.

### Distribution of operations by governorate

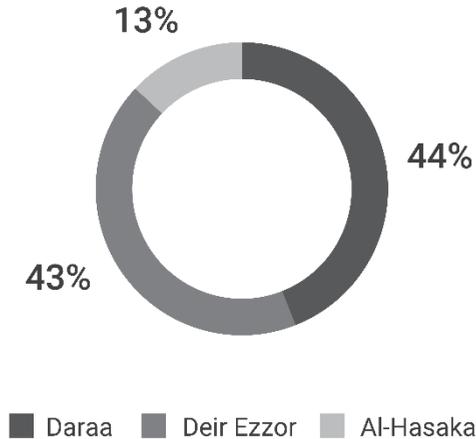


Figure (21): Distribution of Operations per governorate

**In analyzing the first two security indicators, assassinations and explosions, it is evident that security actors are unable to ensure safety. Although Daraa is used as a model by Russia for reconciliation, Daraa still witnessed a high number of assassinations, showcasing the instability and diverging security and political agendas in the region. Both the Syrian regime and Iran have a strong presence and are attempting to eliminate "reconciliation men," who either joined the Fifth Corps, or are still participating actively in the revolution. This reveals the general goal of the regime attempting to remain the central power, despite the Russians seeking to establish a model. As for the explosions, although they are few in number, they used various methods. This indicates that they are a continuation of the same security goals sought by the operations.**

**Deir Ezzor, which is currently divided between regime and the Autonomous Administration (AA) control, ranks second in number of**

**assassinations and explosions. Based on the methods utilized and those most targeted, it's becoming evident that there is a connected network for assassinations and explosions with the capacity to act. Security actors are unable to halt these incidents. Although the incidents are likely to be orchestrated by ISIS, it does not underestimate the conflicting agenda present between the multiple other actors' present.**

**In Al-Hasaka, the number of vehicle bombs is striking as it indicates the presence of ISIS sleeper cells, as well as networks affiliated with Iran and the regime targeting SDF and YPG. The inability to prevent vehicle bombs indicates the fragility of the AA structure.**

**Based on the indicators above, areas controlled by the Regime and AA cannot be considered safe. Both areas failed to prevent explosions and assassinations displaying their lack of capacity, conflicting security agendas internal, and the absence of united motive.**

## **2. Opposition Control Areas**

This section monitors assassination and explosion incidents in Syrian opposition-held areas between **July 2019 and June 2020**, which amounted to 266 incidents and resulted in 1,209 casualties.

### **2.1 Quantitative data by month**

**In July 2019**, there were 16 incidents resulting in 85 casualties, 29 of which were military and 56 civilian casualties, as shown in figure 22. 12 incidents targeted the moderate opposition factions, while 3 targeted civilian entities and one a "extremist groups," as illustrated in figure 23.

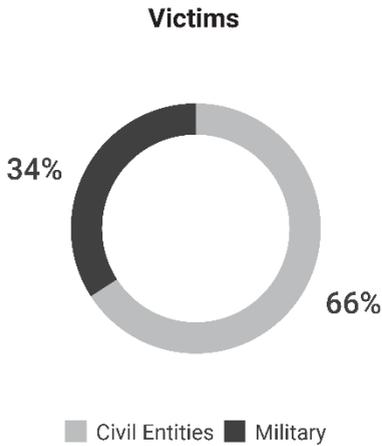


Figure (22): Victims of assassinations and explosions in July

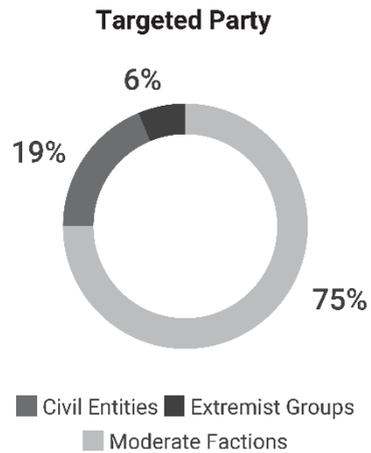


Figure (23): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in July

The data also show that 9 incidents occurred in Afrin, while 6 incidents occurred in the Euphrates Shield areas, and one incident in Idlib, as shown in figure 24. The primary method highlighted from the data was gunfire, which was 25% of all incidents, IEDs were 37% of incidents, vehicle bombs which was 19%, and grenade which was 19%, as illustrated in figure 25. According to the monitored data, responsibility for 14 of the total incidents was claimed by the "Wrath of Olives" operation room, while 4 incidents remained anonymous, as shown in figure 26.

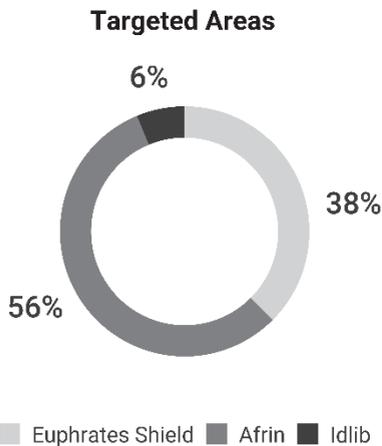


Figure (24): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in July

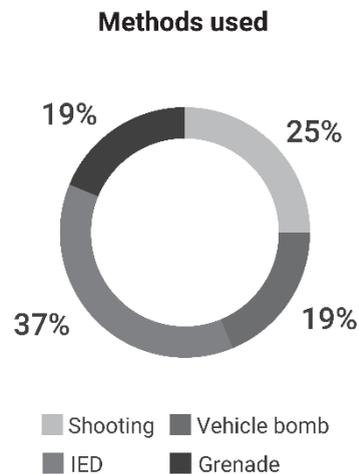


Figure (25): Methods used for assassinations and explosions in July

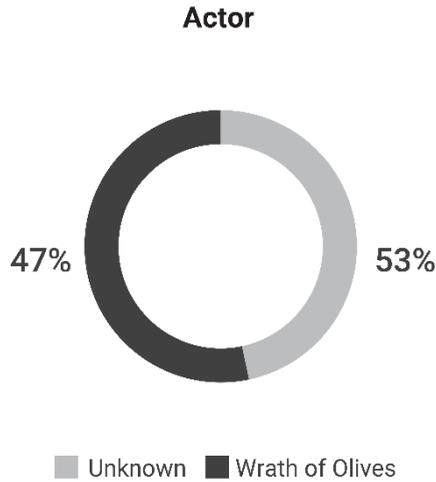


Figure (26): Actors behind assassinations and explosions in July

**In August 2019**, there were 10 incidents that resulted in 40 casualties, 26 of which were military and 14 civilian casualties, as illustrated in figure 27. Moderate opposition factions were the target of 5 incidents, while 3 targeted civilian entities, and 2 incidents targeted extremist groups, as shown in figure 28.

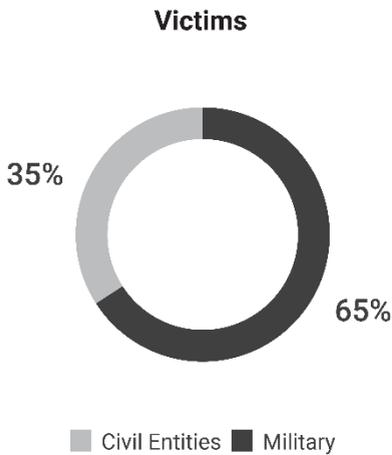


Figure (27): victims of assassinations and explosions in August

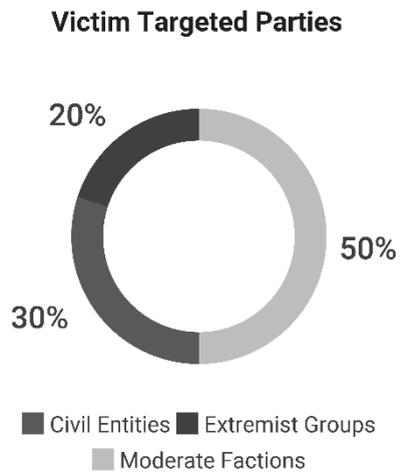


Figure (28): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in August

The data shows that 2 incidents occurred in Afrin area, and the same number in Idlib, while 6 incidents occurred in the Euphrates Shield areas, as shown in figure 29. The methods used the documented incidents, during August, were primarily gunfire, at a rate of 50% of total incidents, IEDs was 40%, and vehicle bombs was 10%, as highlighted in figure 30. Responsibility for 5 of the incidents were claimed by the "Wrath of Olives" operation room and 5 other incidents remain anonymous, as shown in figure 31.

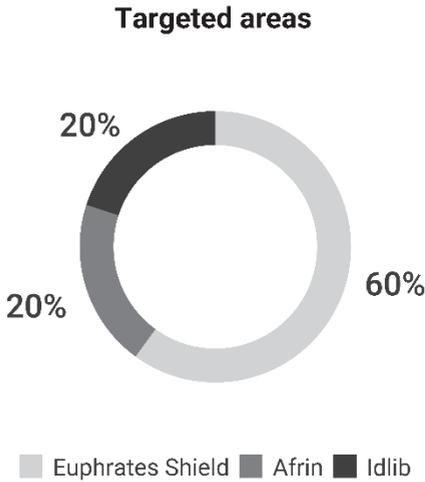


Figure (29): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in August

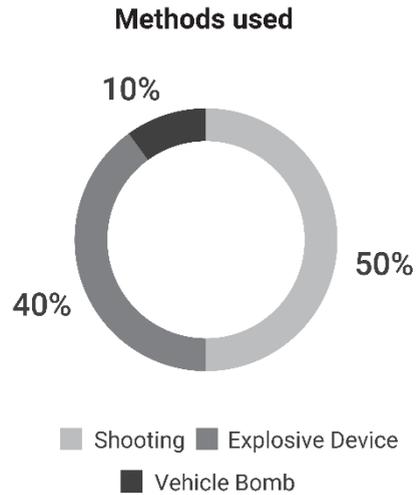


Figure (30): Method used in assassinations and explosions in August

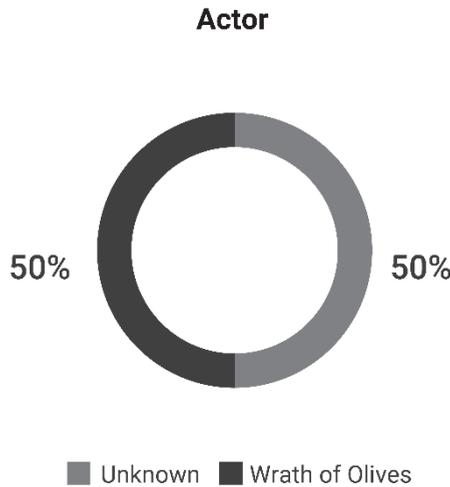


Figure (31): actor behind assassinations and explosions in August

**In September 2019**, 9 incidents were recorded, resulting in 44 casualties. 11 of which were military personnel and 33 civilian casualties, as illustrated in figure 32. 4 incidents targeted the moderate opposition factions and 3 targeted civilian entities. There was a single incident targeting the Turkish Military, and similarly a single incident targeting extremist groups, as shown in figure 33.

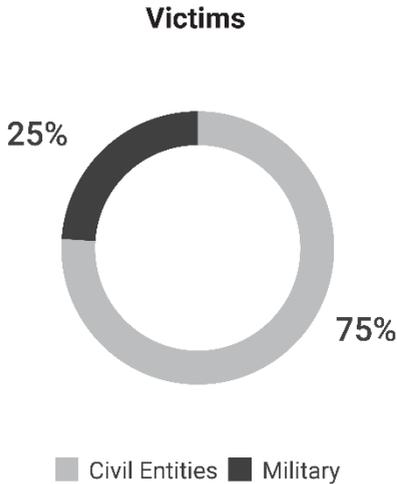


Figure (32): Victims of assassinations and explosions in September

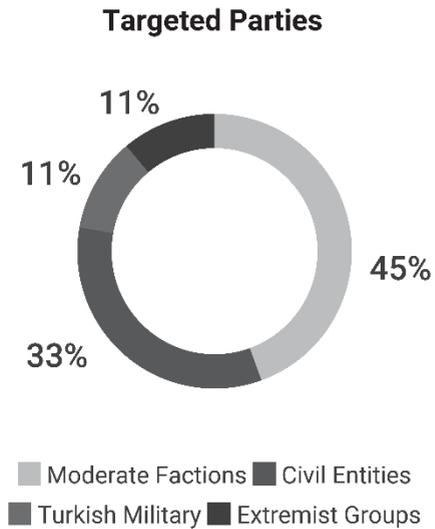


Figure (33): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in September

Based on the data, 5 incidents occurred in Afrin, 3 in Euphrates Shield, and one in Idlib, as shown in figure 34. Divided by method, 34% were vehicle bombs, 33% IEDs, 10% by gunfire, and 11% by mines, as shown in figure 35. According to observed data, 4 incidents were carried out by "Wrath of Olives" operation room, while 5 remain anonymous, as highlighted in figure 36.

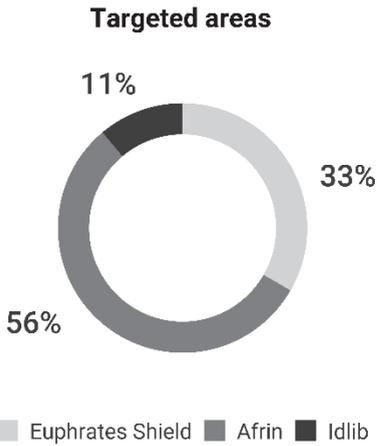


Figure (34): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in September

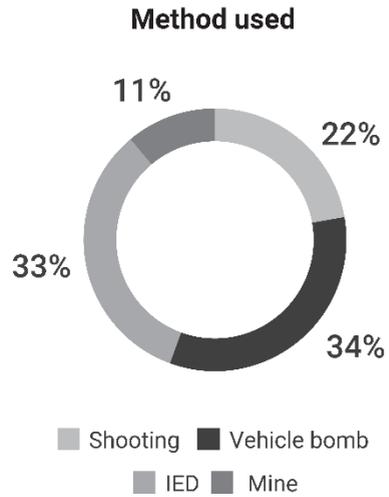


Figure (35): method used in assassinations and explosions in September

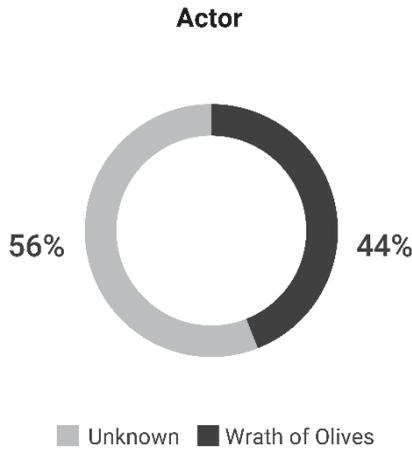


Figure (36): Actor behind assassinations and explosions in September

**In October 2019**, 20 incidents occurred that resulted in 62 casualties, 14 of which were military personnel and 48 civilians, as illustrated in figure 37. Civilian entities were the primary target of these incidents, with 12 incidents that targeted civilians versus 6 incidents that targeted moderate armed factions, and 2 incidents targeted extremist groups. As shown in figure 38.

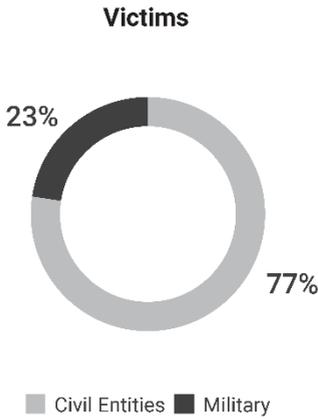


Figure (37): Victims of assassinations and explosions in October

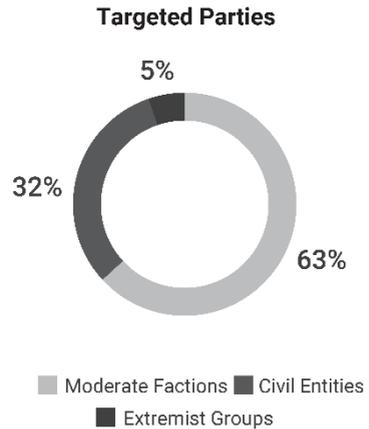


Figure (38): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in October

**Targeted areas**

The data also shows that 9 incidents occurred in Euphrates Shield area, 4 in Idlib, 4 in "Peace Spring" region, and 3 in the Afrin, as shown in figure 39. The methods used in incidents, were mainly 35% IEDs, 35% vehicle bombs, 15% gunfire, 10% mines, and 5% used grenade, as shown in figure 40. While 15 of the attacks remain anonymous, 4 incidents claimed by the "Wrath of Olives", and one was by YPG offshoots. As illustrated in figure 41.

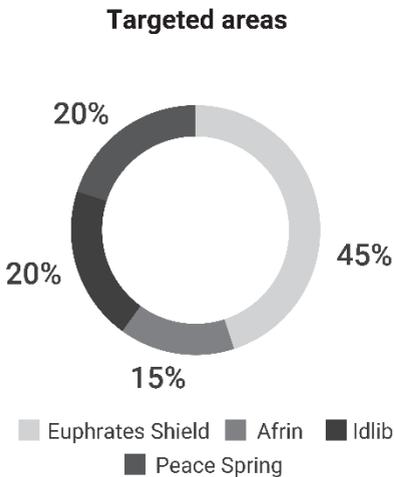


Figure (39): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in October

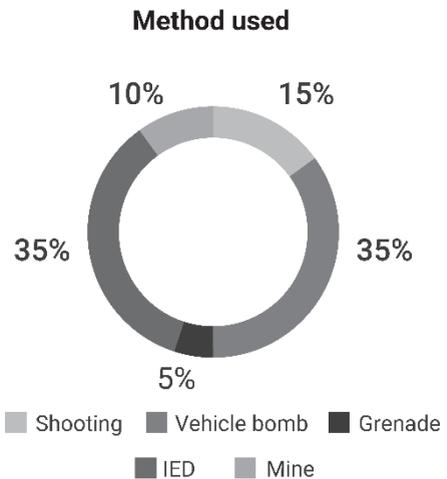


Figure (40): methods used in assassinations and explosions in October

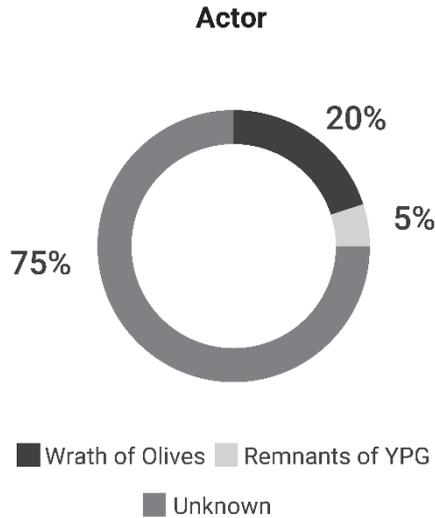


Figure (41): Actors behind assassinations and explosions in October

**In November 2019**, there were 39 incidents that resulted in 234 casualties. This included 29 military and 205 civilian casualties, as shown in figure 42. Civilian entities were targeted in 26 incidents, while 8 incidents targeted moderate armed factions, 3 incidents whose targets remains unknown, 1 incident targeted extremist groups, and 1 targeted the Turkish Military, as shown in figure 43.

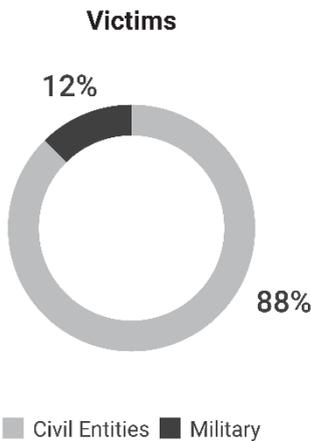


Figure (42): Victims of assassinations and explosions in November

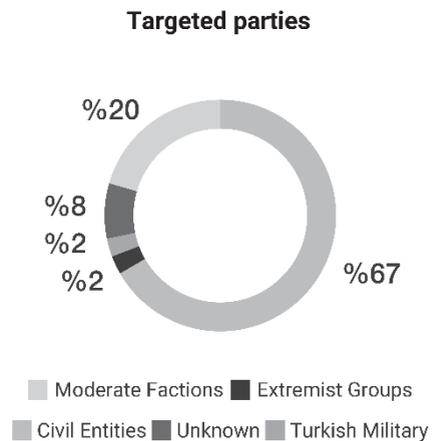


Figure (43): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in November

The data also showed that 17 incidents occurred in the Euphrates Shield area, while 6 incidents occurred in the Afrin, 10 in the “Peace Spring” region, 3 in Idlib and 3 in the areas controlled by "HTS in rural Aleppo, as illustrated in figure 44. The methods used were mainly 36% IEDs, 28% vehicle bombs, 26% by gunfire, and 10% were by mines, as highlighted in figure 45. According to observed data, 6 of the total incidents were claimed by the "Wrath of the Olives" operation room, 4 by YPG remnants, 3 by HTS, one by ISIS, and 25 remain anonymous, as illustrated in figure 46.

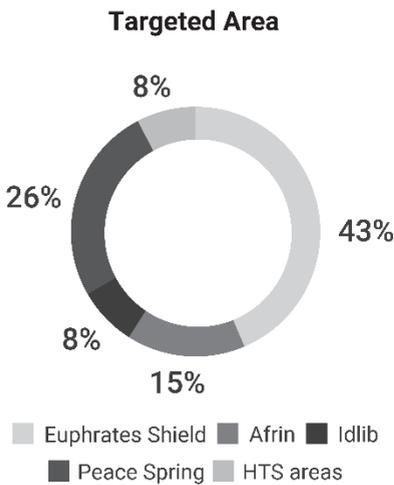


Figure (44): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in November

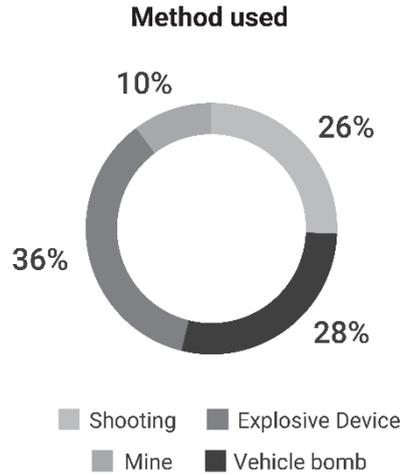


Figure (45): Method used in assassinations and explosions in November

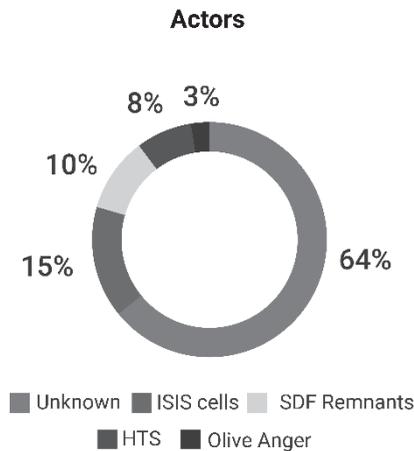


Figure (46): Actors behind assassinations and explosions in November

**In December** 2019, there were 18 incidents that resulted in 115 casualties. 29 of which were military personnel and 86 civilian casualties as shown figure 47. 11 incidents targeted civilian entities, 4 targeted moderate opposition factions, one targeted Turkish Military personnel, one targeted extremist groups, and one remained unknown. This is shown in figure 48.

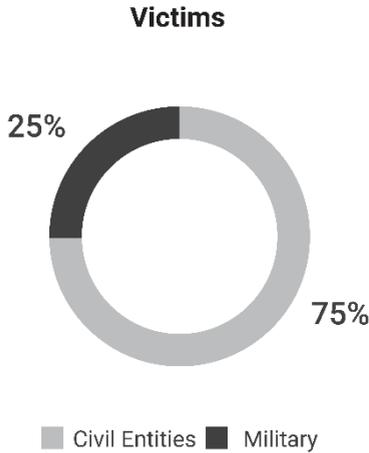


Figure (47): Victims of assassinations and explosions in December

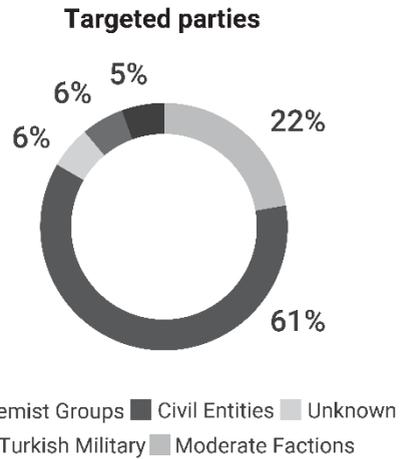


Figure (48): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in December

7 attacks occurred in the “Peace Spring” region, 6 occurred in the Euphrates Shield area, 3 in Idlib, one in Afrin, and one against HTS in Rural Aleppo. This is illustrated in figure 49. Based on the data, the methods used during December, where 56% of total incidents were vehicle bombs, 22% IEDS, 11% gunfire, and 11% mines, as illustrated in figure 50, while the rates of those using gunfire and mines were 11% for each (figure 50).

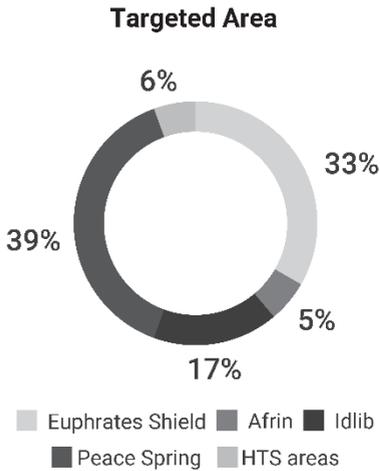


Figure (49): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in December

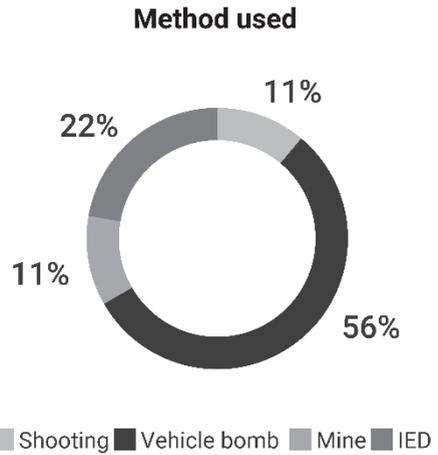


Figure (50): Method used in assassinations and explosions in December

According to observations, all incidents remained anonymous except for a single incident by the “Wrath of Olives” operation room. As shown in figure 51.

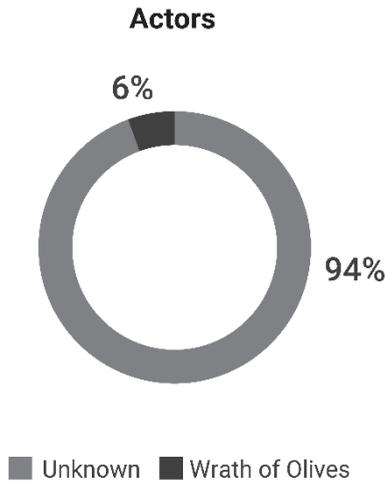


Figure (51): Actors behind assassinations and explosions in December

**In January 2020**, 24 incidents resulted in 93 casualties, 27 whom were military personnel and 66 civilians, as illustrated in figure 52. Civilian

bodies were targeted by 16 of these incidents, while 7 targeted moderate armed factions and, finally, the Turkish Military was targeted in one incident, as shown in figure 53.

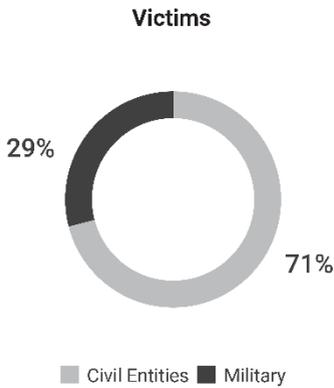


Figure (52): Victims of assassinations and explosions in January

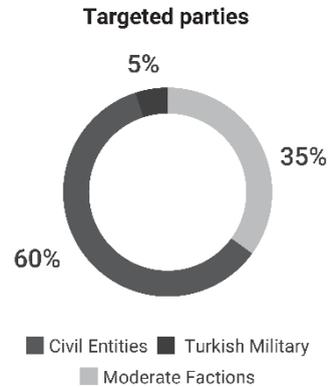


Figure (53): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in January

Based on data, 9 incidents occurred in the Euphrates Shield area, one in Idlib, 3 in HTS-controlled areas in rural Aleppo, 8 in Peace Spring area, and 3 Afrin area, as shown in figure 54. Methods used for January incidents were 37% gunfire, 25% vehicle bombs, 13% equally by either mines or grenades, and 12% by IEDs, as shown in figure 55. According to the observed data with regards to the perpetrator, 18% of the total incidents remained anonymous, while 3 were claimed by "Wrath of Olives" operation room, and 3 incidents allegedly perpetrated by YPG, as illustrated figure 56.

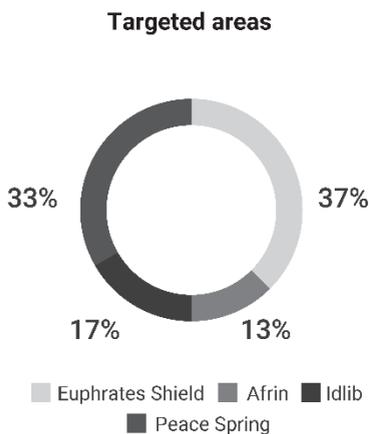


Figure (54): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in January

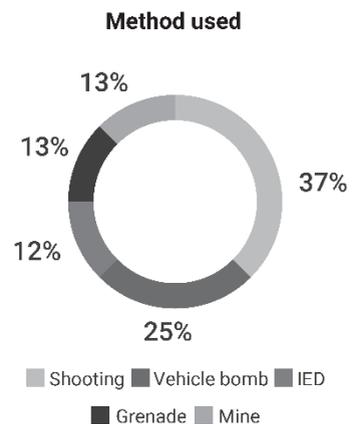


Figure (55): Method used in assassinations and explosions in January

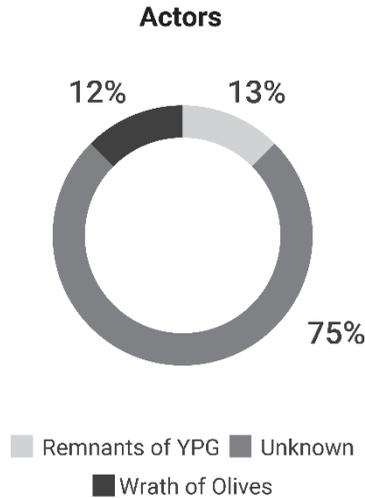


Figure (56): Actors behind assassinations and explosions in January

**In February 2020**, 14 incidents resulted in 70 casualties. 15 military personnel and 55 civilian casualties, as highlighted in figure 57. 8 incidents targeted civilian bodies, while 2 targeted moderate armed factions, 3 had unknown targets, and one targeted the Turkish Military, as illustrated in figure 58.

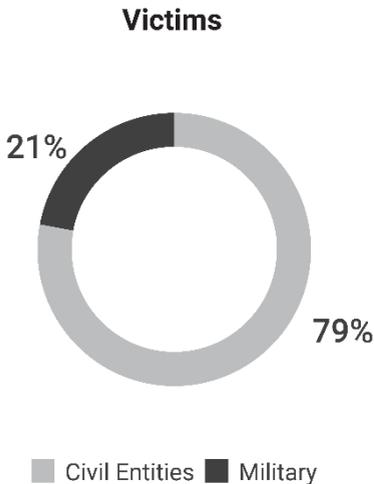


Figure (57): Victims of assassinations and explosions in February

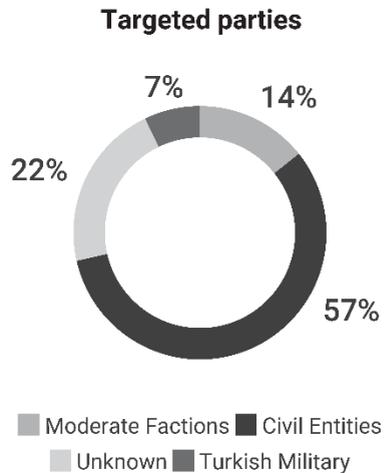


Figure (58): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in February

Data shows that 5 incidents occurred in the Euphrates Shield area, 3 in the Afrin area, 4 in the Peace Spring areas, and 2 in Idlib (figure 59). Methods used in the month of November were as follows: 43% vehicle bombs, 29% IEDs, 14% gunfire, 7% mines, and 7% grenades, (figure 60). 3 of the total incidents were carried out by the "Wrath of Olives" operation room, one incident by remnants of Assad forces, and 10 incidents remained anonymous (figure 61).

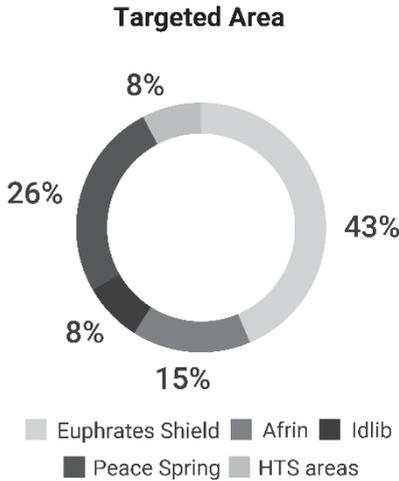


Figure (59): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in February

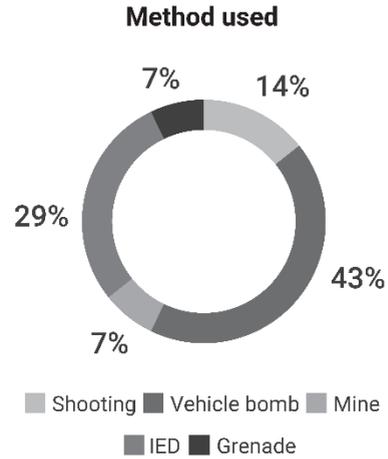


Figure (60): Method used in assassinations and explosions in February

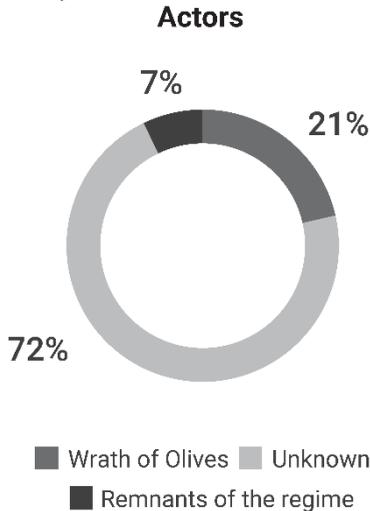


Figure (61): Actors behind assassinations and explosions in February

**In March 2020**, 25 incidents resulted in 71 casualties, 17 of which were military personnel and 54 civilian casualties (figure 62). Moderate armed factions were the target of 13, while 9 targeted civilian bodies, 2 remained anonymous, and the Turkish Military was targeted by a single incident (figure 63).

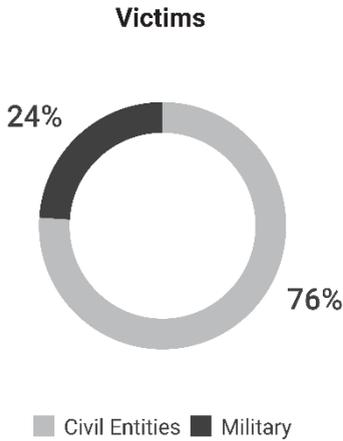


Figure (62): Victims of assassinations and explosions in March

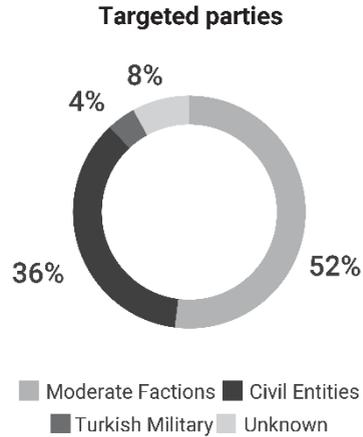


Figure (63): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in March

The data indicate that 5 incidents occurred in Euphrates Shield area, 5 in Idlib, 5 in “Peace Spring” region, and 10 incidents were reported in Afrin (figure 64). The methods used in the month of March were primarily 40% IEDs, 28% vehicle bombs, 24% gunfire, and 8% mines (figure 65). According to the observed data, 15 incidents out of the total incidents remained anonymous, while "Wrath of Olives" operation room was claimed responsibility for 10 incidents. (figure 66).

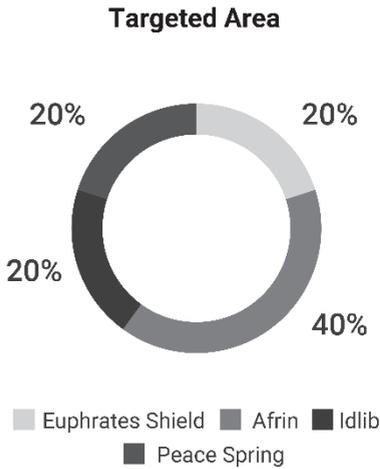


Figure (64): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in March

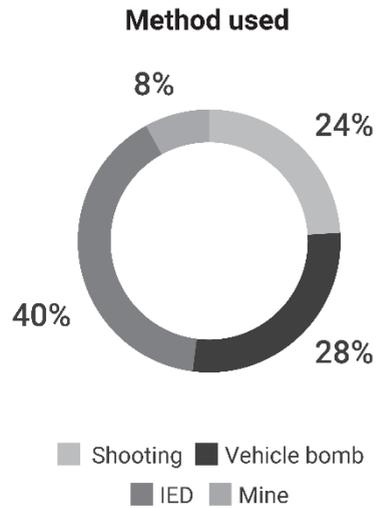


Figure (65): Method used in assassinations and explosions in March

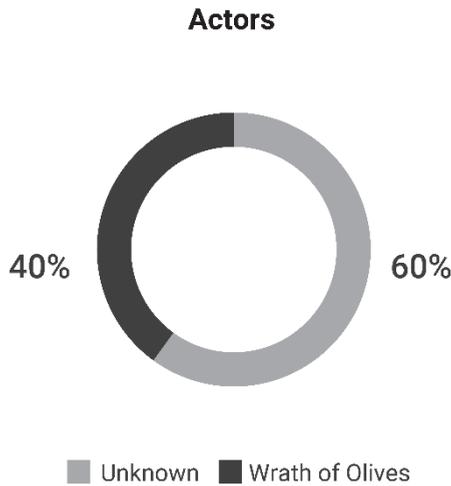


Figure (66): Actor behind assassinations and explosions in March

**In April 2020**, 22 incidents resulted in 170 casualties, 30 of which were military personnel and 140 civilian casualties (figure 67). Civilian entities were the target of 10 incidents of these incidents, while 7 targeted moderate armed factions, 3 remained anonymous, and 2 targeted extremist groups (figure 68).

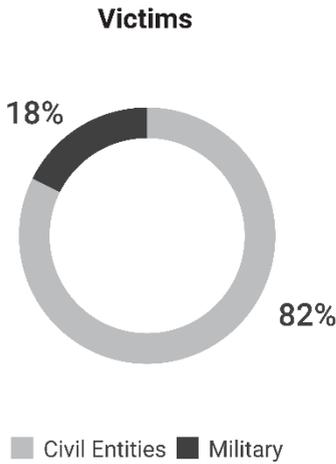


Figure (67): Victims of assassinations and explosions in April

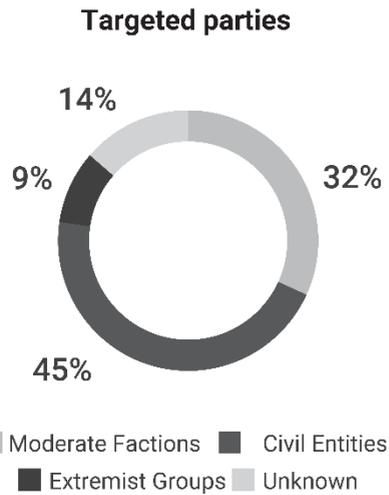


Figure (68): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in April

5 assassination and explosion incidents occurred in the Euphrates Shield area, 7 in Idlib, 7 in Afrin, and 3 incidents were reported in the Peace Spring area (figure 69). Furthermore, in the month of April 40% of incidents were IEDs, 28% vehicle bombs, 24% by gunfire, and 8% by mines (figure 70). According to the observed data, 17 anonymous, while the "Wrath of Olives" operation room claimed responsibility for 3 incidents, and YPG allegedly responsible for 2 incidents (figure 71).

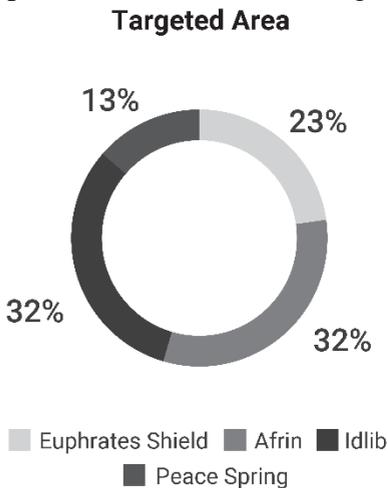


Figure (69): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in April

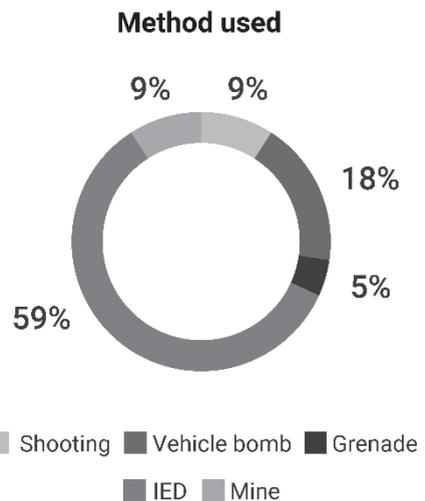


Figure (70): Method used in assassinations and explosions in April

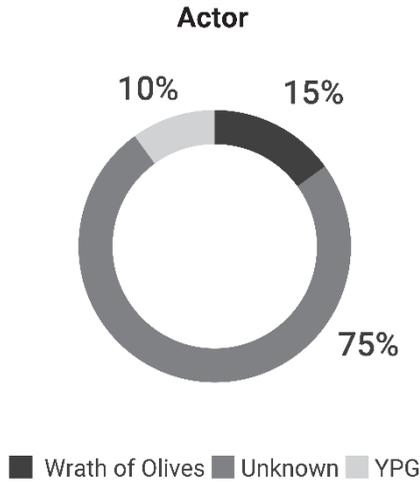


Figure (71): Actors behind assassinations and explosions in April

**In May 2020**, 34 incidents resulted in 103 casualties, 47 of which were military personnel and 56 civilian casualties (figure 72). 15 incidents targeted civilians bodies, 12 incidents targeted moderate armed factions, 4 remained unknown, 2 incidents targeted extremist groups, and one targeted the Turkish Military in Syria (figure 73).

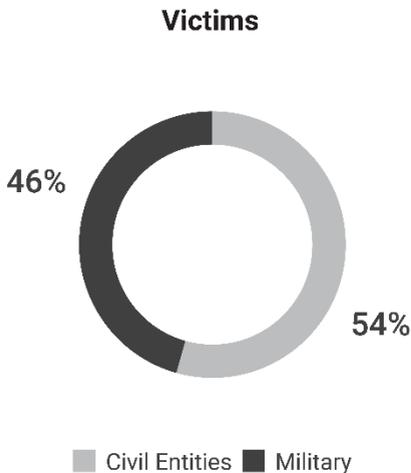


Figure (72): Victims of assassinations and explosions in May

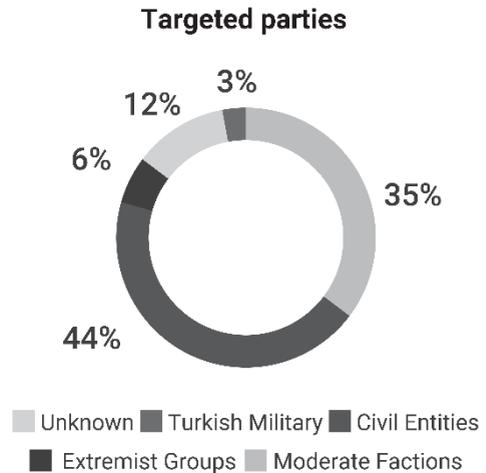


Figure (73): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in May

Based on the data, 10 incidents occurred in the Euphrates Shield area, 9 in Idlib and its surroundings, 9 in Peace Spring area, and 6 incidents were reported in Afrin (figure 74). In addition, in the month of May methods used included 41% of all attacks by IEDs, 29% by mines 12% by gunfire 9% by vehicle bombs, and 9% by drones (figure 75). According to the observed cases, 28 of the total incidents were perpetrated by unidentified actors, while the "Wrath of Olives" operation room claimed responsibility for 6 incidents (figure 76).

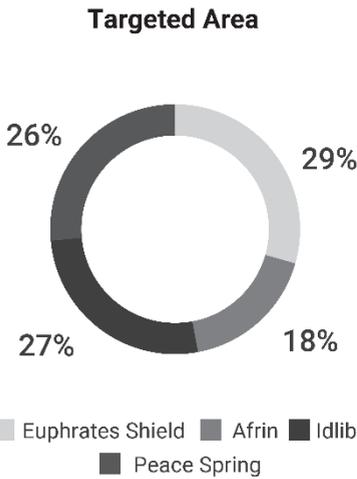


Figure (74): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in May

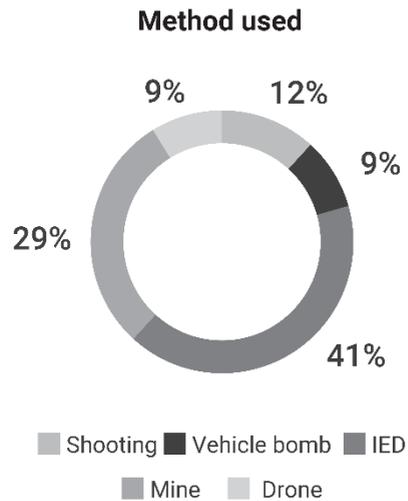


Figure (75): Method used in assassinations and explosions in May

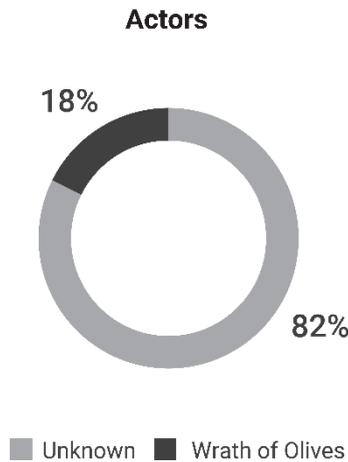


Figure (76): Actors behind assassinations and explosions in May

**In June 2020**, 35 incidents occurred resulting in 122 casualties, 45 were military personnel and 77 civilian casualties (figure 77). 15 attacks targeted civilian bodies, 14 targeted moderate armed groups, 3 remain unknown, 2 targeted the Turkish Military in Syria, and one targeted an extremist group (figure 78).

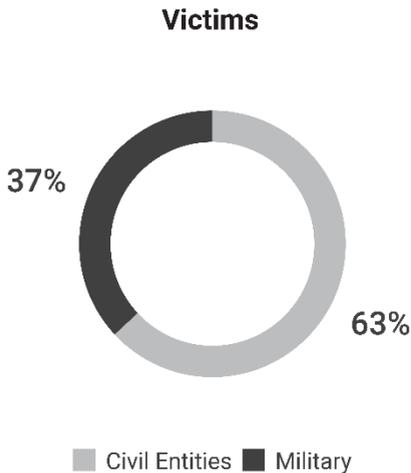


Figure (77): Victims of assassinations and explosions in June

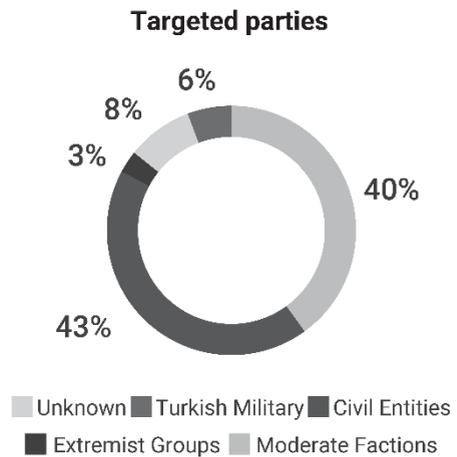


Figure (78): Parties targeted by assassinations and explosions in June

Based on the data, 11 incidents occurred in the Euphrates Shield area, 10 in Idlib and its surroundings, 8 in the Peace Spring region, and 6 in Afrin (figure 79). Methods of attacks included; 31% of all attacks were IEDs, 23% by gunfire, 23% by vehicle bombs, 11% with grenades, 9% with drones, and 3% were by mines (figure 80). While 22 of the incidents remained anonymous, 6 incidents were claimed by the "Wrath of Olives" operation room. Also based on the data, during the month of June ISIS activity was identified, as they conducted 3 incidents, the international coalition conducted 2 incidents, and 2 incidents were by remnants of the Assad forces (figure 81).

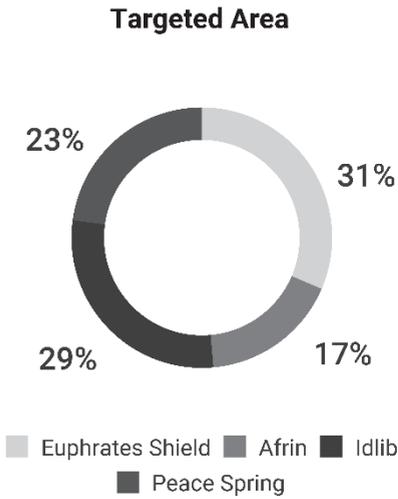


Figure (79): Areas targeted by assassinations and explosions in June

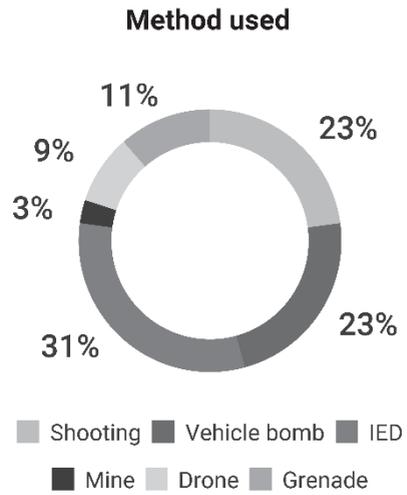


Figure (80): Method used in assassinations and explosions in June

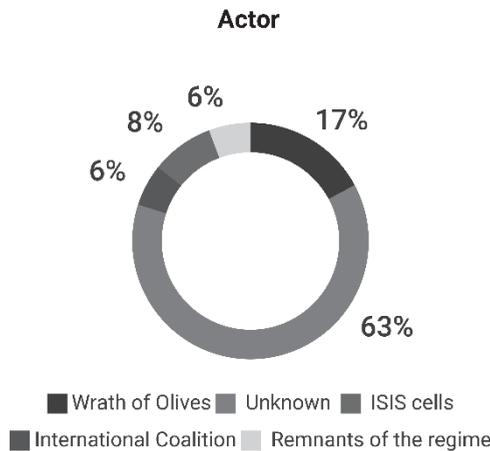


Figure (81): Actors behind assassinations and explosions in June

## 2.2 Quantitative data by governorate

**First: Aleppo Governorate** - The observed data indicate that the number of assassinations and explosion incidents in the Aleppo Governorate resulted in 162 incidents during the monitoring period. This resulted in 737 casualties that included 197 military personnel and 540 civilians. 77 of the assassination incidents occurred in the second half of 2019, while 85 incidents occurred in the first half of 2020 (figure 82). Civilian entities were

the target of 75 incidents, while moderate armed factions were the target of 70, the Turkish Military was targeted in 3 incidents and the target of 14 incidents remain unknown (figure 83).

### Victims of targeted operations

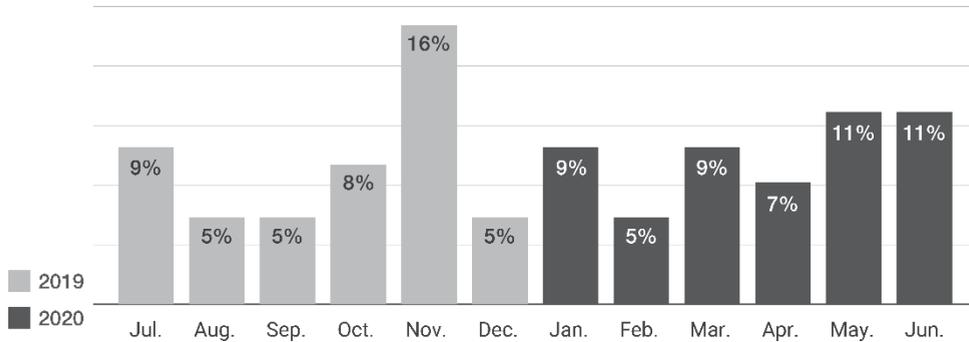


Figure (82): Results of Victims targeted in Aleppo by month

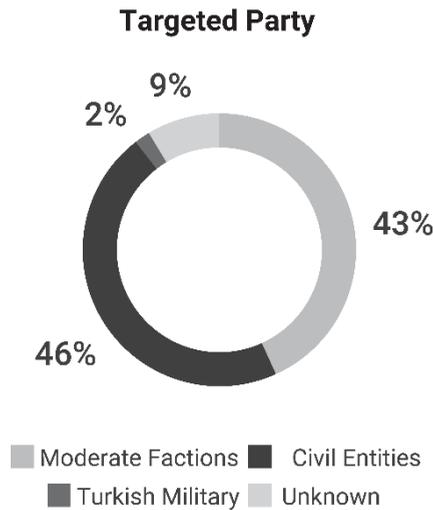


Figure (83): Parties targeted in Aleppo

The analysis of the data indicates that IEDs were the most commonly used method in these incidents, as they were used in 76 incidents, while 40 were by gunfire, 30 used vehicle bombs, 8 incidents were landmines, 6 grenades,

and drones ranked last with 2 incidents (figure 84). The data revealed "Wrath of Olives" operation room claimed responsibility for 61 of the total incidents, while 92 remain anonymous. ISIS also claimed responsibility for 3 incidents, and finally, HTS and YPG allegedly responsible for 3 incidents each. (See figure 85).

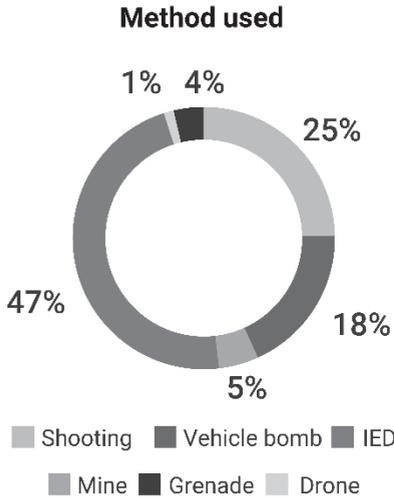


Figure (84): Method used in assassinations and explosions in Aleppo

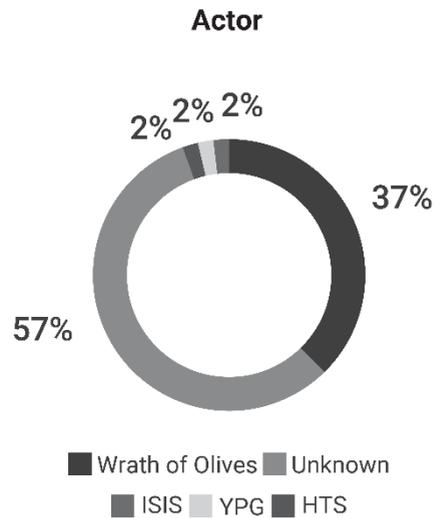


Figure (85): Actors behind assassinations and explosions in Aleppo

**Second: Idlib Governorate-** Based on data collected, 46 assassination and explosion incidents occurred in the Idlib governorate during the monitoring period. This resulted in 96 casualties, 43 of which were military personnel and 53 civilians. 14 incidents occurred in the second half of 2019, while 32 incidents occurred in the first half of 2020 (figure 86). Civilian entities were the target of 18 incidents, while extremist groups were targeted by 13, moderate armed factions by 10, and 3 targeted the Turkish Military in Syria, while for 2 incidents the target remains unknown (figure 87).

### Victims of targeted operations

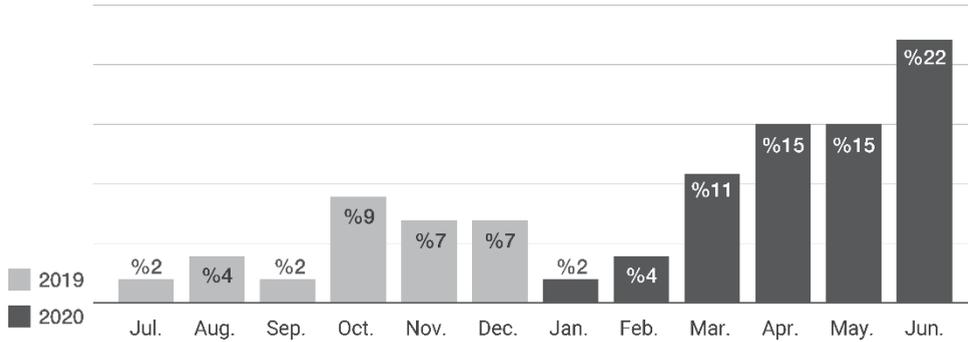


Figure (86): Results of Victims targeted in Idlib by month

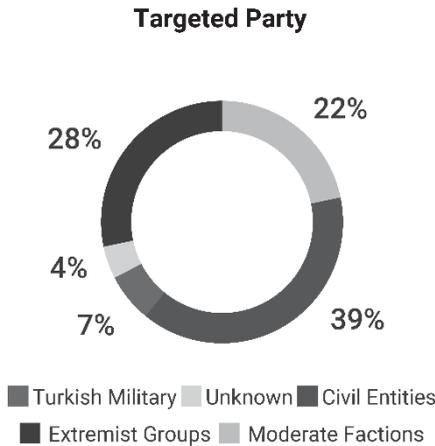


Figure (87): Parties targeted in Idlib

In Idlib, 15 of the incidents were by gunfire, 13 by IEDs, 6 by grenades, 5 by landmines, 3 by vehicle bombs, and 4 by drones. As for parties responsible for these incidents, the international coalition carried out 2 incidents, Assad forces 3, and ISIS cells claimed responsibility for 1 incident, while the responsible part in 40 incidents remain anonymous.

**Third: “Peace Spring” areas/al-Hasaka Governorate-** Assassination and explosion incidents in opposition-controlled areas after operation "Peace Spring" in al-Hasaka Governorate amounted to **28** incidents during the

monitoring period. This resulted in 170 casualties: 49 military personnel and 121 civilian casualties. 12 incidents occurred in the second half of 2019, while 16 occurred in the first half of 2020. Civilian entities were targeted in 18 incidents, moderate armed factions in 7, and Turkish Military in 3 (figure 88). As for methods used, in al-Hasaka governorate there were 18 vehicle bombs, 8 landmines, and 2 IEDs. YPG was allegedly responsible for 4 incidents, the "Wrath of Olives" operation room claimed responsibility for a single incident, while the perpetrator in 23 incidents remain anonymous.

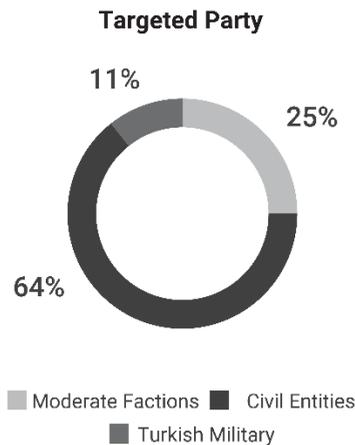


Figure (88): Parties targeted in al-Hasaka Governorate

**Fourth: "Peace Spring" area/Raqqa Governorate-** Assassination and explosion incidents in the Raqqa Governorate amounted to **30** during the monitoring period. This resulted in 206 casualties, including 30 military personnel and 176 civilians. An equal number of incidents occurred in the second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020 with 15 incidents each. Civilian entities were targeted in 20 incidents, moderate armed factions by 7, while the actor in 3 incidents remain unknown (figure 89). As for methods used in Raqqa governorate, there were 18 vehicle bombs, 7 landmines, 2 IEDs, 2 by gunfire, and one grenade. The YPG is allegedly responsible for 3 incidents, the "Wrath of Olives" operation room claimed responsibility for 1 incident, and 26 incidents remain anonymous.

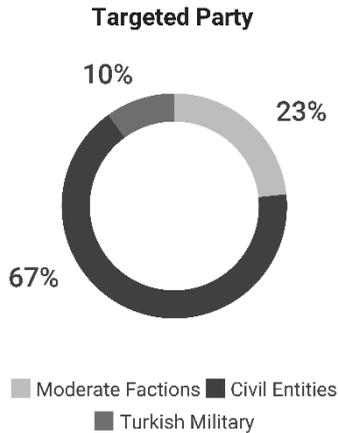


Figure (89): Parties targeted in Raqqa Governorate

### 2.3 Quantitative data by method used

The data and analysis reveals 93 assassination and explosion incidents occurred in opposition-held territory by IEDs. This resulted in 234 casualties, including 41 military and 193 civilian casualties. The IED incidents targeted civilian entities in 41 incidents, moderate armed factions in 34, extremist groups in 3, Turkish Military in 3, and unknown targets in 12.

**57** assassination and explosion incidents were by gunfire during the monitoring period, which resulted in 67 casualties, 54 military and 13 civilian. Moderate armed factions were the target of these incidents in 34 incidents, compared to 17 incidents targeting civilian entities and 6 targeting extremist groups. Operation room "Wrath of Olives" claimed responsibility for 18, HTS and ISIS cells claimed responsibility for 3 incidents, while 33 incidents were perpetrated by unidentified actors.

**69** assassination and explosion incidents were carried out by use of vehicle bombs, resulting in 671 casualties: 567 civilians and 104 military personnel. Civilian entities were the target of vehicle bombs in 44 incidents, moderate armed factions in 17, the Turkish Military in 2 incidents, while the target of 6 incidents remain unknown. Operation room "Wrath of Olives" claimed responsibility for 14 incidents, YPG allegedly responsible for 2 incidents, while 53 incidents remain anonymous.

**13** assassination and explosion incidents were by grenade, which resulted in 34 casualties, 10 military and 24 civilians. 3 incidents targeted moderate armed factions, 8 targeted civilian bodies, and 2 targeted extremist groups. "Wrath of Olives" claimed responsibility for 2 incidents, the Assad forces were responsible for 3, while 8 incidents remain anonymous.

In **28** assassination and explosion incidents, landmines were used resulting in 58 casualties, 25 military and 33 civilian. 5 incidents targeted moderate armed factions, 19 targeted civilian bodies, and 4 targeted the Turkish Military. "Wrath of Olives" operation room claimed responsibility for 2 incidents, YPG is allegedly responsible for 7 incidents, while 19 incidents remain anonymous.

**6** assassination and explosion incidents that were observed to have used drones resulting in 15 casualties, 9 military and 6 civilian casualties. 2 incidents targeted extremist groups, 2 targeted civilian entities, one targeted the moderate armed factions, and one incident remains target unknown. Monitoring shows that the international coalition carried out 2 of these incidents while perpetrators in 4 incidents were unidentified.

Governorate	IEDs	Gunfire	Vehicle bomb	Grenade	Landmine	Drone
<b>Aleppo</b>	67	40	30	6	8	2
<b>Idlib</b>	13	15	3	6	5	4
<b>Raqqa</b>	2	2	18	1	7	0
<b>Al-Hasaka (Peace Spring)</b>	2	0	18	0	8	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	93	57	69	13	28	6

Table 2: Distribution of operations in Syrian governorates according to methods used

## 2.4 Analytical Summary

Based on data from opposition-controlled areas, the casualties from assassination and explosion incidents were as follows: 890 civilians and 319 military casualties. Across the monitored areas, "Wrath of Olives"<sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>(3)</sup> Operation room "Wrath of Olives", according to its self-description on its official handles, is a group of Afrin young men and women, believed to be affiliated with the Democratic Union Party (PYD)'s People's Protection Units (YPG), who assassinate Turkish fighters present in the area, as well as Turkish-backed local fighters. For more information on this group, please check the following link: <http://www.xzeytune.com>

operation room claimed responsibility in 63 incidents and ISIS claimed responsibility in 4 incidents. According to the data, the largest rate of incidents occurred in November 2019, June 2020 was in the second place, and September had the lowest rates of assassination and explosion incidents.

93 of the assassination and explosion incidents were by use of IEDs, 69 by vehicle bombs, 57 by gunfire, 28 by landmines, 13 by grenades, and 6 by drones.

In terms of targeting, civilian entities were targeted in 131 incidents, moderate armed factions in 94, extremist groups in 13, the Turkish Military in 9, and unknown targets in 19 incidents.

Based on data, it is evident that assassinations are no longer limited to extremist groups and civilian entities, but is also inclusive of Turkish soldiers present in the region. Operation room "Wrath of Olives" is quite active in the Euphrates Shield and Afrin territory, as it ranks first in executing assassinations in areas under the control of the "National Army".

**The data demonstrates the inability of the security actors to maintain stability and prevent security breaches. The nature of these operations, and the methods utilized, indicate they were not random or arbitrary, but rather premeditated. Moreover, they were not limited to members of the "National Army", but also targeted administrative staff of police forces, as well as members of local councils. The security breaches are expected, as multiple actors target this region for a variety of reasons. The PYD is active and present in the area, and is constantly seeks Turkish influenced targets as “legitimate.” The Syrian also thrives to destabilize the area and delegitimize any governance model present.**

**Due to the extensive number of civilian casualties, it is apparent that the main objective of the perpetrators is to destabilize the area and add additional obstacles for opposition areas moving towards recovery. Despite the challenges, the following justification does not relieve security structures from their responsibilities, and uncovers their level of fragility.**

## IV. Indicators of Extrajudicial Detentions and Abductions

Below is an overview on extrajudicial detentions and abductions in the cities of Jasim, Douma, al-Bukamal, Raqqa, and opposition-held territories from the beginning of October 2019 until the end of March 2020.

### 1. Cities of Jasim, Douma, al-Bukamal and Raqqa

#### 1.1 Quantitative data by actor

The number of incidents amounted to 73. 19 committed by local actors and 23 by foreign actors. Incidents committed by foreign actors were divided as follows: 6 by Local Defense Forces, 5 by Russian Military Police, one by Brigade 313, 2 by Hezbollah, 9 by ISIS. The number of victims per perpetrator was as follows: Local Defense Forces- 40 people, Russian Military Police- 67, Brigade 313- 8, Hezbollah- 11, and ISIS- 56 people. (See figure 90)

**Distribution of Targeted party  
by foreign actor**

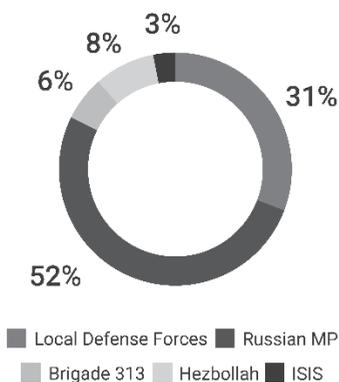
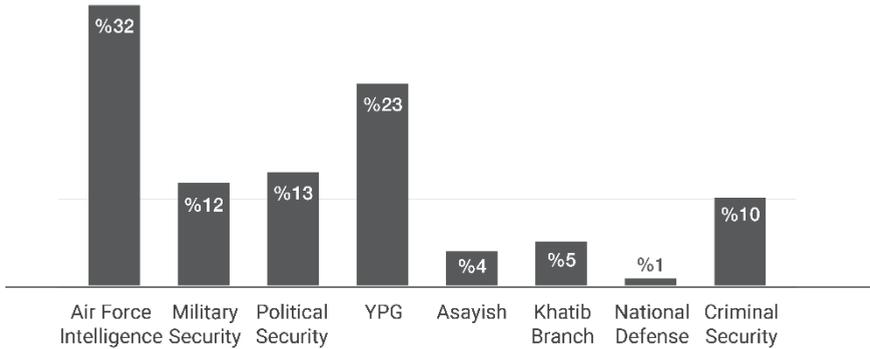


Figure (90): Distribution of Operations by foreign actor

The number of incidents by local actors was divided as follows; Military Security- 6, Air Force Intelligence - 2 (done in conjunction with Military Security), YPG - 7 incidents, Asayish- 1, criminal security (Civil Police)- 2, Political Security Agency:-1, National Defense- 1, Al-Khatib Security Branch (General Security Directorate)- 1. Military security's attacks led to

42 victims, including 16 people in conjunction with Airforce Intelligence, 17 victims by political security, 31 by YPG, 5 by Asayish, 13 by Criminal Security, 2 by National Defense, and 7 by Khatib Branch. (See figure 91)

**Distribution of Targeted party by local actor**



**Figure (91): Distribution of targeted party by local actors**

Table 3 shows a list of local and foreign actors and their locations (the actors listed in the table are the ones in control and those active in monitored areas).

Foreign Actors		Local Actors	
Name	Station	Name	Station
Russian Military Police	Al-Bukamal-Douma	Military Security	Jasim-al-Bukamal- Douma
Hezbollah	Douma	Criminal Security	Jasim-Douma
Iraqi Hezbollah Al-Nujaba	Al-Bukamal	Fifth Corps	Jasim
Brigade 313	Jasim	National Defense	Jasim
Iranian militias	Al-Bukamal	Political Security	Douma
ISIS	Al-Bukamal-Raqqa	Republican Guards	Douma
Fatemiyoun	Al-Bukamal	Al-Khatib Branch	Douma
Zeynabiyoun	Al-Bukamal	Airforce Intelligence	Douma
Local Defense Forces	Al-Bukamal	YPG	Raqqa
Force 313	Al-Bukamal	Asayish	Raqqa
Baqir Brigade	Al-Bukamal	---	---
Sayyid al-Shuhada Brigade	Al-Bukamal	---	---

**Table 3: Names and Stations of Local and Foreign Actors**

## 1.2 Quantitative data by actor

There were **34** extrajudicial detentions that targeted **249** individuals from the following backgrounds; 109 involved in reconciliation, 116 civilians, 10 military personnel, 14 Local Defense Forces. The actors were distributed as follows: local defense forces: **6** incidents, YPG: **7**, Asayish: **1**, criminal security (Police): **2**, Military Security: **6** (including 2 incidents in cooperation with Air Force Intelligence: 2), political security: **1**, Russian Military Police: **5**, Brigade **313**: **1**, Hezbollah: **2**, Khatib Branch: **1**, unknown actors: **2**, one of them by an unknown security force. Extrajudicial detention incidents were distributed over the months as follows: October: **9** November: **4**, December: **4**, January: **5**, February: **6**, March: **6**. (See figure 92).

### Distribution of detentions by month

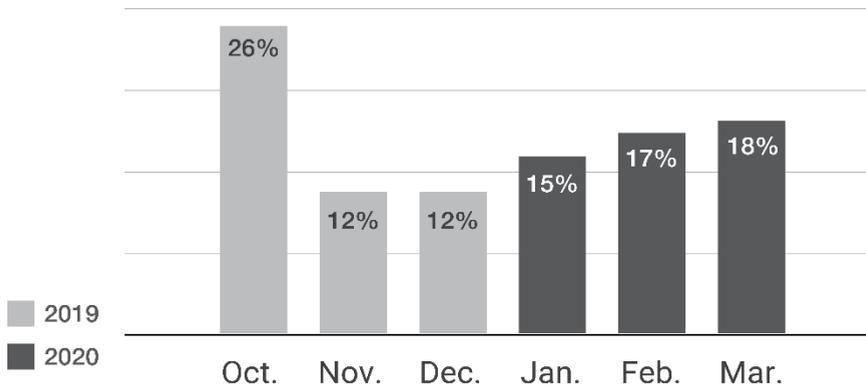


Figure (92): Distribution of detentions by month

**As for abduction**, during the monitored period, there were **39** abductions, while the number of those targeted was **139** persons. The perpetrators of these incidents were distributed as follows: ISIS: **9**, National Defense: **1** while the rest (**29** incidents) remained anonymous. Abduction incidents were distributed over the monitoring months as follows: October: **8** November: **7**, December: **8**, January: **5**, February: **6**, March: **5**. (See figure 93).

## Distribution of abductions by month

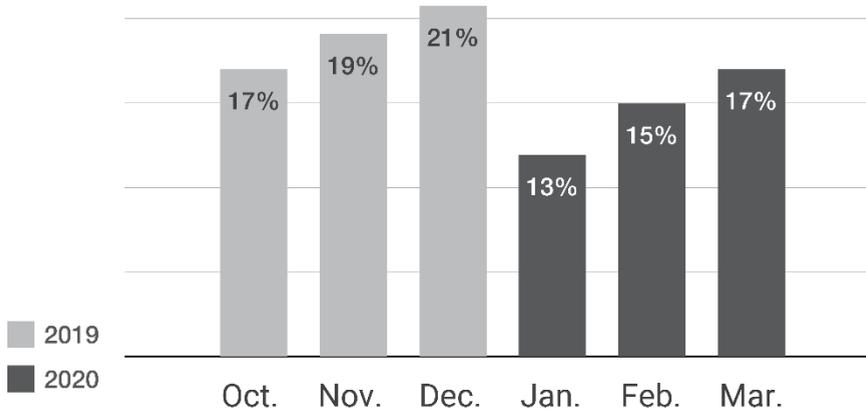


Figure (93): Distribution of abductions by month

### 1.3 Quantitative data by time period

#### **During the last quarter of 2019, the following was reported:**

- **In Jasim city**, 9 incidents (including 3 extrajudicial detentions and 6 abductions), and the Military Security and criminal security (Civil Police) detained 29 people who went through reconciliation, while 19 abductions were reported targeting 41 civilians and 5 military personnel, all of which remained anonymous.
- **In the city of Douma**, 11 incidents were reported and distributed as follows: 5 extrajudicial detentions and 6 abductions. The number of detainees was 37, of whom there were 6 civilians, while the remaining 31 persons were from among people who went through reconciliation. The totals includes 3 females from the same family. Extrajudicial detention incidents were distributed over different months as follows: 3 incidents in October, one in November and one in December. Political security was responsible for the extrajudicial detention of 17 people, Hezbollah 11 people, criminal security (Police) 6 people (a robbery gang) and the remaining 3 people (females) were unlawfully detained

by an unknown entity. On the other hand, the number of abducted people was **12**, including **11** civilians, one of whom was killed, and one military person from the reserve force. The incidents were distributed equally over three months with 2 incidents per month. All abductions remained anonymous, but 4 of them were linked to a gang that kidnaps civilians and demands ransom. However, the security authority protecting this gang could not be identified.

- **In the city of al-Bukamal**, **11** incidents were reported, including 5 extrajudicial detentions and **6** abductions. The number of detainees was **36**, including 3 females. **26** civilians were unlawfully detained by Local Defense Forces, **4** of whom were released after payment of a certain amount of money. One person had been unlawfully detained along with a group of 5 people for smuggling from the **YPG** areas, was released. Moreover, **10** military personnel were unlawfully detained by the Russian Military Police for theft. Incidents were distributed over three months as follows: **3** in October, 1 in November and 1 in December. As for abductions, the total number of abducted persons was 55, divided between **18** civilians abducted anonymously and remained unaccounted for, and **37** military personnel abducted by ISIS and liquidated. Incidents were divided over the three months as follows: 2 incidents in October, 2 in November and 2 in December.
- **As for Raqqa city**, **9** incidents were reported: **4** extrajudicial detentions and 5 abductions. The number of detainees was **19**, all of whom were civilians. Incidents were distributed over the three months as follows: 2 incidents in October, one in November and one in December. **YPG** were allegedly responsible for all incidents. On the other hand, the number of abducted persons was **11**, 7 of whom were civilians while the remaining 4 were **YPG**. Incidents were distributed over the months as 2 incidents in October, 1 in November and 2 in December. ISIS was responsible for 2 incidents against the **YPG**.

**As for the first quarter of 2020:**

- **In Jasim city**, 6 incidents, including 3 extrajudicial detentions and 3 abductions were reported. 15 people affiliated with the reconciliation were unlawfully detained by the Military Security and Brigade 313. Military security was responsible for the unlawful detention of 2 people and Brigade 313 for 8 people, while 5 people were unlawfully detained by an unknown security force. On the other hand, abducted persons were 6 people, including 3 civilians and 3 military personnel, 2 of whom were abducted by the National Defense while the rest were abducted by unknown parties. The incidents were distributed over the months, with 1 in January, 2 in February, and none in March.
- **In the city of Douma**, 9 incidents were reported, including 5 extrajudicial detentions and 4 abductions. There were 66 detainees; the number of civilians detained was 19, while the remaining 47 detainees were individuals related to reconciliation. Extrajudicial detention incidents were distributed over the months as follows: 2 incidents in January, 2 in February and one in March. The Russian Military Police was responsible for the extrajudicial detention of 43 people, Al-Khatib branch for 7 people and the Air Force Intelligence in conjunction with the Military Security for the extrajudicial detention of 16 people. On the other hand, there were 7 abductees, all civilians. Incidents were distributed over the three months as follows: one operation in January, one in February and 2 in March. All abduction cases remained anonymous.
- **In al-Bukamal, there were 9 incidents**, including 5 extrajudicial detentions and 4 abductions. The number of detainees was 30, 16 of whom were civilians, while the remaining 14 belonged to Local Defense Forces. Extrajudicial detention incidents were distributed over the three months as follows: one operation in January, 2 in February and 2 in March. Local Defense Forces were responsible for the unlawful arrest of 16 people, and the Russian Military Police unlawfully arrested 14 people. On the other hand, the number of abductees was 10, 6 from Local Defense Forces, 3 civilians and 1 Military Security. Over the three

months, there was one operation in January, 2 in February and one in March. ISIS was responsible for 2 abductions, one targeted 2 fighters of Local Defense Forces while the other targeted 3 civilians.

- In Raqqa city, **9** incidents were reported, including 4 extrajudicial detentions and 5 abductions. The number of detainees was 17, all civilians. Over the three months, there was one operation in January, one in February and 2 in March. **YPG** was allegedly responsible for the extrajudicial detention of 12 people and Asayish for 5 people. On the other hand, the number of abductees was **19: 8** from **YPG**, 9 civilians, 2 of the AA. Over the three-month period, there were 2 incidents in January, one in February and 2 in March. ISIS was responsible for 3 abduction incidents.

#### **1.4 Quantitative data according to city**

**In Jasim city (Daraa), during the two quarters,** the number of incidents was 15, including 9 abductions and **6** extrajudicial detentions. The number of detainees was **44** people, **31** were affiliated with reconciliation and **13** civilians. Military security was responsible for 3 incidents, Brigade **313** for one, criminal security (Civil Police) for one and the remaining incidents were conducted by an unknown security entity. The number of abductees was **25**, including **17** civilians and **8** military. National Defense was responsible for one operation. The incidents were distributed over the months as follows: October: 3, November: 3, December: 3, January: **2**, February: **3**, March: **1**. (See figure 94).

## Distribution of operations in Jasim by month

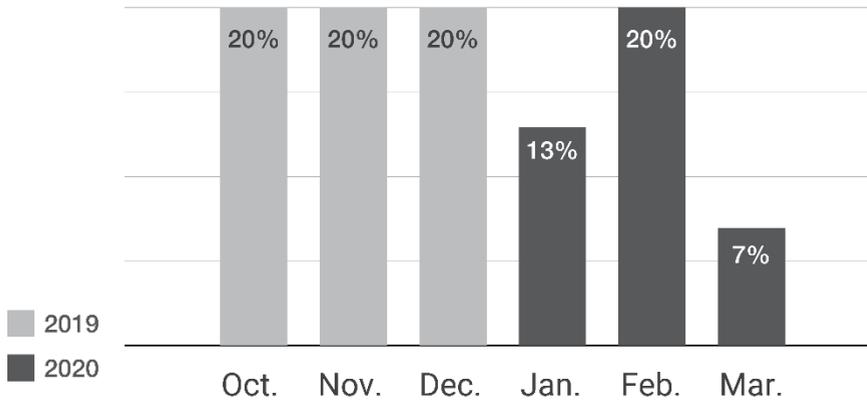


Figure (94): Distribution of operations in Jasim by month

**In Douma city**, the number of incidents amounted to **20** extrajudicial detentions in the two quarters, including **10** extrajudicial detentions and **10** abductions. The number of detainees was **103** people, **78** were affiliated with reconciliation and 25 were civilians. Political security was responsible for one operation, Hezbollah for 2, criminal security (Civil Police) for one, Khatib branch for one, Russian Military Police for 2, and Air Force Intelligence joined with Military Security in 2 incidents, and one operation remained anonymous. The number of abductees in the same period was **19**, including **18** civilians and one military with the actor responsible being anonymous for all. Incidents were distributed over the months as follows: October: 5, November: 3, December: 3, January: 3, February: 3, March: 3. (See figure 95).

## Distribution of operations in Douma by month

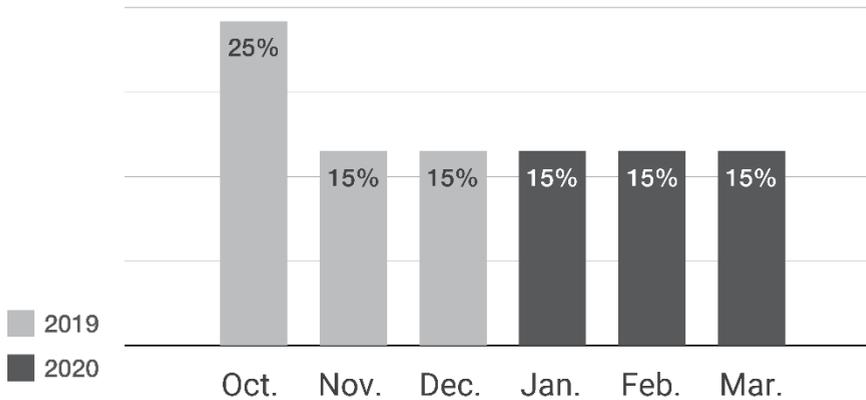
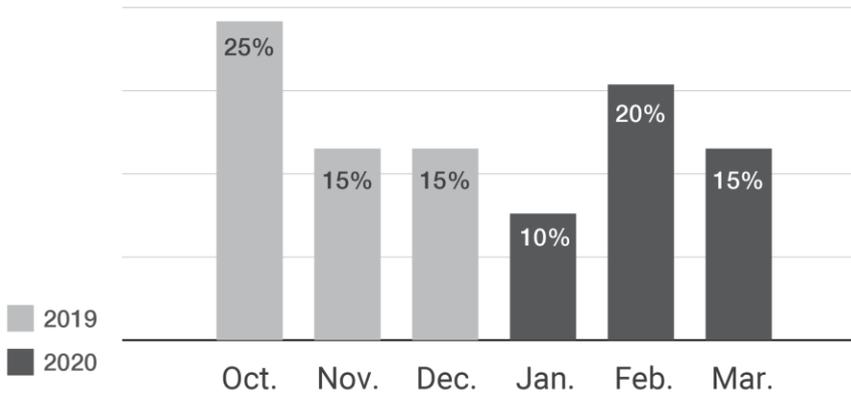


Figure (95): Distribution of operations in Douma by month

**The number of incidents in al-Bukamal was 20, with 10** extrajudicial detentions and 10 abductions. The number of detainees was **66**, including **42** civilians, 10 military personnel, and 14 from the Local Defense Forces. The Russian Military Police were responsible for 3 incidents, Local Defense Forces for 6, and Military Security for one. The number of abductees in the same period was **65**, including **21** civilians, 37 military personnel, **6** from Local Defense Forces and one Military Security member. ISIS was responsible for 4 incidents while other incidents remained anonymous. The incidents were distributed over the months as follows: October: 5, November: 3, December: 3, January: 2, February: 4, March: 3. (See figure 96).

## Distribution of operations in al-Bukamal by month



**Figure (96): Distribution of operations in al-Bukamal by month**

During these two quarters, the number of incidents in Raqqa city was 18, including **8** extrajudicial detentions and 10 abductions. The number of detainees was **36, all of whom were** civilians. **YPG** was allegedly responsible for 7 extrajudicial detentions and Asayish for one. The number of abductees in the same period was **30**, including **16** civilians, **12** from **YPG** and 2 from the AA. ISIS was responsible for 5 incidents. The incidents were distributed over the months as follows: 5 in October, 2 in November, 3 in December, 3 in January, 2 in February, 4 in March. (See figure 97).

## Distribution of operations in Raqqa by month

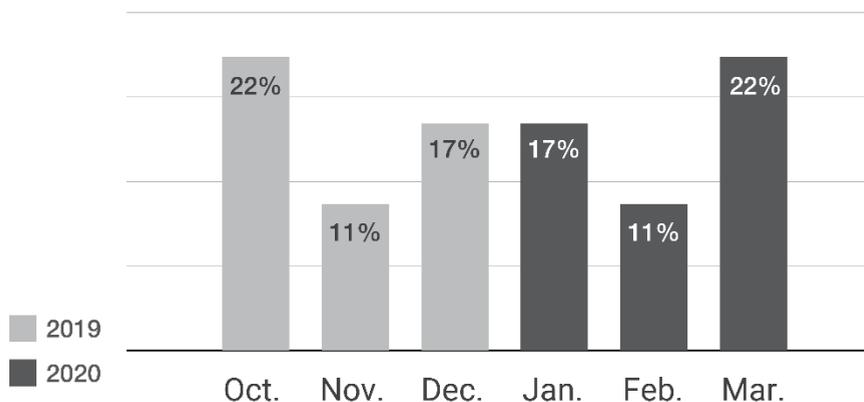


Figure (97): Distribution of operations in Raqqa by month

### 1.5 Analytical Summary

The number of extrajudicial detentions and abductions in the cities of Jasim, Douma, Bukamal and Raqqa, between January 2019 and March 2020, was **73. 34 of which were** extrajudicial detentions and **39** abductions.

- The incidents were distributed among the three cities as follows: 15 in Jasim, 20 in Douma, 20 in Bukamal, and 18 in Raqqa.
- Extrajudicial detentions and abductions were conducted by both foreign and local actors. 23 were committed by foreign actor and 19 by local actors. The remaining 31 remained unknown.
- The number of victims from the extrajudicial detentions and abductions, within the monitored period, **388. 188** were civilians, **109** were individuals affiliated with reconciliation, **56** military personnel, **12** from **YPG**, **20** from Local Defense, **2** from the AA and one from Military Security.
- The responsible party was identified for **42** incidents, while **31** incidents remained anonymous. 9 were committed by ISIS, 7 by YPG, 6 by Local

Defense, 5 by Russian Military Police, 6 by Military Security, 2 by Air Force Intelligence Military Security(2 incidents were jointly conducted between political security and Air Force Intelligence), 2 by Hezbollah, 2 by criminal security (Police) one by National Defense, one by Asayish, one by Al-Khatib Branch, one by Brigade **313**, and one by political security.

- While foreign actors targeted **182** people, local actors targeted **117** people, and **89** people were targeted by unknown parties.

Statistics also indicate a high level of extrajudicial detentions and abductions in the cities of Douma and Daraa, over which the regime had regained control and imposed its security fingerprint. This illustrates the regime's political goals behind the extrajudicial detentions and abductions, exemplifying its objectives to remedying the deficit capacity in its security and military structures. This is evident when inspecting why individuals from reconciled areas were targeted, as the regime ignored the perpetrators of related to mafias of profiteers and grafters. With the abundance of extrajudicial detention and abduction incidents occurring in regime-held areas, specifically in reconciliation areas, the question of return become difficult, as the data illustrates the region is not secure. The multitude of actors and the haphazard methods of extrajudicial detentions and abductions does not encourage a safe and voluntary return.

## **2. Cities of Jarablus and Afrin**

This report also monitored abduction and detention incidents in the cities of Afrin and Jarablus between October 2019 to March 2020.

### **2.1 Quantitative data according to actor**

169 extrajudicial detentions and abduction incidents were reported during this period. Four local actors were observed, and the Turkish Military. The number of incidents per local actor includes: 63 by National Army's factions, 27 by Military Police, 29 by other local security forces, 17 by "Wrath of Olives" Operations Room, and 28 remain anonymous (figure 98). The distribution of targets per actor was as follows: National Army's

factions: 146, Military Police: 58, other local security forces: 60, “Wrath of Olives” Operations Room: 19, while 60 victims were targeted by unidentified actors.

**Distribution of local actors**

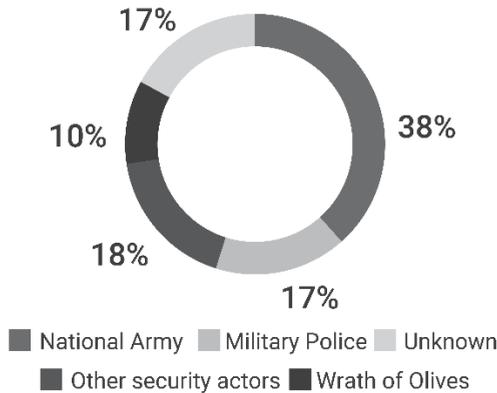


Figure (98): Distribution of operations by local actor

As for foreign actors, mainly the Turkish Military was allegedly responsible for 5 detention incidents in cooperation with the Syrian National Army’s factions in Afrin. 12 targets were detained (See the table below), most of which were later charged with being complicit in recent bombings.

Foreign Actors		Local Actors	
Name	Station	Name	Station
<b>Turkish Military</b>	Afrin-Jarablus	National Army Factions	Afrin-Jarablus
-	-	Military Police	Afrin-Jarablus
-	-	Other local security forces	Afrin-Jarablus
-	-	Wrath of Olives	Afrin

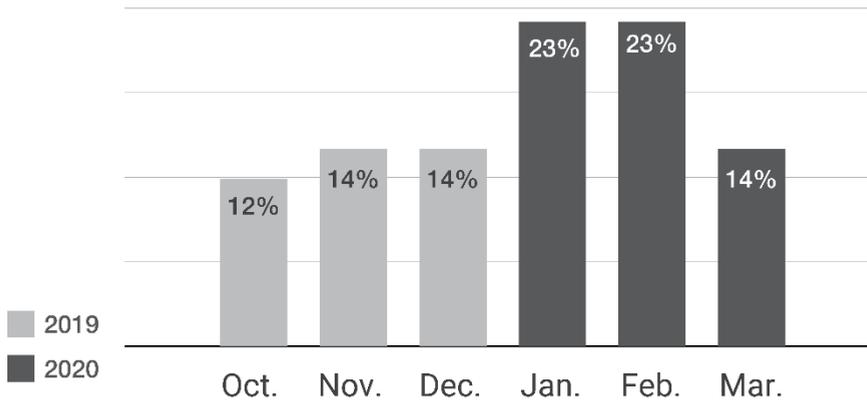
Table 4: Local and Foreign Actors and their Locations

## 2.2 Aggregated quantitative data

In terms of extrajudicial detentions, the data shows that during the monitoring period, there were 124 incidents, in which 276 individuals were targeted, with 109 incidents in Afrin, and only 15 incidents in Jarablus. The

actors responsible for those incidents were classified as follows: Syrian National Army’s factions: 63, Military Police: 27, other local security actors: 29, and the Turkish Military: 5. Arrests per month were as follows: **October: 15, November: 18, December: 18, January: 28, February: 28, March: 17** (figure 99).

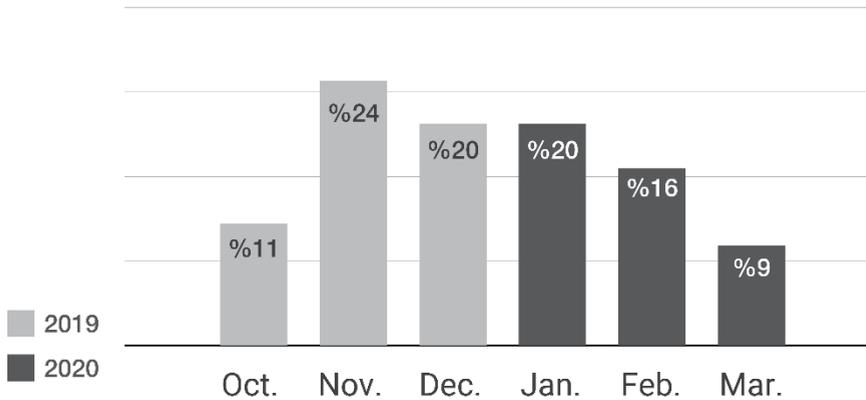
### Distribution by month



**Figure (99): Distribution of arrests by month**

As for abductions, between the two cities the number of incidents reached 45. 23 of them were perpetrated in Afrin and only 22 in the city of Jarablus. The number of those targeted by the incidents reached 79. The data indicate that the “Wrath of Olives” Operations Room carried out 17 abduction incidents targeting members of the Syrian National Army, while the remaining 28 were anonymous groups who demanded ransoms. According to the monitored data, the largest percentage of abductions took place in November, as there were 11 incidents. In December and January, there were 9 incidents each, February there were 7, October there were 5, and March there were 4. March had the smallest number of abductions (figure 100).

## Distribution by Month



**Figure (100): Distribution of abduction by month**

### 2.3 Data per period of time

In the last quarter of 2019, 60 incidents were reported in the city of Afrin, during the monitoring months that resulted in 140 victims. 16 incidents occurred in October, 23 in November, and 21 in December. There were 45 extrajudicial detention incidents and 15 abduction cases. The Syrian National Army's factions were allegedly responsible for 21 of the total incidents, 10 by the Military Police, 9 by other local security forces (such as the political security and opposition special forces), 9 by the "Wrath of Olives" Operations Room, the Turkish Military is allegedly responsible for 5 incidents, and 6 incidents remained unidentified.

As for the city of Jarablus, there were 16 incidents during the monitoring months that resulted in 29 victims. 4 of these incidents took place in October, while 6 in November, and the same number in December. The National Army's factions perpetrated 6 of the total incidents, while 10 remained anonymous. There were 6 detention and ten abduction. Most of those detained in Jarablus were charged with complicity in explosions that hit the city. However, abduction cases all aimed to demand a ransom, as a result of the deteriorating economic situation in the area.

**As for the first quarter of 2020**, 72 incidents were reported in **the city of Afrin**. This resulted in 122 victims. 28 incidents occurred in January and the same in February, while 16 occurred in March. There were 64 detentions and 8 abductions. The Syrian National Army’s factions were allegedly responsible for 27 incidents, the Military Police carried out 17, other security actors: 20, and finally, 8 were by the “Wrath of Olives” Operations Room.

In the city of Jarablus, there were 21 incidents resulting in 64 victims, with 9 detentions and 12 abductions. 9 incidents took place in January, 7 in February, and 5 in March. The National Army’s factions were responsible for 9 of the total incidents, while 12 remain anonymous.

### 2.4 Quantitative data per city

Afrin witnessed 132 incidents, during the monitoring period that resulted in 262 victims. 16 incidents occurred in October, 23 in November, 21 in December, 28 in each January, 28 in February, and 16 in March. There were 109 detentions and 23 abductions (figure 101).

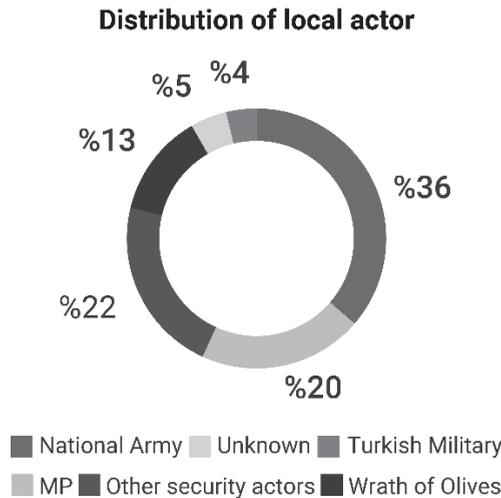
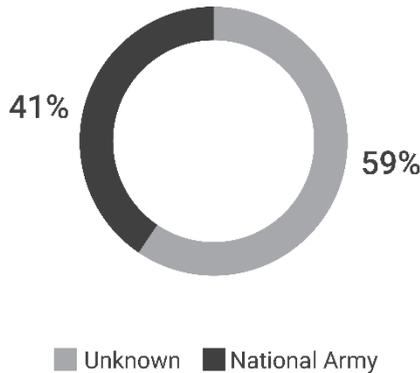


Figure (101): Distribution of operations in Afrin by local actors

**Most of those detained by the National Army and the Turkish Military in Afrin were later charged with being complicit** in an explosion that targeted the area, or for previously working with the AA structure. As for abductions, either they aimed to demand a ransom, due to bad economic conditions, or they were perpetrated by “Wrath of Olives” Operations Room targeting members of the National Army in the area.

As for the city of Jarablus, the number of incidents reached 37 during the monitoring period with 93 individuals. 4 incidents were committed in October, 6 in November, 6 in December, 9 in January, 7 in February, and 5 in March. The National Army’s factions committed 15 of the total incidents, while 22 incidents remained anonymous (figure 102). There were 6 detentions and ten abductions. Those detained in Jarablus were charged with complicity of an explosion that affected the city. As for abduction cases, all demanded a ransom highlighting the declining economic conditions in the area.

**Distribution of local actor**



**Figure (102): Distribution of operations in Jarablus by local actors**

## 2.5 Analytical summary

The number of abduction and detention incidents reached 169 in the two cities, with 355 victims. The number of incidents in Jarablus was 27, while

in Afrin was 132. 93 victims were from Jarablus, while 262 victims were in Afrin.

The total number of incidents in Afrin and Jarablus, included 124 detention cases and 45 abduction cases. Most cases were committed by the Syrian National Army's factions, while some incidents were carried out by Turkish Military or intelligence in cooperation with the National Army. A number of incidents remained anonymous. The "Wrath of Olives" Operations Room was responsible for 17 incidents, all of which were against members affiliated with the National Army and had the aim of interrogating and then liquidating them.

According to the data, the largest rate of incidents took place in January 2020, followed by February, November 2019, and then December 2019, while March 2020 was fifth. October 2019 had the lowest percentage of detention and abduction cases. The actors responsible for the 141 detention incidents were identified, whereas actors responsible in 28 incidents remain anonymous. Of the 141 incidents identified responsible party, 63 were by the National Army's factions, 27 by Military Police, 29 by other security actors, 17 by "Wrath of Olives" Operations Room, and 5 by the Turkish Military. It is noteworthy to mention that the Turkish Military was not observed to **directly** conduct arrests or detain individuals but through special forces of the opposition and mostly related to investigations of explosions and security incidents.

Numbers of abduction and detention cases varied in both cities. The rate of detention cases was larger in Afrin, while the rate of abduction cases was larger in the city of Jarablus. Based on the data, local actors targeted 283 people with their operations, while foreign actors targeted 12 people, and 60 people were targeted by anonymous actors. The charges against detainees also varied. Some of them were accused of complicity in previous explosion incidents, and some were accused of previously working with the local AA councils. Some were detained for having performed "duty of self-defense" with the AA forces before the opposition factions took control over the two cities.

## V. General Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The models selected for observation in the governorates of Daraa, Deir Ezzor and al-Hasaka, highlight the weakness of the Syrian regime, on the one hand, and, to a lesser degree, the AA. The amount of explosions and assassinations were high relative to security situation of the area, theoretically. The data presented a practical outlook on the lack of security within regime-held territories, due to the spread of local and foreign militias. The differing agendas resulted in thousands of casualties within these areas. This reflected adversely on the parameters of safe return. The inability of the regime to secure a safe environment directly impacts Syrian refugees' decision to return.
2. The data highlighting extrajudicial detentions and abductions in the cities of Jasim, Douma, al-Bukamal, and Raqqa, during the selected period, illustrates the decay in security and stability. Various actors, and perpetrators, formal and informal groups, commit extrajudicial detentions and abductions without just cause. This highlights the inability of the security actors to create an environment conducive to safe return. The fragile and deteriorating context does not guarantee protection or safety.
3. Explosion and assassination incidents in opposition-controlled areas indicate that local environments **are not sufficiently secured**, as security breaches are widespread. Although security is a top priority, the multitude of tools utilized to target the area, has proved a challenge for security actors. Due to the challenging security context and link with the "Wrath of Olives" operation room, it is difficult to fulfill the requirements for safe return. With continued military operations, the region remains unstable and unsuitable for recovery and voluntary return.
4. As for abduction and extrajudicial detentions in the cities of Afrin and Jarablus, the discrepancy of figures (highest figure being in Afrin) indicate that disorder and security concerns persist. The lack of security highlights the failure of security actors to create a safe environment. The

variety of perpetrators displays the weakness of the security apparatuses, as multiple actors are able to unlawful arrest and abductions continue to occur.

**The report recommends the following:**

- Decision makers in countries hosting Syrian refugees must outline detailed return arrangements that guarantee Syrian returnees a safe and dignified return. The arrangements must include legal, administrative, and political conditions that will maintain the rights of the individual and community dynamics and serve as pre-conditions for any safe and voluntary return program.
- Civil society organizations focusing on human rights must continue to elevate the issue of detainees in regime areas, in order to pressure international organizations and governmental bodies to include their release as a prerequisite to the political process. This directly relates to creating and sustaining stability and social cohesion.
- Intelligence coordination must be promoted among local security actors in opposition areas, as well as establishing a time-frame to restore institutional structures and rule of law. The structures should be restored based on criteria of professionalism, adopting policies related to arms control, moving military sites and formations outside civilian areas, and handing over all checkpoints to civil police. A civil-security and military relations commission should be established to follow up on issues of detainees in opposition areas. Lastly, undertaking fact-finding missions in the city of Afrin must be encouraged



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