

## Statement on Recent Airstrikes Targeting Displaced Civilians and Hospitals in Syria

The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect is appalled by the 5 May airstrike on a displacement camp in Sarmada, Idlib that killed at least 30 civilians. If proven to be deliberate, this attack not only demonstrates an unconscionable disregard for civilian lives, but is also a war crime. Bombing defenseless civilians represents an obscene violation of the most basic tenets of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law.

Yesterday's attack follows a 27 April targeted bombing of Al-Quds hospital in Aleppo by the Syrian government. The airstrike, which killed at least 50 people, was followed by the unanimous adoption on 3 May of UN Security Council Resolution 2286, condemning attacks on medical and humanitarian workers in situations of armed conflict.

The Al-Quds and Sarmada bombings - targeting hospitals and displacement camps for civilians who are fleeing the conflict - exhibit the unimaginable cruelty of Syria's civil war. A formal cessation of hostilities, brokered by the United States and Russia, began on 27 February and helped decrease levels of violence across the country. These recent attacks and the government's offensive against Aleppo represent a dangerous re-escalation of the conflict.

The Syrian government is currently besieging Aleppo, threatening humanitarian access to over 900,000 desperately vulnerable people. Médecins Sans Frontières claims that there have been at least 300 airstrikes on Aleppo since 21 April, including on the Al-Quds hospital. An armed rebel group also fired a rocket at the Al-Dabit hospital in Aleppo on 3 May, killing at least 19 staff and patients, including children.

Syrians have faced over five years of intolerable suffering in a civil war where all parties to the conflict have blatantly disregarded the laws of war and the sanctity of human life. The government, with direct military support from international allies, continues to cause the greatest number of civilian casualties and is manifestly failing to uphold its Responsibility to Protect.

Yesterday's airstrike on the Sarmada displacement camp shows that UN Security Council resolutions are meaningless if not backed up by measures aimed at holding perpetrators accountable. The latest attacks in Sarmada and Aleppo must catalyze the world into action. All diplomatic efforts must now be made to save the cessation of hostilities, ensure unimpeded humanitarian access, and restart the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva before it is too late. They must also ensure that those responsible for Al-Quds, Sarmada and other attacks on civilians face justice. International law and our common humanity demand nothing less.