Between 24 July and 29 July, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) carried out three security operations in the overcrowded and impoverished Al-Hol camp in Al-Hasakah governorate where they detained 35 residents, 30 of whom were children. These raids followed a security policy where boys, including those under 10-years-old, are systematically forcibly separated from their mothers and detained in efforts to deter future security risks.

Insecurity Insight’s monitoring has recorded a total of 195 incidents of threats or violence inside Syrian camps between January 2021 and July 2023. In these incidents, 123 residents have been killed, including women and children, and numerous others injured. In addition over 300 more have been arrested by various security forces. This data is available on HDX.

**Al-Hol camp**

Over two-thirds of incidents occurred in Al-Hol camp and frequently involved assassinations by Islamic State (IS) militants or sympathisers and security operations by the SDF and Asayish police. Security operations have increased in 2023, following a decrease in 2022. The number of incidents where it was reported that children have been detained in security operations has also increased.
In addition, four IS arson attacks have taken place in the camp in 2023, with three happening over a three-day period in April, causing tent damages. Violence inside the camp also impacts everyday activities such as in April 2023 when a boy was fatally shot by SDF members after he climbed the perimeter fence to retrieve a ball he was playing with. Violence has also impacted health workers, with three NGO health staff being attacked in 2022. Read the 2022 Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) factsheet for more details. Available in Arabic and English.

Explosive weapons affecting camps

In Aleppo and Idlib governorates, explosive weapons used by the SDF, Syrian Regime Forces, Turkish Armed Forces and Russian Armed Forces affected IDP camps. Some camps, such as Kuwait Al-Rahma Camp in Aleppo governorate, have been struck multiple times. Incidents also took place in Al-Hasakah and Ar-Raqqah but to a lesser extent. On at least one occasion, US Special Forces using helicopters, explosive weapons and machine gun fire, conducted a two-hour counter-terrorism raid along the Syria-Turkish border where there are numerous informal camps, killing 13 people, including six children and four women in February 2022.

1 Al-Hol camp close to the Syria-Iraq border has a population of almost 55,000, mainly displaced people from the self-proclaimed IS caliphate declared in parts of Syria and Iraq in 2014 (which had largely collapsed by December 2017); it is mainly controlled by the SDF.

Related content

Violence in Rohingya Refugee Camps in Bangladesh

In the early hours of 7 July 2023, a gunfight erupted between the rival armed groups Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) and the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation, over control of the Kutupalong-Balukhuli expansion camp.* At least five people were killed, including a child, and several others were injured. This incident occurred just a day after the fatal stabbing of a Rohingya refugee community leader who had been mobilising refugees to meet the International Criminal Court prosecutor during his visit to the camp.

Insecurity Insight’s monitoring of reported threats and violence recorded 57 incidents of threats or violence inside the camp between January 2021 and June 2023. Incidents have increased since July 2022 and at least 58 camp residents have been killed since January 2021. Most were shot or stabbed to death. The violence also affects children. Read more

Protection in Danger Monthly News Brief

Reported threats and incidents of violence affecting protection of IDPs and refugees. Past editions: July; May; April; March; February; January; All

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