

The (non) responsibility of the International Coalition for its Humanitarian and Human rights Laws violations in Syria

On my opinion, one of the most concerning issue currently happening in the world is the violations that the countries forming the International Coalition are committing in Syria, using the fight against terrorism to hide their acts.

Indeed, it is known that the regime under Bashar Al-Assad, and the other parties involved in the conflict since its beginning, are involved in multiple violations of human rights, by perpetrating unlawful restriction on humanitarian aids and use of chemical weapons, arbitrary arrests and killings, torture, therefore threatening the life of thousands of civilians still trapped in war zones.

However, the International Coalition, which is composed by European countries, the United States and more, is also responsible for several violations.

Airstrikes carried out by the International Coalition have impacted civilians and killed almost 1,000 children, mostly in Raqqa and Aleppo, raising concerns about general principles as distinction, proportionality and precaution in attacks under international humanitarian law.

In particular, by not taking any precaution to minimize civilian casualties during this operation, the Coalition breached the rules progressively established by the Hague Convention of 1899 and 1907, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, its Additional Protocols of 1977, and the decisions of the UN Security Council, thus sacrificing the whole city.

All the external actions in Syria are abandoned to the military services of the states involved, without any respect to humanitarian and criminal international laws. Currently, even if some terrorists are researched and prosecuted all over the world, there is no international legal proceeding against the higher authorities of the Daesh organization.

Therefore, the airstrikes and targeted killings perpetrated by the Coalition illustrate the political choice of the states, infringing consciously human rights, to the detriment of justice and law.

Additionally, the murders are mostly committed based on information that are external to the actual situation, and not on the basis of the potential danger that these persons represent *in concreto*.

The international human rights laws that lay down the commitments of the states prohibit arbitrary deprivation of life and require the necessary standards to guarantee a fair trial to all.

Nevertheless, no country participating in the International Coalition has investigated on these facts, no country has even recognized its own responsibility and therefore no country has faced up to their human rights accountability nor trying to compensate the losses and casualties they caused.

This situation not only highlights the lack of responsibility of the states committing violations to international laws, but also questions the immunity of organizations such as the UN, which has been criticized more than once thorough years of peace keeping missions.

Moreover, the war in Syria, and generally all the armed conflicts in the area, are contributing to the immigration crisis which is arising concerns around the Mediterranean Sea. And some European countries are running away from their responsibility.

For example, the decree passed in December by the Italian government has abolished humanitarian protection for refugees and asylum seekers, a change which has led to widespread homelessness for those arriving from across the Mediterranean.

Unfortunately, Italy's anti-search and rescue laws still remain largely unchallenged by EU authorities so far.

Such a policy is not compatible with international laws, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea which requires the states to help the ships in distress, or even the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which declared that everyone has the right to leave any country, and to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

Furthermore, a statement by the UN human rights experts in May was clear that: "*The right to life and the principle of non-refoulement (not sending people back) should always prevail over national legislation or other measures purportedly adopted in the name of national security.*"

In conclusion, the International Coalition did commit a lot of violations to international laws, that remain unpunished, and would probably never be. The situation of civilians during armed conflicts is still so vulnerable and they are not protected as they should be by the states and by the international organizations, when the right to life is the preliminary to any other right.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, World Report of 2018, Latest news on Syria

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/syria>

INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT, The crisis in Syria

<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-syria>

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, More than 3,000 civilians killed by International Coalition in Syria, 21th March 2019

<https://syrianobserver.com/EN/features/49299/more-than-3000-civilians-killed-by-international-coalition-in-syria.html>

Daniel BOFFEY, From kidnap to torture, the database rigorously logging every Syrian atrocity, The Guardian, 23 July 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/23/why-database-of-syrian-atrocities-may-hold-key-to-future-justice>

Amnesty International (2017). State of the World's Human Rights 2016/17.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/report-syria/>

Idris IFFAT, UK Helpdesk Report on International Humanitarian Law and Human rights violations in Syria, 5 June 2017

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/598453b2e5274a1704000078/127-IHL-and-HR-violations-in-Syria.pdf>