

Syria: End Indiscriminate Shootings of Civilians Fleeing Country Human Rights Watch 2
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(Amman) – Syrian soldiers on the border with Jordan appear to be shooting indiscriminately at anyone - including civilian women and children - trying to flee from

[Syria](#)

, Human Rights Watch said today. The Syrian authorities should immediately order its armed forces on the border to end all indiscriminate attacks and take all feasible measures to avoid injuries to civilians crossing into neighboring countries, and to respect their right to leave the country.

In mid-June, Human Rights Watch spoke with 17 Syrian refugees in Jordan who said that when they fled in May and June across the border in groups of up to 200 civilians accompanied by members of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), Syrian soldiers subjected them to sustained machine gun and sniper fire, killing three civilians and wounding 11. All of the refugees described incidents in which the Syrian army opened fire without warning, and fired on everyone who was crossing the border, FSA fighters and civilian men, women and children alike. (...)

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Syria has ratified, provides that any person is entitled to leave his or her country, which includes long-term residents such as Palestinians in Syria, and that this right may only be restricted under circumstances "which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order, public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others" and which "are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Covenant." Syria has made no declaration explaining why civilians, including women, children and the injured, may not leave the country, nor explained why it is using lethal force to try and stop them.

Human Rights Watch said that even when FSA fighters are present with the civilians, and engaged in fighting, the Syrian soldiers must take all feasible steps to minimize harm to the civilians, including ensuring its attacks only target military objectives. FSA fighters must also take all feasible steps to ensure that civilians are not harmed, including by ensuring that their deployment does not draw attacks onto the civilians. But all the accounts given by the refugees state that the Syrian army has opened fire without warning on everyone crossing the border, without drawing any distinction between the civilians and the FSA fighters.

Read the
[full statement](#)

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