Russian Airstrikes in Syria have 'Killed More Than 1,000 Civilians’

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By AFP

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<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/20/russian-airstrikes-in-syria-have-killed-more-than-1000-civilians>

Russian airstrikes in [Syria](http://www.theguardian.com/world/syria) have killed more than 1,000 civilians since they were launched almost four months ago, a monitoring organisation has said.

The raids, which started on 30 September, have killed 1,015 civilians, including more than 200 children, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said on Wednesday.

The group, which relies on a network of sources on the ground for its reports, said the strikes had also killed 893 [Islamic State](http://www.theguardian.com/world/isis) jihadis and 1,141 other opposition militants, including members of al-Qaida affiliate al-Nusra Front.

The toll of 3,049 includes almost 700 deaths in just three weeks.

[Russia](http://www.theguardian.com/world/russia) is a staunch ally of President Bashar al-Assad’s government and has coordinated its strikes with Damascus, saying it is targeting Isis and other terrorist groups.

But activists and Syrian rebels accuse Moscow of focusing more on moderate and Islamist opposition fighters than Isis.

Russia has previously dismissed accusations that its raids have killed civilians as absurd and said claims by rights groups of such deaths were made up of “cliches and fakes”.

The SOHR says it differentiates between strikes by Russia, US-led coalition warplanes and the Syrian regime based on the type of aircraft and the munitions used.

A coalition led by Washington has also been carrying out strikes against Isis in Syria since September 2014, but it does not coordinate its raids with Damascus.

Those strikes have killed 4,256 people since they began, among them 322 civilians, including more than 90 children, according to the SOHR.

The monitor said the strikes had also killed 3,787 Isis fighters and almost 150 militants from other extremist groups including al-Nusra Front.