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Syrian forces and armed groups will be held criminally responsible for war crimes

“A pattern is emerging of orders being issued to civilians to move out of urban areas, raising fears that the authorities intend to increase the intensity of assault on neighbourhoods they plan to attack,” said Donatella Rovera, Senior Crisis Response Adviser.

“The fact that an order has been issued does not mean that the area has actually been cleared, which could result in more and more people coming under attack.”

The Syrian armed forces and members of armed opposition groups such as the Free Syria Army (FSA) may be held criminally responsible if they fail to protect the civilian population caught up in this conflict, with resultant unlawful killings.

As members of the opposition become better equipped with weapons and armaments, more and more civilians are being exposed to danger as fighting intensifies in populated urban areas.

“With the opposition’s greater access to heavy weaponry comes increased responsibility,” said Donatella Rovera. “The safety of civilians should never be an afterthought and both sides must recognise the increased risk of taking the fight into civilian areas.”

“Members of the opposition are no more immune from these responsibilities than government forces.”

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Amnesty International’s press office on: +44 7778 472 126 or press@amnesty.org

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