Airstrike on rebel-held village in northwest Syria kills at least 44

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Airstrikes on a village in rebel-held [Syria](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria) have killed at least 44 civilians and injured a further 80, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) has said, in the biggest attack in the area so far this year.

The UK-based war monitor as well as the Syrian Civil Defence service said the attack on Zardana in Idlib province overnight on Thursday involved a 'double tap', in which planes returned to bomb the same area after paramedics arrived at the scene.

A total of eleven women and six children were among the dead in what is believed to be a Russian operation, the observatory said.

Eight strikes hit the small settlement after dark, during which people were breaking the Ramadan fast.

Graphic pictures shared by the defence service, which is also known as the White Helmets, showed children covered in blood and shrapnel wounds in hospital and residential buildings reduced to rubble.

At least one rescue worker is among the dead, the defence service said. The search for survivors continued after daybreak on Friday. The mounting death toll from the strikes makes the attack the biggest to hit the area in 2018 to date.

No one has claimed responsibility for the unusually large attack. Both the Syrian and [Russian](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) air forces operate over Idlib, but the area has been subject to a de-escalation agreement between government and rebel forces since 2017.

Idlib province in the country's northwest is the Syrian opposition's last major stronghold.

Since the tide of the seven-year-old civil war turned in President Bashar al Assad's favour in 2015 tens of thousands of people displaced from other areas have either willingly or been forcefully resettled there.