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سوريون
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“The Unprecedented”

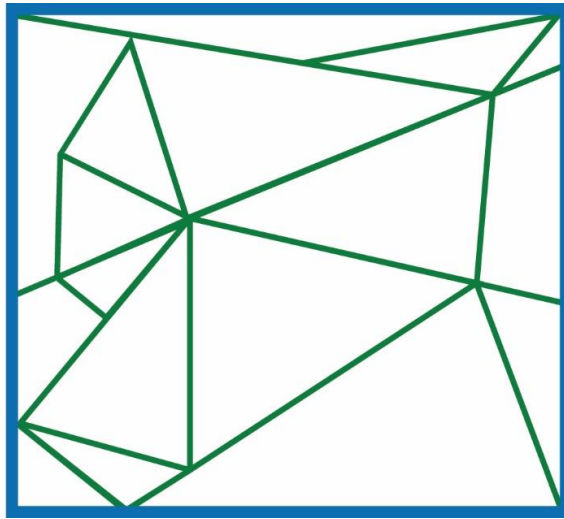
**A Special Report Covering Incidents and Massacres Committed
in Eastern Ghouta between February 18, 2018 and April 8, 2018**

About the organization (STJ):

[Syrians for Truth and Justice \(STJ\)](#) is an independent, nongovernmental organization whose members include Syrian human rights defenders, advocates and academics of different backgrounds and nationalities. The initiative strives for SYRIA, where all Syrian citizens (males and females) have dignity, equality, justice and equal human rights.

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*A Special Report Covering Incidents and Massacres Committed in Eastern Ghouta
between February 18, 2018 and April 8, 2018*



Preface:

The Eastern Ghouta region witnessed one of the worst and most violent military attacks led by Syrian regular forces with the direct backing and support from the Russian military aircraft in the air and foreign militias and auxiliary troops on the ground, during the period from February 18, 2018 until April 18, 2018.

Cities and towns of Eastern Ghouta, which had been besieged for several years, were subjected to unprecedented bombardment during this 49-day campaign. Nothing was spared even the concentrations of civilians and their houses, basements, shelters and other medical and civilian facilities, which were actually targets following the systematic policy pursued by the pro-government forces during those military operations, according to investigations carried out by STJ researchers who were present in this hot-spot area during that period.

This military operation resulted in the kill of at least 2,000 civilians and the injury of thousands, also according to STJ researchers, who have crossed the victims' information they got from several sources, including medical points, victims' relatives, direct testimonies and the public open sources.

This campaign led to the pro-government forces' full control over whole Eastern Ghouta, after signing a number of deals with the armed opposition factions there. The first signed deal was with [Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya movement](#)¹ in Harasta city, on March 21, 2018, which provided for the evacuation of Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya movement fighters along with their families, as well as all civilians who didn't want to get back under al-Assad rule, towards northern Syria. This deal was followed by another one with [The al-Rahman Legion](#)² on March 23, 2018, which also provided for the evacuation of The al-Rahman Legion and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham/HTS³

¹ Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya was formed on November 11, 2011 with approximately 25,000 combatants. It is an Islamic military faction formed of integration of four Islamic factions: Kataeb Ahrar al-Sham, al-Fajr al-Islamiyya Movement, Jamaat al-Taliaa al-Islamiyya and al-Iman Fighting Brigades. Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya actives in many areas that are not held by Syrian government, especially in the provinces of Idlib, Aleppo, and Hama, and is headed by Hasan Sofan/Abo al-Barra, born in Lattakia 1979, the ex-prisoner who was sentenced for 12 years in Sednaya Military Prison but released late 2016 following a prisoner swap agreement.

² At the beginning of August 2012, formation of the Al-Baraa brigade, led by dissent captain "Abdel Nasser Shammair", hails from Homs province, was announced. At the end of the year 2013, it expanded, with the announcement of the formation of Failaq al-Rahman that included Syrian armed opposition brigades, some of them were Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari Brigade, Liwa Shuhada Al-Ghouta, Ahl al-Sham Brigades, al-Liwa al-Awal in Qaboun and Tishreen neighborhood, and Al-Adiyat Brigade in Western Ghouta. According to several sources, Failaq al-Rahman has about 9,000 fighters; it gains its influence from its controlled sites in the neighborhoods of the east of Damascus, in Jobar and Zamalka, and is considered the second largest opposition military faction in Ghouta after Army of Islam.

³ On January 28, 2017, several Jihadi factions in northern Syria announced the merger under the name of "Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham/HTS". They were; Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly Al-Nusra Front), The Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement, Liwa al-Haqq, Jabhat Ansar al-Din, Jaysh al-Sunna and Ansar al-Sham. However, The Nour al-Din al-



militants with their families, and other civilians to northern Syria, this deal covered the towns of (Irbin, Zamalka, Ein Tarma and Jobar), and the last evacuation deal was signed with [the Army of Islam](#)⁴ on April 8, 2018. This deal provided for the release of all the abductees⁵ held by the Army of Islam, in exchange for allowing the latter's fighters along with their families and civilians unwilling to settle with the Regime to get out of Eastern Ghouta towards northern Syria.

STJ will conduct extensive and detailed investigations into these settlement agreements and the accompanying forced displacements against the inhabitants of the area. These investigations will be published successively and immediately upon completion.

According to STJ researchers⁶, Syrian regular forces and their allies have not stopped shelling the cities and towns of Eastern Ghouta by various types of weapons throughout the campaign, to the point of following the scorched-earth policy so that they could advance militarily. To this aim they divided Eastern Ghouta into three main sectors: which are the Central Sector⁷, the Harasta Sector⁸ and the Douma Sector⁹, so that they could be easily controlled afterwards. An STJ field researcher noted that death became usual in Eastern Ghouta during the campaign, that almost every day scores of people lose their lives, indicating that life equaled death at the time.

Zenki Movement declared its secession from HTS against the background of the recent clashes between the latter and Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya in northern Syria on 15 July 2017.

⁴ in September 2011, "Zahrán Aloush", the former prisoner in Sednaya Prison, announced the formation of the opposition Battalion of Islam that later became, in mid-2012, Liwa al-Islam. On September 29, 2013, the brigade merged with a number of other factions to announce the formation of the "Army of Islam" and later joined the Islamic Front, in the same year, including other Islamic brigades like al-Tawhid Brigade, Suqour al-Sham, Ahrar al-Sham Islamiyya Movement, and Liwa al-Haqq, and Zahrán was the commander. The army is now mainly active in the Eastern Ghouta area of Damascus countryside, but is also located in most areas out of control of the Syrian government except areas under ISIS and the Syrian Democratic Forces/SDF.

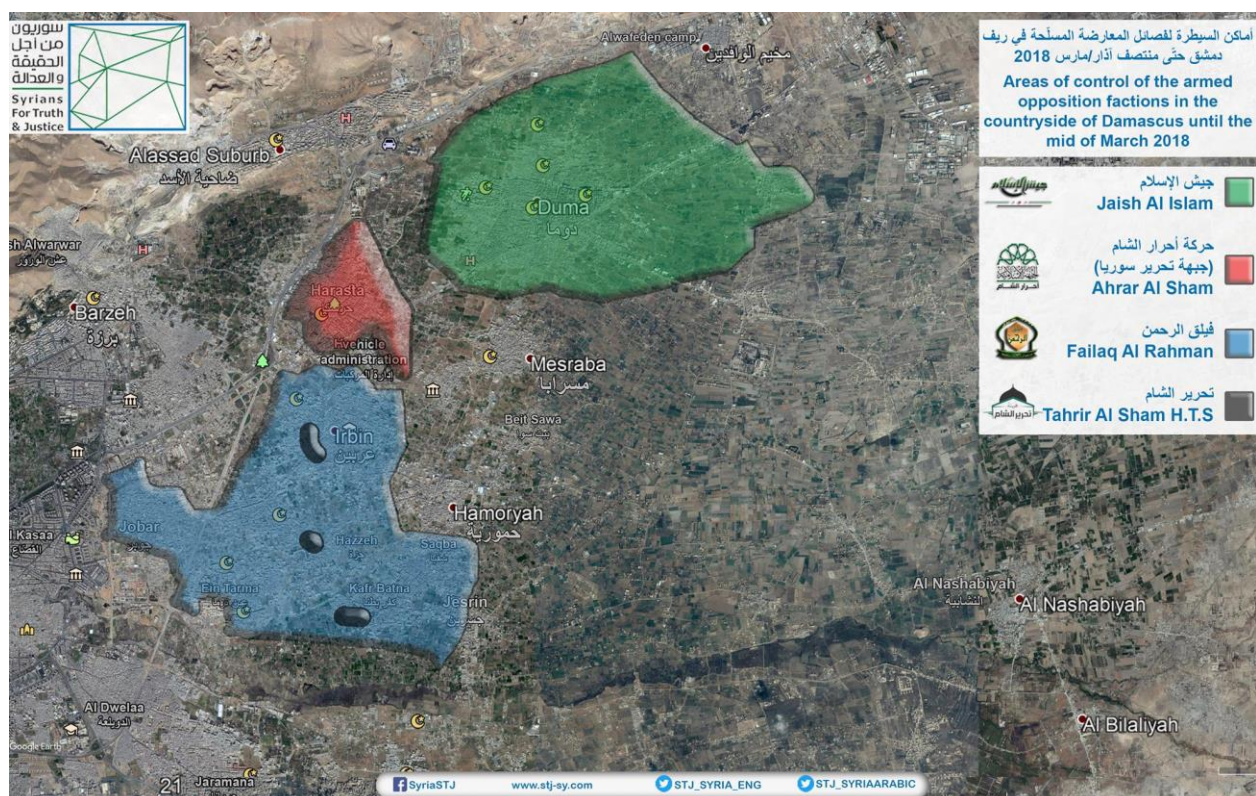
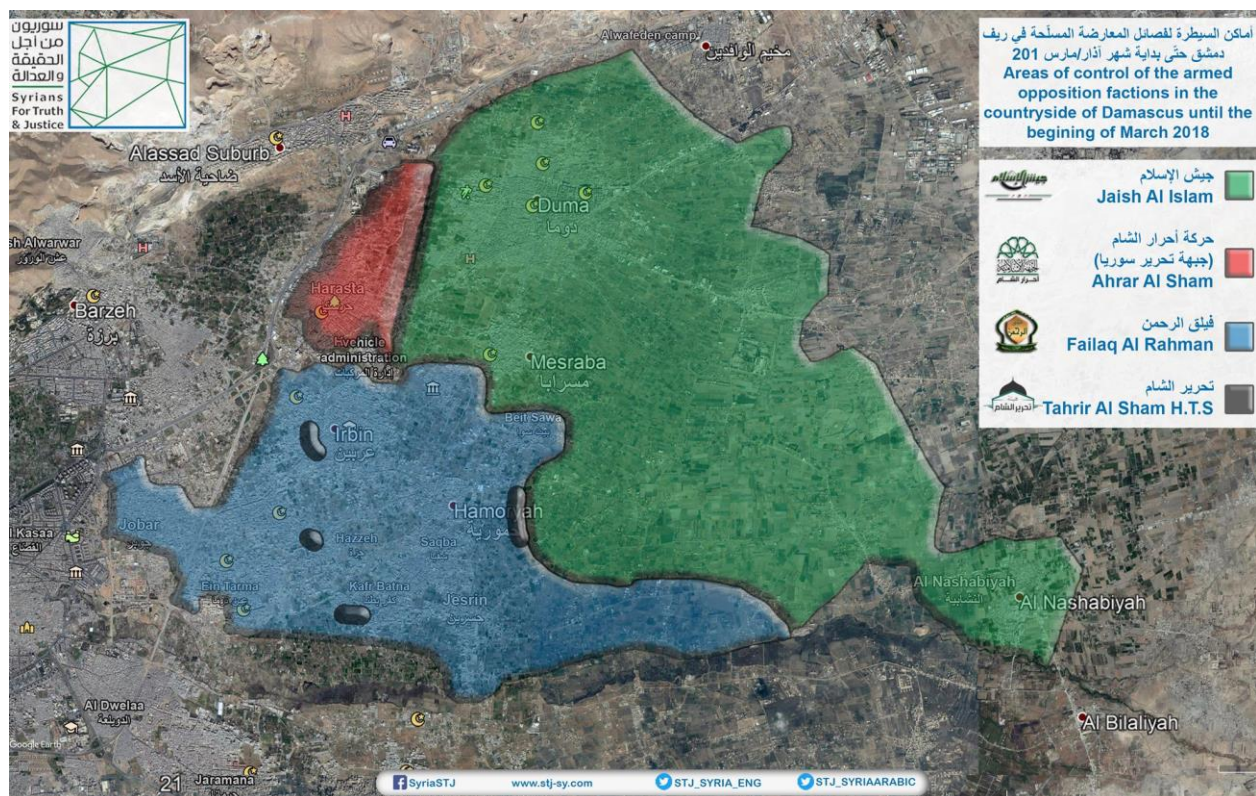
⁵ Detainees who have been arrested for being accused of supporting the Syrian regime.

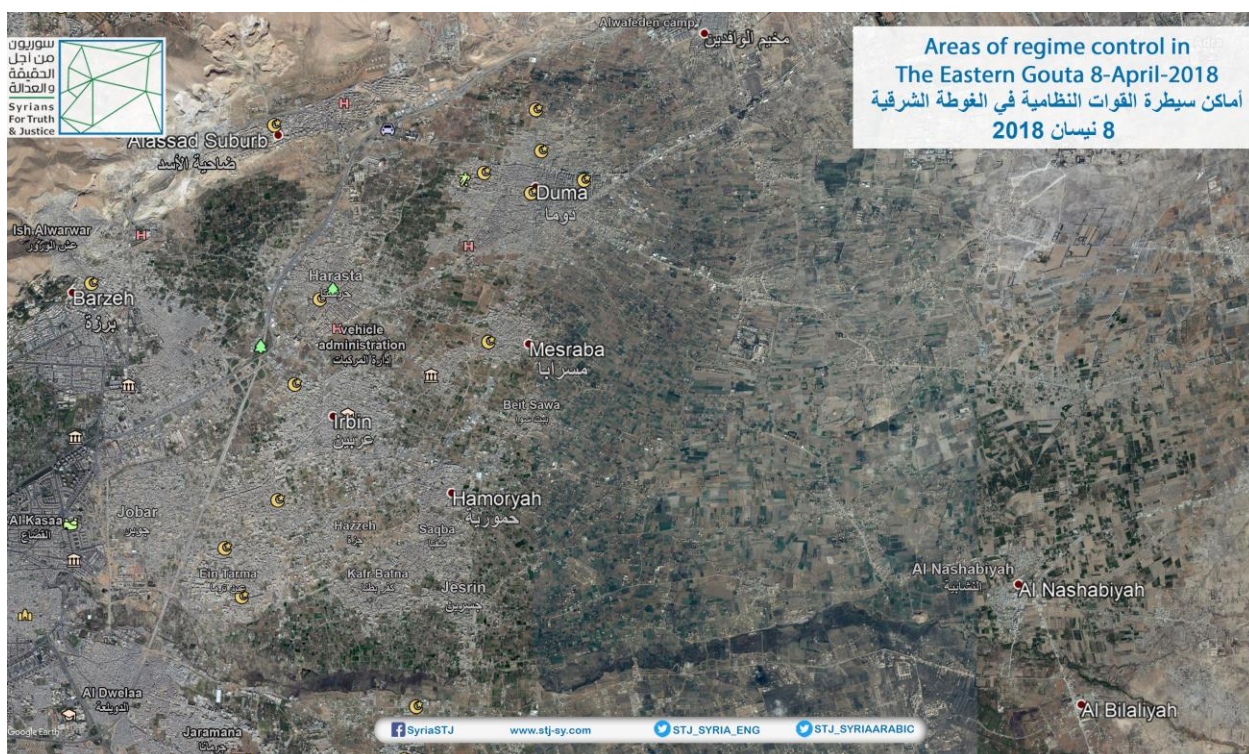
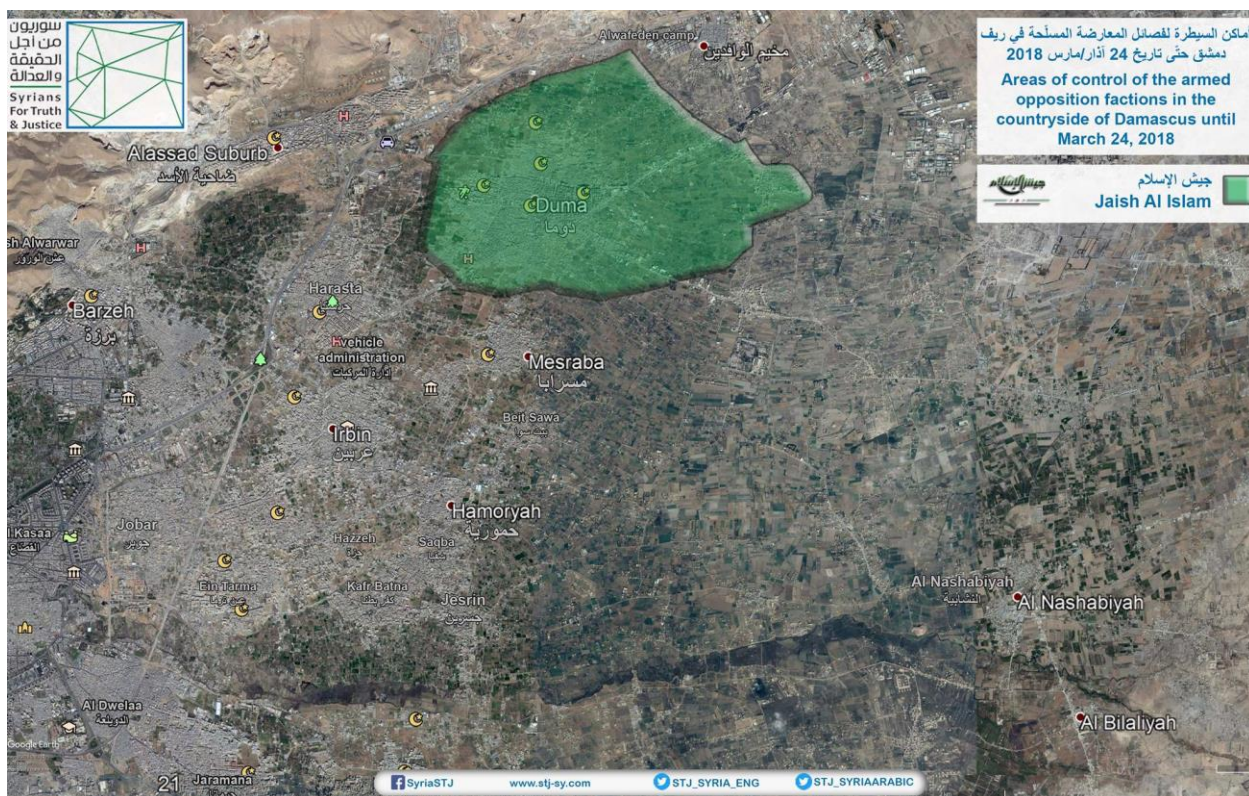
⁶ It should be noted that most of the witnesses who gave us statements preferred to use aliases for security reasons. Some of them were interviewed by the STJ field researcher in Eastern Ghouta, and others outside it following their displacement to the northern Syria.

⁷ The Central Sector includes several cities and town such as Irbin, Hamoryah, Kafr Batna, Saqba, Jisreen and Zamalka, and it was held by The al-Rahman Legion.

⁸ Harasta Sector was held by Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement.

⁹ Douma Sector includes several cities and towns, mainly Douma, Mesraba and al-Shefonia, and it was held by The Army of Islam.





The distribution of Eastern Ghouta areas among the conflicted parties since February 18, 2018, until April 8, 2018.



It is worth mentioning that The UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. ([2401](#)) amid a welcome from the [United Nations](#), which called for a ceasefire throughout Syria for at least 30 consecutive days to enable the delivery of humanitarian aid and medical evacuation services of the critically sick and wounded.

[The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#) has described the situation in Syria as "bleak" in the wake of the UN Security Council resolution calling for 30-day ceasefire throughout the country.

Military operations in Eastern Ghouta paralleled with further military operations in northern Syria, where the Turkish forces backed with Syrian armed opposition factions launched a military campaign against Afrin the Kurdish-majority Syrian city, [on](#) January 20, 2018, and led to the Turkish army and supporting forces' control over whole Afrin.

Deaths and Wounds Following Shelling Various Areas in Damascus and its Outskirts

In conjunction with the fiercest military campaign on cities and towns of Eastern Ghouta, various areas of the capital Damascus and its surrounding were exposed to a number of indiscriminate shells killing and injuring several civilians, as well as causing significant material damage to their property.

As of February 18, 2018, [a number of mortar shells fell](#) on several areas in the middle of Damascus, such as Bab Touma and Bab al-Salam, killing one person and wounding another, along with [other 11 shells that fell](#) in Dahiyat al-Assad suburb causing material damage.

Moreover, on February 19, 2018, in parallel with the onset of violent shelling on cities and towns of Eastern Ghouta, two missiles fell on Sayyidah Zaynab town, in addition to more than a dozen other shells that fell on Dahiyat al-Assad injuring several civilians, including two children and a woman, According to the [Voice of the Capital Network](#).

Furthermore, on February 20, 2018, many shells fell on various areas in the capital city, such as the Umayyad Square located in the middle of Damascus. Yomyatkzefeh page (daily page of mortar shells in Damasus) posted a [video footage](#) showing rising smoke caused by a rocket shell that fell on the area; the page also [indicated](#) that on the same day, six people were injured due to missiles falling on Bab Touma and al-Qassaa neighborhoods, plus [other rocket shells](#) falling in the vicinity of al-Hal market (grocery market) in al-Zablatani area, as well as rocket shells in Jaramana area, killing a person identified as Qusai Haytham Mohammed and injuring five others, according to [Yomyatkzefeh](#) page, which also [reported](#) that another person identified as Hassan Imam was killed affected by his wounds from a rocket shell falling in Jisr al-Raes area.



اصابات الثلاثاء ٢٠/٢/٢٠١٨ في مشفى دمشق							
الاسم	الاب	الام	منطقة الإصابة	نوع الإصابة	الدخول	التولد	ملاحظات
علي ناعمة	ياسر		مخيم بركوك	طلق ناربي			وفاة
فايزه عرابي	حمدي	بشيرة	زبلطاني	شظايا		١٩٥١	
لؤي دريوسي	ظريف	دلال	الفورسيزن	شظايا		1983	وفاة
احمد الطي	قاسم	مريم	الفورسيزن	شظايا		1950	وفاة
احمد شنيير	محمد	زينب	الفورسيزن	شظايا		1993	
سومر اسير	سليمان	حسناء	الفورسيزن	شظايا		1986	
ابراهيم زركلي	محي الدين	زاهده	الفورسيزن	شظايا		1965	
عبد الكريم ابراهيم	ابراهيم	بدرية	الفورسيزن	شظايا		1960	
احمد محسن	عبد الرزاق	وجيهة	الفورسيزن	شظايا			وفاة
فادي شابو	يعقوب	جانيت	جرمانا	شظايا		1977	
حسام ابو خديجة	عبد الطيف	مريم	جرمانا	شظايا		1979	
نجاح خميس	محمد	سلسيل	جرمانا	شظايا		1.5	
محمد خضرة	ميسر	كوثر	جرمانا	شظايا		1978	
حياة كبول	حسن	نجاح	جرمانا	شظايا		1972	
ايهاب غنيم	محمود	امنه	جرمانا	شظايا		1980	
يزن حسون	هيثم	نظيرة	جرمانا	شظايا		1993	
كاظم محمد	محمد	امينة	جرمانا	شظايا		1993	
عدنان رياض	عبد الكريم	ادبية	جرمانا	شظايا		1971	
نعمه حليوة			جرمانا	شظايا			
ماجد مراد			جرمانا	شظايا			
لؤي عبد الله		جورية	جرمانا	شظايا			
محمد الحاج			جرمانا	شظايا			
لؤي الحسيني		جورية	جرمانا	شظايا		سنة 46	
عدنان زيار			جرمانا	شظايا			
كاظم قزموز			جرمانا	شظايا		سنة 23	
احمد فارس	طلال	سوسن	عباسيين	طلق ناربي			وفاة
حسن حمادة الخليف							وفاة
اسامة المعلم							وفاة
لما فالح فلول	خدي		جرمانا	شظايا			
نزار الغريبي			جرمانا	شظايا			
ياسر مونه	ياسر		جرمانا	شظايا			
عبد الله السمحة	باسل		جرمانا	شظايا			
كريم الدين قاسم	محمد		جرمانا	شظايا			

An image showing identities of the dead and injured civilians, who were dispatched to al-Mojtahed Hospital in Damascus; the incident was due to shells falling in various areas of Damascus on February 20, 2018, photo credit: [Yomyatkzefeh page](#).

On February 21, 2018, several people were injured because large numbers of missiles fell on areas of Dweilaa, Jaramana, and Bab-Sharqi, according to the [Voice of the Capital Network](#), and three other shells fell in Osh al-Warwar area causing injuries, according to [the same network](#). Moreover, [Yomyatkzefeh page](#) reported that two persons were seriously injured following a missile fell on Bab al-Salam area on the same day.

February 22, 2018 was not the day less pressure than the other days on the people of Damascus and its surroundings; [Yomyatkzefeh page](#) reported that a child was killed and 10 others injured as a result of rocket missiles falling on al-Wafideen refugee camp on the outskirts of Damascus. The same source [said](#) that the fall of shells had renewed on Bab Touma area on the same day, injuring five people.



Indiscriminate shelling of Damascus continued until February 23, 2018; [Voice of the Capital Network](#) said that the fall of shells had renewed on neighborhoods of the Old City in Damascus and Jaramana causing injuries and material damage. Whereas Yomyatkzefeh page said that two people were killed and at least 50 were injured, let alone the massive devastation of houses and property following the fall of a homemade rocket on Ruken al-Din, it described and posted a [video footage](#) showing smoke rising and showed significant material damage affected to civilian's houses caused by the fall of what it said to be a homemade rocket. Moreover, it [mentioned](#) that the child Omar Oda Bashy, had died after that because of his wounds caused by that incident. The page also [reported](#) that a rocket missile had fallen on the intensive care unit of the Medical Surgery Center located in Baghdad Street, causing material damage.

In addition, February 24, 2018, witnessed a large number of shells that fell on several areas of Damascus; as [Voice of the Capital Network reported](#) that the number of the shells that had fallen that day exceeded 70 shells; they fell on different parts of Damascus and its surroundings, such as the al-Abasyeen, the Old City in Damascus, al-Qassaa, Mezzeh and Jaramana. On the other hand, [Yomyatkzefeh page](#) said seven civilians had been injured as a result of rocket shells falling on Jaramana.

On February 26, 2018, the fall of shells were renewed on neighborhoods of the Old City of Damascus, Bab Touma and al-Qassaa, but no casualties recorded according to [Voice of the Capital Network](#).

[Yomyatkzefeh page](#) said three shells fell in the vicinity of Al-Hayat Hospital in al-Adawi area but no casualties recorded. Besides it [reported](#) that another missile fell in the vicinity of the Institute of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering located on the road to Damascus International Airport, causing material damage.

The situation continued as it was until the following day i.e. 27 February 2018; [Voice of the Capital Network](#) said that mortar shells hit areas of Jaramana, al-Abasyeen, Dahiyat al-Assad, leaving at least six injuries. Whereas [Yomyatkzefeh page](#) mentioned that one person was killed and five others injured as a result of mortar shells falling on Dweilaa, [besides](#) that two mortar shells fell on al-Qazzaz neighborhood south of Damascus, but no further information was received.

March 2018 arrived carrying more shells falling heavily on various parts of Damascus and its outskirts. On March 1, 2018, three people were injured following two mortar shells falling on Bab al-Salam area in the Old City of Damascus, according to [Voice of the Capital Network](#).

On March 5, 2018, several shells fell in the areas surrounding Ibn Sina Hospital, Bab al-Salam and Dweilaa, injuring some civilians as well as causing material damage, according to [Voice of the Capital Network](#).



In addition, on March 6, 2018, seven people were injured, following the rocket missiles fell on Jaramana area, according to [Yomyatkzefeh page](#), which also [reported](#) that another shell fell in Dweilaa area causing material damage.

On March 7, 2018, four people were injured due to rocket shells falling on Bab Touma, according to [Yomyatkzefeh page](#).

On March 8, 2018 Shelling Bab Touma and Bab-Sharqi was renewed leaving material damage, [as mentioned by Voice of the Capital Network](#); it also [reported](#) that on March 9, 2018, several injuries were recorded following the falling of rocket shells on neighborhoods and regions of Ruken al-Din, Jaramana, Bab Touma, al-Qassaa, and the Old City of Damascus.

March 11, 2018 witnessed the death of four civilians and injury of six others as a result of a missile falling on a bus transporting civilians in Jaramana area, [as reported by Yomyatkzefeh page](#), which also said that six people were injured by a rocket missile falling on a taxi in al-Malki district. Moreover, it [said](#) that the young man Mohammad Ali Rida had been killed because of mortar shells falling on the Old City of Damascus.

On 13 March 2018, [Yomyatkzefeh page](#) reported that two persons had been injured because a number of shells that fell in the regions and neighborhoods of the Old City of Damascus and al-Qassaa. But Voice of the Capital Network [said](#) that on March 15, 2018, more than 10 civilians were injured when mortar shells fell on al-Bahsa area.

Shelling Bab Touma was renewed on March 15, 2018, according to [Yomyatkzefeh page](#), which also [reported](#) that on the same day, three persons were injured after a rocket missile fell in al-Bahsa area located in the middle of Damascus.

On March 17, 2018, 15 people were injured after several rocket shells fell in Ruken al-Din, Midan, al-Zahira and Jaramana, [as mentioned by Voice of the Capital Network](#).

Moreover, on March 20, 2018, Yomyatkzefeh page mentioned that a woman and two children had been injured due to the fall of a missile in Mezzeh neighborhood, and published a [video footage](#) showing smoke rising in Mezzeh neighborhood following the fall of a missile. The same day witnessed a horrific massacre following two rocket missiles fell on a public market in Kashkoul area located in Jaramana, and claimed lives of more than 30 people plus dozens injured, according to Yomyatkzefeh page, which posted a [video footage](#) showing the aftermath. In addition, the page [documented](#) identities of some civilians who were killed in this massacre, they were Ahmed Badawiyah, Adam Badawiyah, Rose Ezra, Ahmed Terki, Ahmed Mohammed, Yamamah al-Habbal, Talal Nador, Nourreddin Hassan and Botros Zekeimi).

On March 22, 2018, missiles fell on various areas in Damascus and its surrounding, such as neighborhoods of al-Thawra Street, Arnous, al-Mojtahed and al-Abed Street, [as mentioned by Yomyatkzefeh page](#). It also mentioned that one of the shells fell on the al-Hal market (grocery



market) near al-Thawra Street, and posted [a video footage](#) showing moments when the missile fell on al-Hal market. On March 24, 2018, one person killed and others wounded when a mortar shell fell on a gym in the middle of Damascus, [according to Voice of the Capital Network](#).

There was a relative lull in Damascus neighborhoods, from March 25, 2018 to April 6, 2018, but after that, missiles started to come the front again in conjunction with negotiations for a ceasefire between the Russian side from one hand, and Jaysh al-Islam faction on the other hand. On April 7, 2018, six people, including a girl and two women, were killed and dozens wounded due to rocket missiles falling on neighborhoods of Damascus, the Syrian capital. [Smart News Agency](#) stated that the Red Crescent had responded to reports of shells falling in the vicinity of Umayyad Square and neighborhoods of al-Rabweh, Abu Remmaneh, al-Mazraa and al-Shahbandar; Raed Salhani, director of the Voice of the Capital Network confirmed this information and spoke to STJ about the bombing operations in Damascus and its surrounding in parallel with the military campaign launched by Syrian regular forces on Eastern Ghouta Saying:

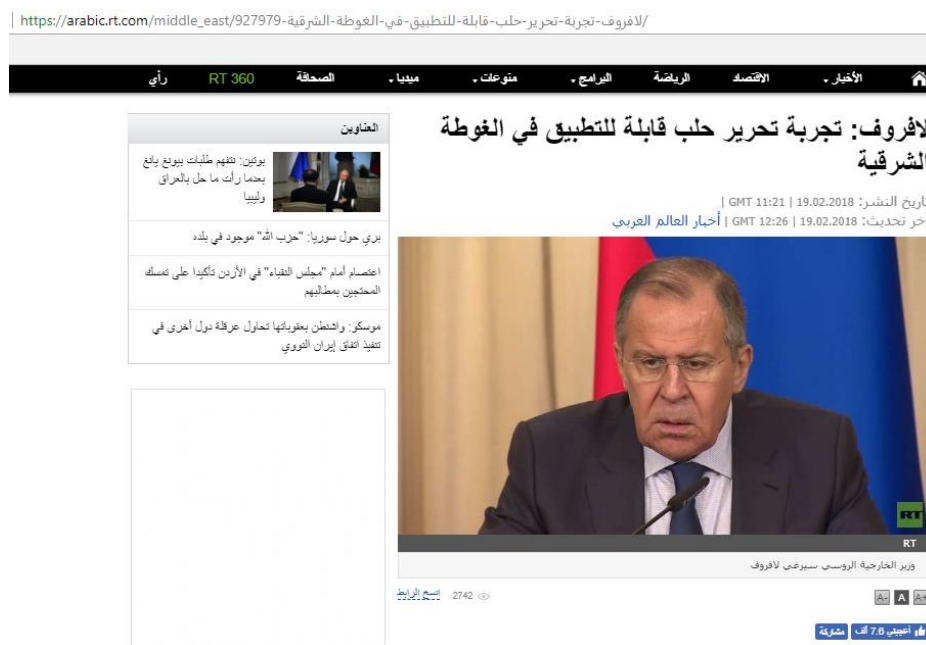
"During this period, Damascus city was exposed to a major bombing campaign; the shelling focused on neighborhoods and areas of the Old City of Damascus, Bab Touma, al-Qassaa, Osh al-Warwar and Jaramana, along with al-Mojtahed Hospital in Damascus, since it was the main hospital where the dead and wounded were transported to, as well as to Tishreen Military Hospital. Generally, the bombardment caused many civilian wounds and deaths and the source of bombing was the armed opposition-controlled areas in Eastern Ghouta, mainly the areas held by al-Nusra Front, Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya, Faylaq al-Rahman, which fires missiles from both cities of Arbin and Wadi Ein Tarma. Although these factions denied shelling Damascus by missiles, but reliable sources within Eastern Ghouta had confirmed that those parties bombed Damascus on a daily basis. However, The Russian warplanes targeted for many times the launching pad of these missile in Eastern Ghouta, and killed many elements of these factions, knowing that Damascus was not subjected to any wrong artillery shelling by the regime forces during this period except once or twice."

Raed Salhani indicated that one of the most fiercest massacres that took place in Damascus in that period was the massacre of "Kashkoul", which was committed in Jaramana area on March 20, 2018, and claimed lives of about 40 people after shelling a public market with a homemade missile. He also mentioned that there was information stressing that Faylaq al-Rahman had launched the rocket specifically from Zamalka city.



I. First week incidents (18 to 24 February 2018):

During the first half of February 2018, pro-government forces and militias mobilized a very large number of vehicles and soldiers on several adjacent points to Eastern Ghouta aiming at controlling it. On February 18, 2018, began shelling Eastern Ghouta cities and towns by rocket launchers, however, as of February 19, 2018, they had shelled Eastern Ghouta in an unprecedented manner, and had flown to carry out intensive raids on most of the cities and towns of Ghouta, using various types of weapons, and military operations coincided with the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, dated February 19, 2018, in which he said that “[experience in liberating Aleppo is applicable in Eastern Ghouta](#)”



A shot taken from the video of the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's statement on Eastern Ghouta cited by [Russia Today TV](#).

[The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic \(IICI\) had issued a special report](#) on the military operations that had taken place in the eastern parts of Aleppo city on February 2, 2017, which led to the Syrian regular forces supported with Russian aviation and allied militias' control over all areas which were held by the Syrian armed opposition forces such as Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham/HTS and other jihadist factions, the commission said:



“The Battle for Aleppo was a stage of relentless violence, where civilians from both sides fall, as a part of the strategy of pro-government forces to force surrender, these forces cordoned off the eastern part of Aleppo in late July 2016 and sieged civilians who didn’t have adequate food or medical supplies. Between July and December 2016, the Syrian and Russian forces conducted daily air strikes that killed hundreds of people and rendered hospitals, schools and markets to rubble. Russian forced hit residential areas with chlorine bombs, killing hundreds of civilian. The evacuation from the eastern part of Aleppo city was tantamount to forcible deportation, and thousands of civilians were left in a serious situation. While many civilians were allowed to leave for the western part of Aleppo, others were transferred to Idlib, where they lacked adequate living conditions.”

1. Dire human conditions and infrastructure targeting:

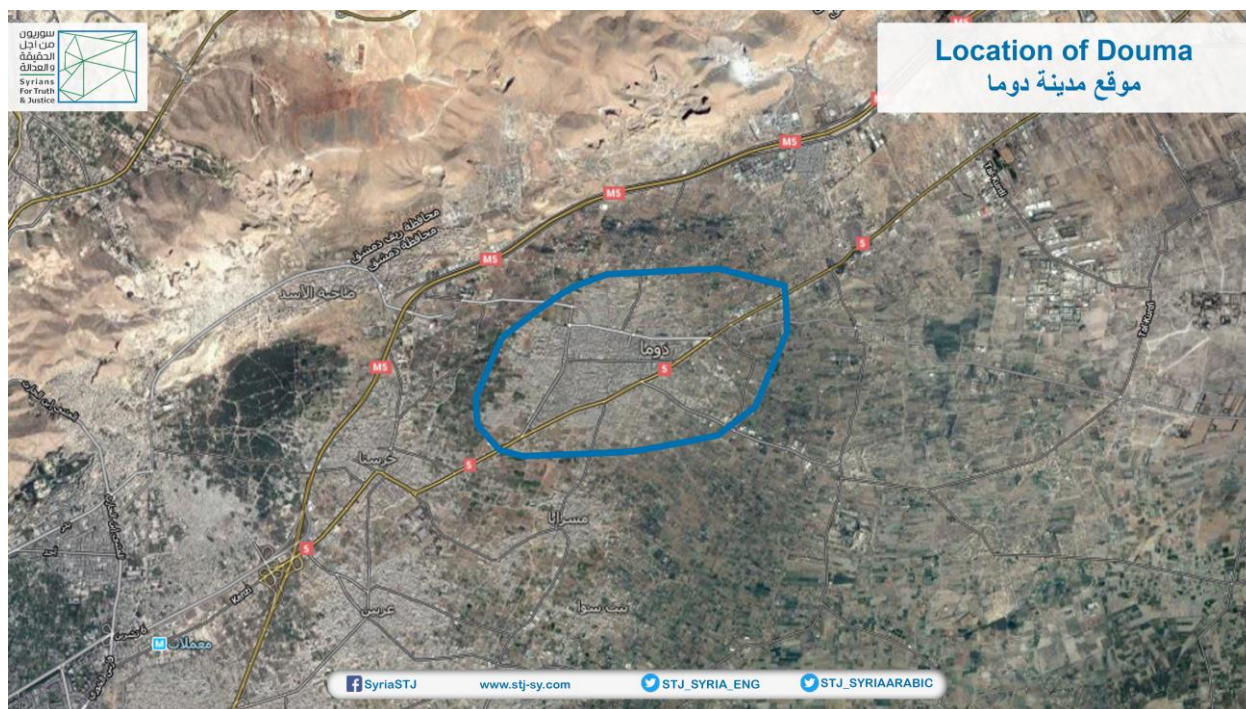
On February 19, 2018, the regular forces began shelling most areas of Eastern Ghouta by warplanes and helicopters; dropping nearly 25 barrel bombs on most of the Ghouta areas. The death toll in whole Eastern Ghouta is expected to be well over 100 people besides more than 300 injuries. Syrian regular forces also targeted infrastructure in Eastern Ghouta areas on that day, such as hospitals, livestock and several schools, according to a report released by STJ, which entitled "[As If it’s Doomsday! Fact Sheet on Recent Massacres Committed in Eastern Ghouta that Exposes to One of the Most Brutal and Violent Attacks](#)" .

On the same day at 10:00 a.m., a warplane believed to be Russian bombed "Al-Manfoush company" warehouse in Mesraba village, one of the most important food warehouses in Eastern Ghouta, which served as the food basket that cover the food needs of people. The warehouses include one of the most important bread ovens serving people of Eastern Ghouta. This incident was followed by a similar one, on February 20, 2018, which was the targeting of one of the main bread ovens in Saqba town, with three rockets at once which resulted in its total destruction, making the townspeople face a great difficulty in getting one loaf of bread, according to an earlier report prepared by STJ, which entitled "[Targeting Ovens in Eastern Ghouta Deprives Tens of Thousands Residents from Bread](#)".



Image shows an aspect of the destruction caused to Douma city, following violent bombardment of February 19, 2018.

Photo credit: activists from Douma.





Analysis of visual evidence.

Following these violent bombardments, thousands of besieged civilians started to dig underground tunnels, hoping to survive , these tunnels lack the minimum conditions of life, as the vision of sunlight turned into a mere luxury for all the people of Eastern Ghouta, according to another report prepared by STJ entitled "[Tunneling Underground Becomes the Only Hope to Survive in Eastern Ghouta](#)".

The humanitarian situation got worse in whole Eastern Ghouta, with launching the latest military campaign, where the area was completely besieged, which increased the suffering of many civilians trapped in Eastern Ghouta because of the lack of humanitarian and UN aid provided to them. Noting that Eastern Ghouta had been under intensified blockade by Syrian regular forces for more than four years, according to a report prepared by STJ under entitled "[Scantiness of Humanitarian Assistance Compounds the Tragedy of about 400 Thousand People Trapped in Eastern Ghouta](#)".



2. Targetting medical facilities in Kafr Batna, Hamoryah and Saqba:

On February 20, 2018, pro-government forces, bombed several medical facilities in Eastern Ghouta, most notably a field hospital, which was originally a tuberculosis hospital, in Kafr Batna town, where a warplane believed to be Russian targeted it directly with several thermobaric rockets, and rendered it inoperable. Ayman Issa, a doctor from Kafr Batna town, confirmed this by saying:

"The hospital was targeted in the morning, where the military aircraft carried out several air strikes with thermobaric rockets, causing damage to large sections of the hospital which was providing health care to most of the surrounding areas residents. Thank God there were no injuries among the medical staff, but the hospital was completely rendered inoperable."

Dar al-Shifa hospital, in Hamoryah city, was also one of the targeted hospitals on February 20, 2018, where a regular forces helicopter dropped a number of barrel bombs directly on it. Omar Arbini, a native of Hamoryah city confirmed that by saying:

"Residential neighborhoods in Hamoryah were targeted daily with various types of weapons by Syrian regime forces and their allies. It was the most targeted area due to its position in the middle of Eastern Ghouta. At 10:00 a.m. on February 20, 2018, Dar al-Shifa hospital was directly targeted by helicopters, so people in the vicinity rushed to transfer the injured to other medical points, and while they were gathering in the vicinity of the hospital, the warplanes returned and fired a high-explosive missile at the same place, killing the media activist Abdul Rahman Yaseen immediately, and injuring many of the hospital's medical staff members, whom we couldn't count then, because of the difficult situation and the intensity of bombardment. Targeting Dar al-Shifa hospital and the roads leading to it has never stopped, it has lasted for more than two weeks since the campaign began, almost on a daily basis."

The "Saqba Surgical Hospital" in Saqba town was also bombed on February 20, 2018, where pro-government forces continued to target the most basic facilities on which the people of Eastern Ghouta depend, according to Dr. Abu Issam, from Saqba, who spoke to STJ saying:



"When the Syrian regime started its campaign on Eastern Ghouta, the numbers of the injured began to increase gradually, especially after intensive shelling and direct targeting of residential communities. The hospitals were overcrowded, and the scarcity of medicines and medical supplies has contributed to the alarmingly high numbers of victims, I was working at Saqba Surgical Hospital when military aircraft directly targeted it at about 3:00 p.m. on February 20, 2018. The Syrian regime and its allies focused their bombardment on the hospital and re-attacked it the next day, on February 21, 2018, by military aircraft and helicopters, at the very same hour of the previous attack, which seemed to be a scheduled timing, aiming to destroy the hospital and the surrounding area to render it inoperable."





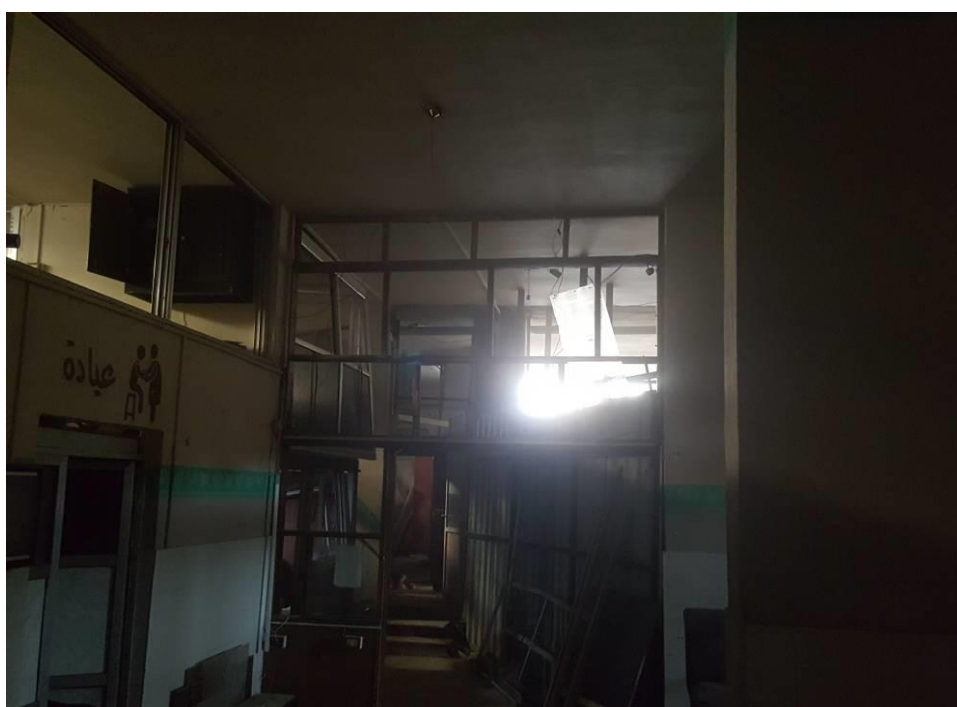


Image shows a side of the destruction and damage caused to the Saqba Surgical Hospital being targeted by Syrian regular forces on February 20, 2018.

Photo credit: Dr. Abu Issam al-Souri.

Dr. Abu Issam said that al-Zahra Maternity Hospital in Saqba town also was not spared from the Syrian regular forces' bombardment on February 20, 2018, where he confirmed that the helicopter had targeted the Maternity Hospital at 4:00 p.m., rendering it inoperable.



3. Heavy bombardment on residential neighborhoods and shelters:

The hospitals were not the only target of the pro-government forces' attacks, as it targeted every living thing that moveth upon the earth in Eastern Ghouta, where on February 20, 2018, Saqba town witnessed a violent bombing campaign by warplanes and helicopters with various types of weapons, including barrel bombs and high explosive rockets. Muhammad al-Masri, a resident of Saqba, said in this connection:

"On February 20, 2018, Saqba town was targeted with all types of weapons, which led people to take refuge inside the basements and tunnels they had already dug, but this has not save them from death, as the military aviation concentrated its bombardment on shelters and cellars, with the intention of causing the greatest possible losses in civilian ranks" .

Al-Masri added that February 20, 2018, was a bloody day for the people of Saqba, especially since the warplanes and helicopters did not leave the city's airspace on that day, bombing residential neighborhoods, which resulted in the kill of nine people, including children and women.

STJ field researcher has documented the names of those killed in Saqba town following the violent bombardment of February 20, 2018, they were:

1. Ala'a Dhabian.
2. Khaled Ghazi al-Quatli.
3. Abdul Rahman al-Quatli.
4. Firas al-Shayeb.
5. Hisham Eid (a nurse).
6. Bilal Ajaj.
7. Khawla al-Rihani.
8. Khawla al-Rihani's two children -daughters.
9. Judy Hussam al-Harili (a girl child)

A [video footage](#) published by the Ghouta Media Centre showed what it said was the moment of targeting Saqba town by a helicopter using barrel bombs on February 20, 2018.



شاهد فيديو يظهر الطيران المروحي أثناء استهدافه لمدينة سقيا بالبراميل المتفجرة 2018/2/20

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... فيديو يظهر لحظة استهداف الطيران المروحي لمدينة سقيا في الغوطة الشرقية بريف دمشق

A shot taken from the [footage](#) published by the Ghouta Media Center on February 20, 2018, which showed a helicopter flying in the sky of Eastern Ghouta, according to the source.

On the same day, at approximately 4:00 p.m., a Syrian regular forces' helicopter committed another massacre, by killing up to 50 civilians, mostly women and children in Beit Sawa village, where it dropped two barrel bombs on a building, in which a large number of people were sheltering inside its basement, according to a [report](#) prepared by STJ.

It is noteworthy that this incident, which claimed the lives of scores of children, came in conjunction with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) issuance of a [statement](#), specifically on February 20, 2018, that did not carry any words, through which it expressed bad conditions in Eastern Ghouta, due to the kill of many children since the beginning of the last military campaign. The statement said: "There are no words that can do justice to the dead children, their mothers and their parents".



4. A horrific massacre in Kafr Batna claiming the lives of more than twenty people:

On 21 February 2018, a settlement agreement was reached between the Syrian regular forces and Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya movement in Harasta city, after which Syrian regular forces concentrated their shelling on the areas of the Central Sector under the control of the The al-Rahman Legion, which includes Kafr Batna town, where it witnessed an unprecedented and violent bombing campaign that day, it was also targeted by heavy artillery, helicopters and military aircraft. The places that were shelled that day varied that it included the popular market and its neighborhood, killing more than 20 people and injuring more than 100 others, according to Ayman al-Issa a doctor from Kafr Batna, where he said:

"The civil defense and ambulances worked to transfer the injured and recovered the dead, while the rescue teams were unable to intervene until almost half an hour after the bombardment began, due to the intensity of the continued bombing on the popular market and its neighborhood, where the injured were transported to the field hospital, which was not well-equipped, because it was targeted a day before and rendered inoperable. However, we did what we had to do as doctors. Most of the hospital rooms were converted into operation and emergency rooms due to frequent injuries, where more than 20 deaths and up to 100 injures were documented, and these numbers were likely to rise due to the seriousness of the injuries and the large number of missing persons who were still trapped under the rubble" .

According to Issa, doctors performed about 60 surgical surgeries on February 21, 2018, as the work was cumbersome and tiring for all physicians and injured persons, due to the unavailability of medical equipment, and added:

We kept working until we helped the last injured. I think, the time was 10:00 p.m. when we finished the last surgical operation, noting that the bombardment on Kafr Batna began at 9:00 a.m. The Regime forces used barrel bombs and rockets in bombing Kafr Batna, Hamoryah and al-Marj area" .

A [footage](#) broadcasted by the Ghotia Media Centre showed an aspect of the devastation caused to Kafr Batna town following heavy shelling on February 21, 2018. Another [footage](#) broadcasted by the Centre on the same day showed the moments of bombing Kafr Batna by military aircraft.



الغوطة الشرقية كفرطنا الدمار الكبير جراء غارات الطيران الروسي

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A shot taken from the previous [footage](#) (1) showing an aspect of the devastation caused to Kafr Batna, following the heavy bombardment of February 21, 2018.



#شاهد لحظة استهداف مدينة كفرطنا بالغارات الجوية من الطيران الروسي

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Another shot taken from the previous [footage](#) (2) showing moments of bombing Kafr Batna, on February 21, 2018.



شاهد لحظة استهداف مدينة كفر بطنا بالغارات الجوية من الطيران الروسي #

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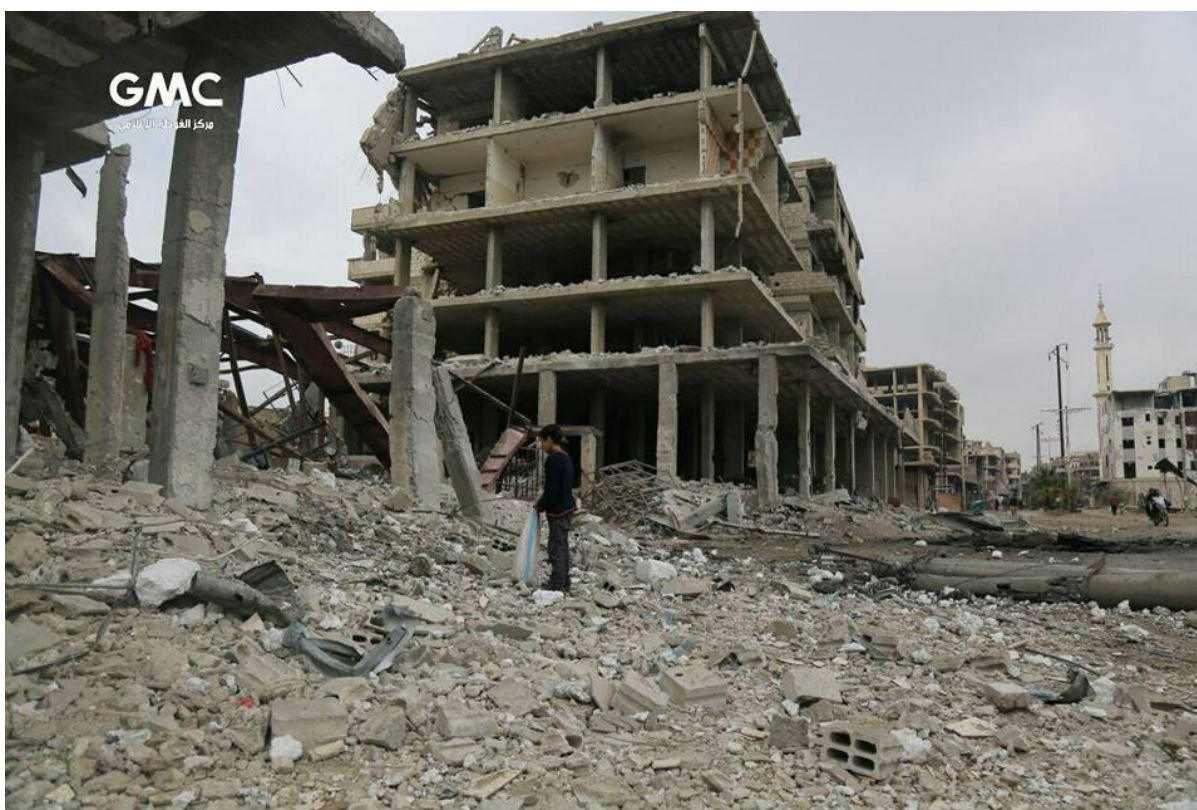
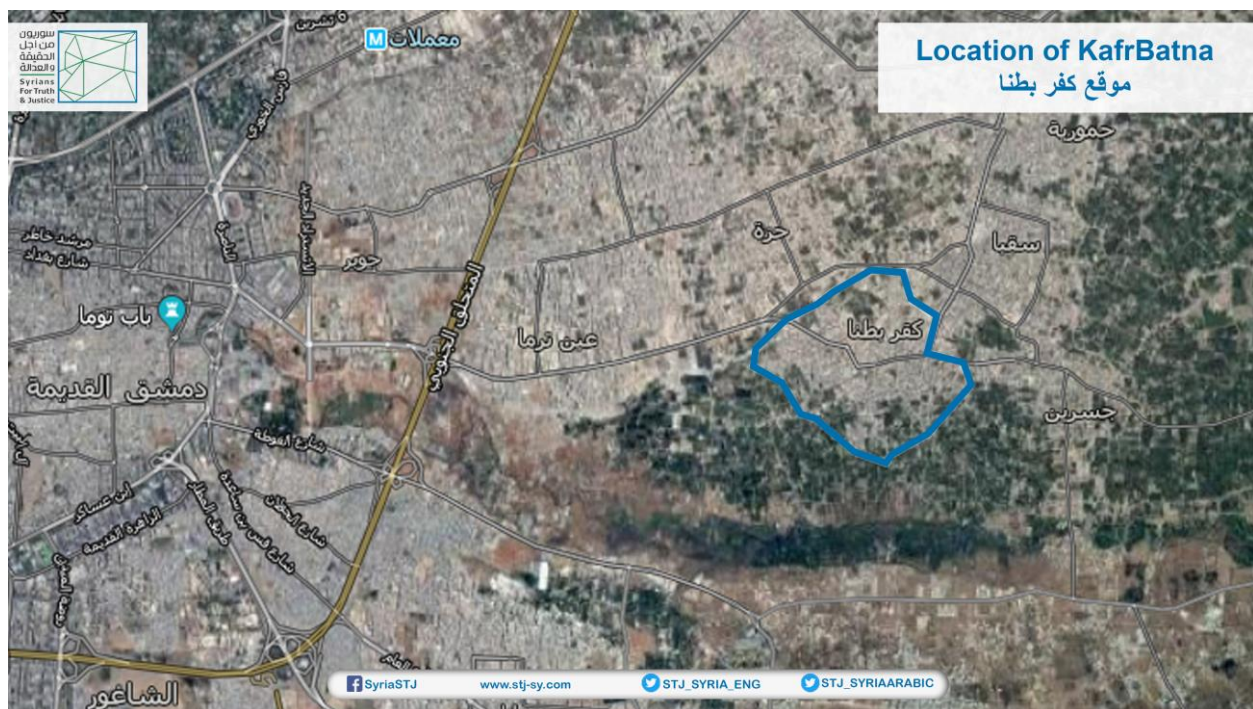


Image shows the devastation caused by bombing Kafr Batna during February 2018.

Photo credit: [Ghota Media Centre](#).





Analysis of visual evidence.



5. Continued bombardment on medical facilities:

Syrian regular forces did not stop bombing medical facilities and everything that would keep civilians alive in Eastern Ghouta, where on February 21, 2018, the field hospital in Jisreen village was directly targeted with thermobaric weapon, which rendered it completely inoperable, and injured more than 10 people, according to "Shoa'a al-Shams", an activist from Jisreen, who said:

"The Regime forces Warplanes targeted the only field hospital in Jisreen directly and rendered it completely inoperable. This bombardment coincided with the targeting of the village's civil defense center, as well as the ambulance center just a few days before targeting the hospital. This was a systematic military operation to target medical and ambulance teams directly" .

The medical center in Madira village was also one of the facilities that had been bombed on February 21, 2018. Hussam al-Ali, director of the media office of Madira's medical center, confirmed that by saying that on the same day they received a warning from the military aviation observatories, stating that the medical center of Madira would be the next target, and in this respect he goes on to say:

"We immediately removed some of the center's light equipment and placed it in the basements of the premises adjacent to the center. In minutes a warplane bombed the building directly, causing it a massive destruction. Medical work inside Eastern Ghouta was more like committing suicide, that when any medical center opens and starts to receive the injured, it becomes vulnerable to direct target. However, we managed to withdraw some equipment from the rubble of the targeted building and then activated one of the emergency rooms in another building, in an attempt to save the lives of as many injured as possible " .

6. Bombing residential communities in Hamoryah and Kafr Batna:

On February 21, 2018, the military aircraft of the Syrian regular forces targeted residential neighborhoods in Hamoryah city with six high explosive rockets, causing the destruction of an entire residential neighborhood, according to an earlier report by STJ entitled "[No Houses to Shelter Them Anymore, Flash Report Documents Destruction of People's Homes In Eastern Ghouta- Damascus Countryside since February 2018 Campaign](#)" .



Image shows an aspect of the devastation caused to civilian houses in Hamoryah city, following the bombardment of March 2018.

Photo credit: STJ

The following day, specifically on February 22, 2018, Kafr Batna town witnessed a further massacre of civilians following the bombardment of residential communities in the town by military aircraft, causing scores of civilians dead or wounded, according to "Shoua'a al-Shams", an activist from Kafr Batna, who said:

"Kafr Batna was bombed with all types of weapons that day, such as high-explosive rockets and barrel bombs, and we face a great difficulty in counting the numbers of dead due to the difficulty in moving between one region and another, as most medical points in the town were completely out of use. About 150 injuries, and more than 30 deaths were documented in Kafr Batna alone, since the start of the military campaign by pro-government forces, who continued to target all vital and residential facilities as well as popular markets in Kafr Batna, in order to exert pressure on civilians to surrender and get out of their towns, and that's what really happened after the wanton and hysterical bombardment the town has witnessed."



7. Incendiary weapons on Hamoryah and Saqba:

On February 22, 2018, precisely at 9:00 p.m., Hamoryah city was bombed with rockets loaded with weapons loaded with phosphorus-like incendiary substance. On the following day, at 10 p.m., the same incendiary weapons hit it, where many houses and properties of many civilians were set on fire. Saqba town also had a large share of the incendiary weapons attacks on 22 and 23 February, which led to the outbreak of fires in houses and the injury of a civilian.



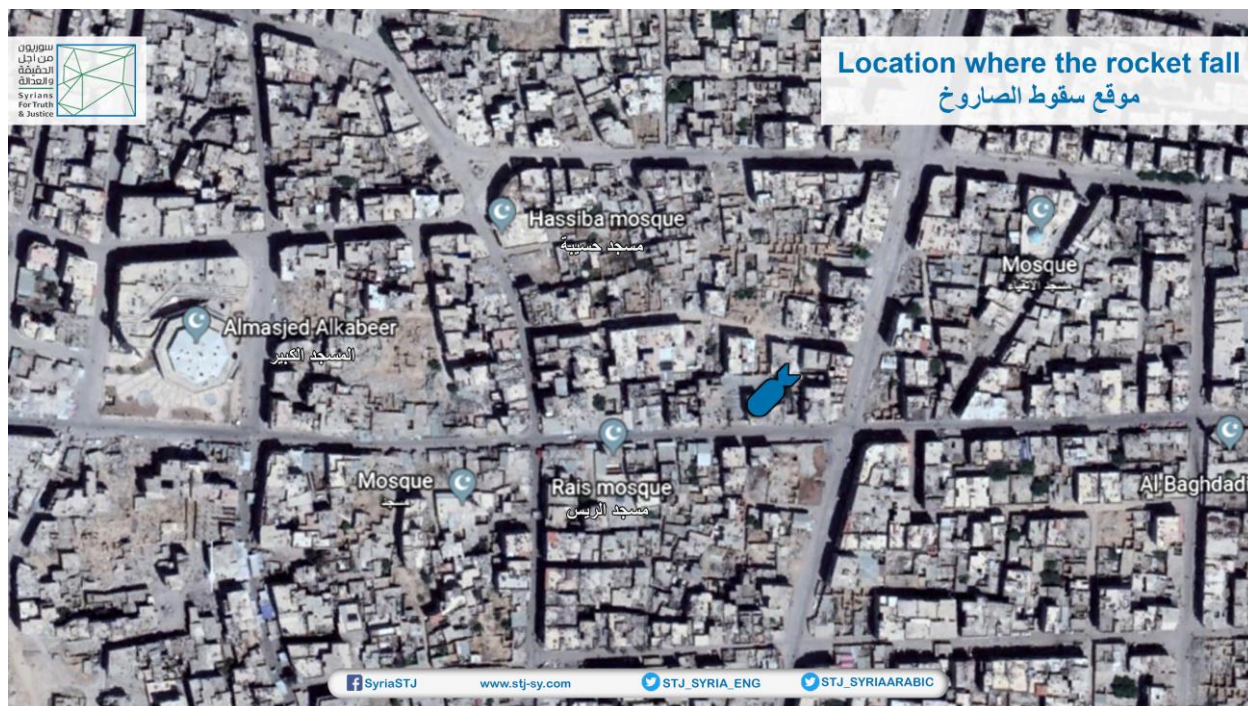
Image of the remnants of the rocket loaded with incendiary substance, landed on Hamoryah city on February 22, 2018.
Photo credit: STJ.

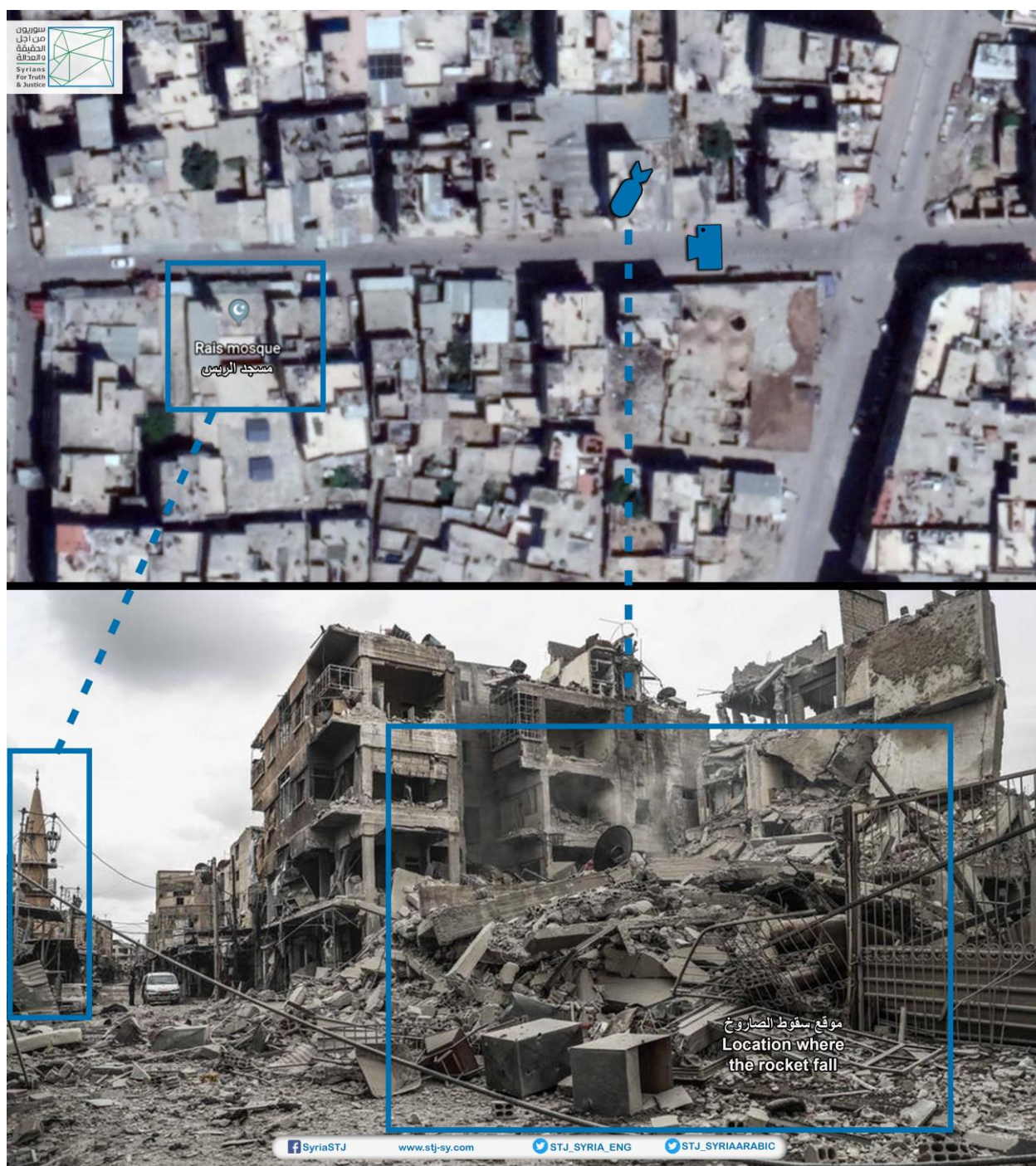
These military operations included the dropping of flyers by Syrian regular forces on February 22, 2018 on Eastern Ghouta especially Douma city, those flyers contained threats to civilians there, pushing them to leave their cities and towns. Dropping flyers coincided with violent shelling of those areas, according to an earlier report prepared by STJ which entitled; [“Masked compliance; The use of flyers by the Syrian regime, A Special Document Providing Examples of Threatening "Flyers " Dropped by the Syrian Regime Forces over Eastern Ghouta People Concurrently with Barbaric Bombardments - A Joint Report between Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ and the Syrian Legal Development”](#).



Image shows an aspect of the destruction caused to Douma city, following the violent shelling of February 2018.

Photo credit: the media activist Muhammad Badrah.





Analysis of visual evidence.



II. Second week incidents (February 25, 2018 to March 3, 2018):

The military campaign entered its second week and the pro-government forces continued to carry out violent attacks on residential neighborhoods and popular markets, using many types of weapons, and they managed to take control over al-Shefonia town, which was under the control of the Army of Islam, on March 3, 2018:

1. The continued killing of civilians despite the UN Security Council's resolution to cease fire:

Despite the UN Security Council's adoption of Resolution No. (2401), of February 24, 2018, for the cessation of hostilities throughout Syria for at least 30 consecutive days, the Syrian regular forces continued to carry out the bombing campaign, using various types of weapons such as chemical weapons. At approximately 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 25, 2017, al-Shefonia town-east of Ghouta which inhabited by about 230 families was targeted with toxic gas, which resulted in many civilian casualties and killed at least two children. The chemical attack is the fourth consecutive one since the beginning of the year 2018, according to a report prepared by STJ entitled "[Syrian Forces Bombard Eastern Ghouta with Chemical Weapons for the Fourth Consecutive Time since the Beginning of 2018](#)".

On February 26, 2018, Syrian regular forces continued their military escalation on al-Shefonia town, at 6:00 a.m., the military aircraft fired incendiary rockets at al-Shefonia town, directly targeting the local council headquarters, which was an agricultural school previously, resulting in the death of seven civilians sheltering inside the headquarters, according to "Muhammad al-Jamous", a member of the local council in al-Shefonia town, who said:

"The local council building was one of the best fortified buildings, it was built from reinforced concrete, but nevertheless the rockets drilled into the roof reaching down the basement where six civilians and a child were sheltering in, all of whom were burnt alive. My brother was one of them, I risked and went to check on him that day, but I found him turned to a charred corpse with the rest who were with him."

The massacres did not stop despite the [announcement](#) of a daily humanitarian truce in Eastern Ghouta, which was made by Russia on February 26, 2018. The truce was supposed to take effect on February 27, 2018, starting at 9:00 a.m. to 14:00 p.m., but the military Air Force Syrian regulars continued their bombardment on the city of Douma on March 2, 2018, exactly at 11:00 a.m., i.e. within the time allotted for the truce. Pro-government warplanes carried out two air raids on residential buildings in the center of the town, resulting in numerous civilian casualties, followed by heavy bombardment by ground-to-ground missiles on al-Bitwana area the al-Dairya



area. The military aircraft re-bombed residential buildings with high-explosive rockets, causing more civilian casualties that day.

STJ field researcher documented the names of some of the civilian victims who fell in Douma on March 2, 2018, they are:

1. Omar Mahmoud Ayoub.
2. Mahmoud Ataya Abdel Wahhab.
3. Subhi Abdullah Sneer.
4. Fahed Ayoub.
5. Ahmed Ezzo Halawa.
6. Hiyam Saleem Hamada.
7. Aziza Mahmoud Hatem.
8. Unidentified man.
9. Unidentified man.

A [footage](#) published by the Civil Defense in Damascus countryside also showed an aspect of evacuating the wounded, following the aerial bombardment on residential neighborhoods of Douma city on March 2, 2018.



A shot taken from the previous [footage](#), showing an aspect of evacuating the wounded, following the aerial bombardment on residential neighborhoods of Douma city on March 2, 2018.



III. Third week incidents (4 to 10 March 2018):

The brutal bombardment on whole Eastern Ghouta cities and towns did not subside during the third week of the campaign, as Syrian regular forces continued to bomb neighbourhoods and civilian communities killing and injuring many. On the other hand, the regular forces have followed their military progress on the ground and managed to take control of Beit Sawa village on March 7, 2018.

1. More than 27 civilian deaths by bombing residential neighbourhoods in Douma:

On March 4, 2018, the military aircraft focused its bombardment again on residential neighbourhoods in Douma, killing more than 27 and injuring dozens that day alone. Muhammad Sleek, from Douma, said in this connection:

“That day, at 6:00 a.m. hell returned to Douma again with the return of the warplanes to bombard the city's neighbourhoods, let alone of the reconnaissance flight, which did not leave the sky of Douma. At 12:00 p.m., the city was shelled with rocket launchers, which were scattered in various neighbourhoods, and with heavy artillery stationed at the mountains overlooking the city. Air strikes had never stopped that day, they lasted until late at night. High-explosive rockets were not the only used weapons, as at 8:00 p.m., the warplanes hit the streets around the al-Jala'a market with rockets loaded with napalm, causing massive fires, along with the fall of many civilian casualties.”

STJ field researcher documented the names of some of the civilian deaths, including women and children, fallen on March 4, 2018, as a result of shelling Douma city, they are:

1. Ahmed al-Haweed.
2. Omar Ali Ghannoum.
3. Anwar Shahada Aibour.
4. Safa'a Saleem Idrees.
5. Ya'rub Muhammad al-Hakeem (a child).
6. Muhammad Bassam al-Kharj (a child)
7. Samah Oyoum (a girl child)
8. Muhammad Ghannoum.
9. Sarah Marwan Rashid.



10. Wael Saleem Badawia (a child).
11. Adnan Ali al-Buaidani.
12. Subhi Younis al-Rizz.
13. Muhammad Younis al-Rizz.
14. Muhammad Kheir Anwar al-Rizz.
15. Ibrahim al-Mashout.
16. Waheed Ahmed Ghadban.
17. Tawfiq Hasan all-Shami.
18. Qusai Muhammad Abdel Qader (a child)
19. Ghazal Muhammad Ghazi (a girl child)
20. Kasem Muhammad Ghazi (a child).
21. Ghadeer Barkhash (a girl child)
22. Lana Muhammad Abdel Qader (a girl child)
23. Abdul Rahman Yaseen Hamdou (a child)
24. Kasem Muhammad al-Sheikh Bazeena (a child).
25. Maher Ka'aka.
26. Unidentified man.
27. Unidentified man.

A [footage](#) published by of the Civil Defence in Damascus countryside showed, what it said, the moment of targeting the civil defence teams in Douma, in the course of the evacuation of civilians, following the shelling carried out on Douma on March 4, 2018.

2. A Doomsday in Jisreen:

Jisreen village also had a large share of the pro-government bombardment and massacres resulted from it, where on March 5, 2018, the village witnessed a bloody day, following the bombing of residential communities with various types of weapons, which resulted in the death of 11 civilians and the injury of others. "Bassam Darwish", a resident of Jisreen said:

"Jisreen village has been targeted since the start of the military campaign by all types of weapons, but I have never witnessed a day like March 5, 2018, it was like the doomsday, where at 3:00 a.m. the Russian air force launched its raids on the village, targeting residential communities with four air strikes using high-explosive rockets. The interval between raids was not long, which resulted in more deaths and injuries. The number of raids launched on the village that day alone were about 15 raids, which directly targeted residential communities, destroying entire buildings over their occupants' heads" .



Darwish added that the following day was no less onerous on Jisreen village, where on March 6, 2018, the military aircraft re-committed massacres in the town starting at 6:00 a.m., where it bombed the residential communities again, indicating that the number of raids reached up to 10 raids on that day alone, each of which was carried high-explosive rockets .

STJ field researcher documented the names of some civilian casualties fall by bombing Jisreen on 5 and 6 March 2018, they are:

1. Wafa'a al-Khateeb.
2. Naser Kabboush (1 year old)
3. Kinana Kabboush (a girl child)
4. Reem al-Tinawi.
5. Wafeeqa Darwish.
6. Rama al-Tinawi.
7. Haneen Sadqa.
8. Kasem al-Hamad.
9. Haneefa al-Khawama.
10. Muhammad Sam Darbal (a child).
11. Haneen Darbal (a girl child).
12. Muhammad Khairi al-Nabki.
13. Mahmoud al-Nabki.
14. Abdel Sattar Darwish.
15. Amer Talal al-Nabki (a child).
16. Maher Talal al-Nabki.



Image shows some of the child victims who were killed as a result of bombing Jisreen on March 6, 2018.

Photo credit: [Jisreen Media Office](#).



Another image shows some victims who were killed as a result of bombing Jisreen on March 6, 2018.

Photo credit: [Jisreen Media Office](#).



It is worth mentioning that shelling Jisreen village on March 5, 2018 was coincided with the [entry of a UN humanitarian aid convoy](#) into Douma city. However, Syrian government authorities removed medical and surgical supplies from the convoy, which was supposed to be directed to relief Ghouta. An official of the World Health Organization (WHO) [told Reuters](#): " All trauma (kits), surgical, dialysis sessions and insulin were rejected by security," a WHO official said by email, adding that some 70 percent of the supplies loaded on its trucks leaving its warehouses had been removed during the inspection, according to an [earlier report](#) by STJ.

Syrian regular forces continued to perpetrate massacres in Eastern Ghouta, where on March 7, 2018, they used chemical substances in bombarding residential neighbourhoods in the area between Hamoryah city and Saqba town. According to several testimonies obtained by STJ, several (Rajma) rockets have landed on the area, loaded with gas which symptoms are consistent with that of chlorine on those neighbourhoods, causing suffocation to about (70) civilians, mainly women and children, according to an earlier report by STJ entitled "[Syrian Forces Re-Use Toxic Gases in Eastern Ghouta for a Five Time in 2018](#)" .

On the same day, Syrian regular forces bombed Hamoryah city with phosphor-like and napalm-like incendiary substances. This intensive bombardment using toxic gas, killed at least 29 civilians, two of whom were burnt to death with incendiary substances, and caused suffocation to scores of civilians, besides the outbreak of fires in residential buildings, according to an earlier report prepared by STJ which entitled: "[Repeated Attacks with Incendiary Weapons, Cluster Munitions and Chemicals on Eastern Ghouta A Flash Report Documenting the events of 7 March 2018 in Hamoryah and those of 10 and 11 March 2018 in Irbin](#)"

On March 9, 2018, the second UN Aid convoy entered Douma city in Eastern Ghouta- Damascus countryside, at about 11 a.m., Damascus time. According to a member in the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), this convoy is a sequel to the previous one that entered on March 5, 2018. The current convoy carries only food items. Fourteen trucks were to be introduced, but only 13 trucks entered, as reported in an [earlier report](#) by STJ on the convoy.



3. 20 deaths in Douma City on March 10, 2018 alone:

On March 10, 2018, a helicopter of pro-government forces dropped barrel bombs on the residential areas of Douma and then proceeded to bomb the city with rocket launchers, followed by raids with incendiary weapons, resulting in the kill of more than 20 people, according to "Osama al-Omari", an activist from Douma, who said:

“At 7:00 a.m., the helicopter dropped its barrel bombs on the residential areas of Douma, and that was followed by intensive shelling by rocket launchers at all neighbourhoods of the city. At 11:30 p.m., Russian warplanes launched several raids on the city, causing the outbreak of massive fires, not to mention artillery fire. The number of raids was about 50 on that day, four of which were loaded with incendiary napalm substance, resulting in the death of more than 20 people and the injury of dozens .“

STJ field researcher documented the names of some civilian victims who were killed as a result of the bombing Douma on March 10, 2018, they are:

1. Muhammad To'uma (a child).
2. Sana'a Aibour.
3. Rana Ramadan.
4. Muhammad Rashid (a child).
5. Ahmed al-Mansi.
6. Mahmoud al-Sa'our.
7. Mustafa Thareefa.
8. Natheer Younis al-Qaseer.
9. Aref Tawfiq al-Hawri.
10. Sulaiman Khaled Abdul Ra'ouf.
11. Muhammad Saif Hijazi.
12. Hassan Muhammad al-Sarmini (a child).
13. Omar Muhammad al-Rayees.
14. Subhi Abbas.
15. Abdullah Smoud.
16. Tariq Akram Khalil.
17. Mariam al-Qaseer.
18. Nour Ibrahim al-Hawri (a girlchild).
19. Tawfiq Hatem Ward al-Sham.
20. Rabia'a Majeed al-Ajwa.



IV. Fourth week incidents (11 to 17 March 2018):

Syrian regular forces continued their heaviest military campaign on Eastern Ghouta for the fourth consecutive week, increasing the numbers of dead and injured civilians day by day. Pro-government forces managed to split Eastern Ghouta in half during this period, following the control on entire Mesraba village on March 10, 2018, Madira village on March 11, 2018, Jisreen village on March 15, 2018. In addition to the control of the Saqba and Kafr Batna towns on March 17, 2018.

1. “War of extermination” in Zamalka and Hamoryah:

Zamalka town witnessed an unprecedented military escalation, on 11,12,13,14, and 15 March, during which the pro-government forces used many types of weapons, such as barrel bombs, thermobaric rockets and cluster munitions, causing many civilian casualties killed or wounded.

According to STJ field researcher, this violent escalation followed an unofficial statements by the Negotiating Delegation in Eastern Ghouta, which addressed the armed and their families unwilling to settle with the Syrian regime, and people of the Central Sector (Hamoryah, Saqba, Kafr Batna, Hazeh and Jisreen), calling them to leave their areas towards what it called (Jobar, Ein Tarma and Zamalka) triangle, referring to it as safe and neutral area. According to several testimonies obtained by STJ, once a large number of people gathered in that area, the Syrian regular forces turned it into a target of their fire, causing more civilian casualties, according to an [earlier report](#) by STJ.

Massacres continued to occur in Eastern Ghouta, where on March 14, 2018, Hamoryah city was subjected of a violent bombing campaign, in which the Syrian regular forces followed what activists called "genocide", coinciding with the start of their land incursion, where the city was hit with more than 50 air raids laden with 30 barrel bombs, dozens of Grad rockets besides the heavy artillery shells. A shelter in the city was bombed, which resulted in the kill of a number of civilians, including women and children, according to Ahmed Issa, a son of Hamoryah city, who spoke to STJ saying:

“Hamoryah witnessed a non-stop bombardment that day which led the civilians to shelter in basements and the linked trenches they had already dug trying to survive as long as possible. However, the Syrian regime deliberately bombed basements and shelters, including a basement in al-Baladia street, which was used as a school named (al-Ma’arifa School), where



many people sheltered because it was more fortified and safer than others. However, dozens of families went down its basement, but unfortunately, it was spotted by the pro-government reconnaissance aircraft, and then targeted by a high-explosive rocket that exploded inside it directly, destroying it completely. No one was able to aid any of the injured who were sheltering inside this basement, all of them were killed, and no one was able to count the number of victims of this massacre. We all got out of the town, while those victims are still under the rubble" .

When Syrian regular forces began to advance from the eastern side of Hamoryah city on the night of Thursday, March 15, 2018, many residents were forced to flee the city, but military aircraft targeted them in the public square, injuring entire families and the defense teams were unable to reach them due to heavy shelling. The city's civil defense center was also bombed and put out of use. There is no accurate statistic on the number of deaths that day, due to the intensity of the shelling and the inability to inspect the site, but witnesses reported the death of dozen, according to STJ field researcher.

After attacking civilians in the town square, Syrian regular forces targeted Hamoryah with toxic gas, so the civilians rushed to the upper floors, but Regime warplanes attacked them once more.

Following this incursion, dozens of families attempted to flee Hamoryah towards other areas such as Zamalka and Hazeh, but military aircraft also attacked them, leaving scores of casualties dead or wounded. The civil defense teams were unable to reach them, because of the heavy bombardment, which was targeting all roads leading to Hamoryah square where civilians have gathered.

These risks prevented the remaining civilians hiding in shelters from fleeing to other areas until dawn on Thursday, March 15, 2018, when the [Syrian regular forces announced through its official news agencies](#) the opening of a crossing to let civilians out of Eastern Ghouta towards areas under their control, in particular, near the "Al-Ahlam Factory" in the Alashaary area adjacent to Hamoryah. They also announced that they would stop their military operations for several hours until civilians head towards the crossing point, after which the military campaign against the city would be re-launched, forcing a large number of civilians to move towards Regime areas and to stay at the accommodation centers in Adra town, near Damascus.



On Thursday afternoon, March 15, 2018, Hamoryah city became almost devoid of its inhabitants, who were displaced, as the Syrian regular forces managed to break into the town by road, using the fleeing civilians as human shields, which prevented The al-Rahman Legion from firing towards the Syrian regular forces, according to a statement made by "Wael Alwan", the spokesman for The al-Rahman Legion in a [video interview](#) aired on Al-Jazeera on March 15, 2018. At approximately 3:00 p.m., on Thursday, Syrian regular forces managed to take control over the entire city. In this regard, a native of Hamoryah said to STJ:

“On Thursday, 7:00 a.m., the calm began to return relatively to the city, but with the intense vigilance of the natives and great perplexity, no one knew where to head, some went towards Zamalka, and others towards Ein Tarma but the situation there wasn’t better, as they also were witnessing a constant bombardment. As for my family, we didn’t know the whereabouts of a part of it, as we did not know whether they were still in the city or left it. The next day I moved to Saqba, but it was being targeted constantly. On March 16, 2018, we decided to leave Saqba towards the accommodation centers in Adra town, because the regular army was very close and we were unable to go to The al-Rahman Legion areas for fear of targeting. On that day waves of people headed towards the Regime checkpoints, including us, we gathered in Alashaary area to be relocated to accommodation centers, but we spent a night in the farmlands there, and then we were informed that the people of Saqba and Hamoryah had to return to their homes. Upon our return we were shocked to see the area almost destroyed” .

The Revolutionary Command Council in Damascus and its Countryside issued a statement on March 15, 2018, condemning the shelling of Hamoryah city using all types of weapons in conjunction with the incursion, and the use of civilians as human shields by Syrian regular forces.

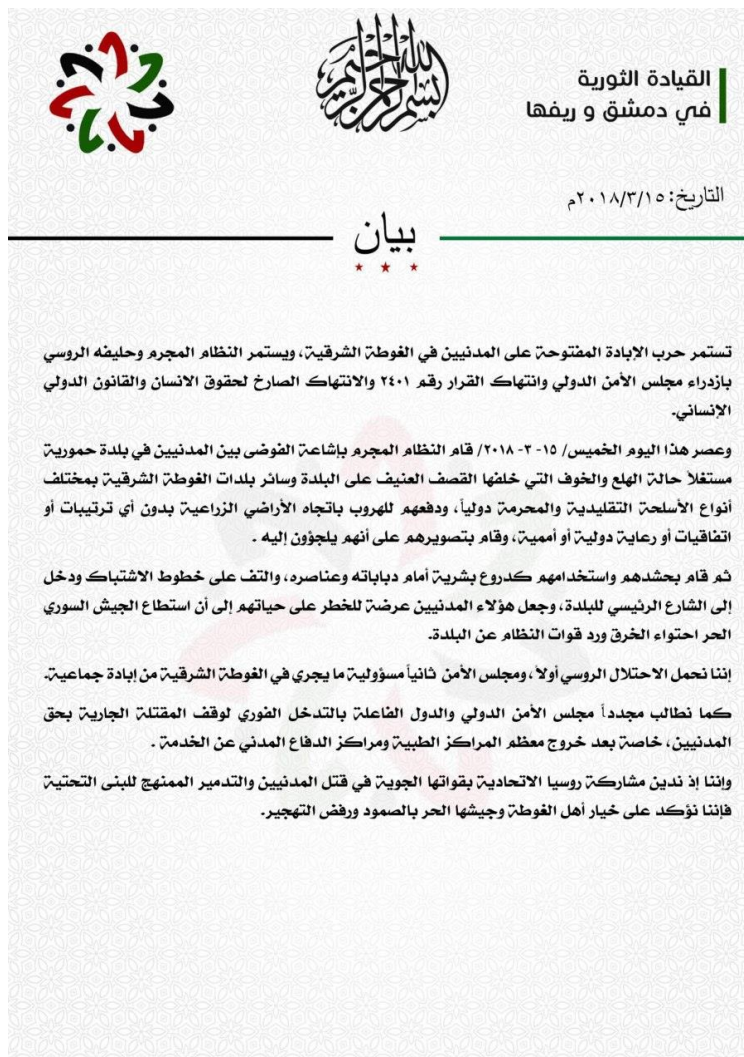


Image shows the statement issued by the Revolutionary Command Council in Damascus and its Countryside on March 15, 2018, condemning the bombardment on Hamoryah and the use of civilians as human shields.

Photo credit: [Revolutionary Command Council in Damascus and its Countryside](#).

Due to the violent non-stop bombardment, many Eastern Ghouta people continued to flow to the accommodation centers in Damascus countryside. (UNICEF) reported that, on March 16, 2018, families continued to flow from Eastern Ghouta, where thousands reached Al Horjelah center in Damascus countryside, and the total number of those who left Eastern Ghouta is unknown. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, has expressed concern about the situation of the collectively fleeing Eastern Ghouta, and regretted the non-implementation of Security Council resolution 2401 on the cessation of hostilities throughout Syria.



2. Incendiary weapons kill 68 civilians in Kafr Batna:

On March 16, 2018, military aircraft fired four rockets loaded with napalm-like incendiary substance on Kafr Batna town, targeting the popular market, which resulted in the death and injury of scores of civilians, according to Hassan Salameh, a resident of the town, who spoke to STJ saying:

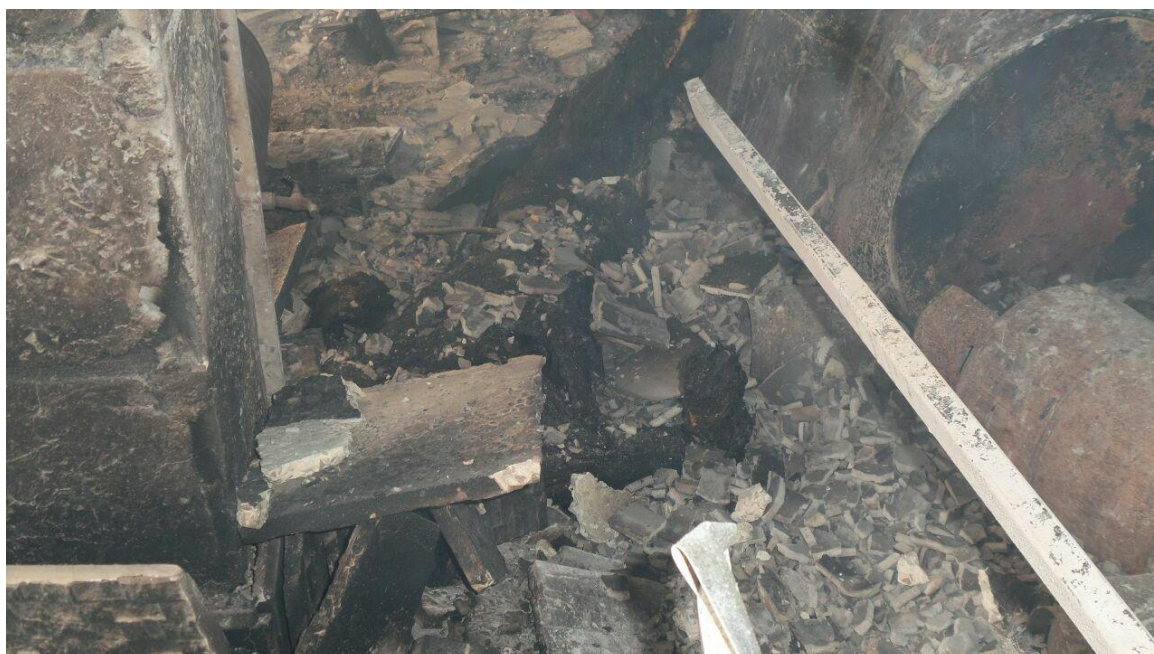
“Kafr Batna town has been targeted several times during this campaign, but the most severe attacks occurred on March 16, 2018, at 11:00 a.m., when I heard the roar of a warplane flying in the sky of the town, immediately I took refuge in one of the cellars, and in moments it hit the main square, which contains a popular market, with four rockets at once loaded with napalm-like incendiary substance. When I got out to the street after the attack, I saw the scale of the massacre, as it left scores of civilian casualties dead or wounded. I rushed with one of my relatives to help some of those injured, whom we chose according to the severe of their injuries, as the numbers were very large, because the massacre occurred just after the Russians and the Regime’s announcement of a humanitarian truce between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. of that day, which prompted many people to get out of the basements in order to do shopping, before the regime re-bombs again, but the latter did not abide by the lull that it had announced, and continued to commit massacres.”





Images showing a side of the civilian victims who died as a result of shelling the popular market in Kafr Batna with incendiary weapons on March 16, 2018.

Photo credit: [Media Men of Damascus and its Countryside's Telegram Channel](#).



Another image showing an aspect of the fires erupted in the popular market in Kafr Batna town following its bombardment with napalm-like incendiary substance on March 16, 2018.

Photo credit: [Media Men of Damascus and its Countryside's Telegram Channel](#).



STJ get an another testimony from Ayman Issa, the director of the Central Hospital of Eastern Ghouta, who said that emergency crews in Kafr Batna town, were unable to treat all the injured that day, due to their large numbers, and in this regard he continued:

"I was at the hospital when we got the news of targeting the popular market in Kafr Batna as it was crowded with civilians. Large number of injured were transferred to the hospital, which made the medical staff socked and powerless, since the town had never been subjected to such a massacre. The corpses that transferred to us were fully charred, and smelled bad, while some of the injured suffered severe burns. 160 injuries were transferred to the hospital while 42 deaths were initially documented."

According to Issa, the medical staff did not stop working that day. The work lasted for 16 consecutive hours, they performed surgical operations to a large number of injured, many of whom were survived but others unfortunately dead. Issa goes on to say:

"68 deaths were documented that day, the operating rooms are no longer enough, so we have been conducting operations in the hospital corridors and waiting rooms. The medical staff suffered a lot because of the poor resources and the shortage in its members. As I recall, I made 22 emergency open abdomen surgeries on that day alone, and (77) amputations were recorded. We stood helpless in the absence of medical equipment or equipped intensive care rooms."

A [footage](#) published by Jobar News, on March 16, 2018, showed a side of the fires and the bodies of some victims who had been hit by incendiary substance in the popular market of Kafr Batna town on March 16, 2018.



Secure | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOKlwNSkRHw>

YouTube

الغوة الشرقية - مجزرة كفر بطنا
16-03-2018

0:22 / 2:03

شاهد | مجزرة كفر بطنا في الغوة الشرقية أكثر من 61 شهيد و 200 جريح جُلهم من الأطفال ونساء 2018-03-16

2,790 views

27 2 SHARE

JobarNews
أخبار جوبار
Published on Mar 16, 2018

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A shot taken from the previous [footage](#), showing an aspect of the bodies of the victims who had fallen after bombing the popular market in Kafr Batna with incendiary weapons on March 16, 2018.

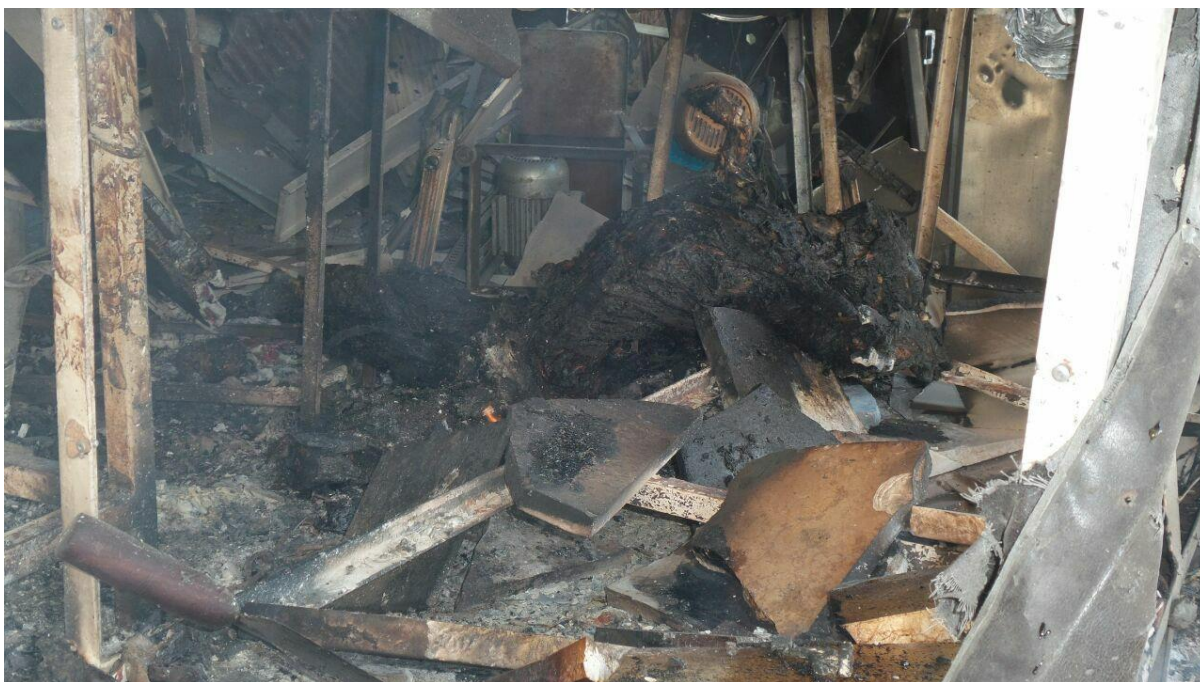


Image shows a victim burnt to death, as a result of bombing the popular market of Kafr Batna with napalm-like incendiary substances on March 16, 2018.

Photo credit: [Media Men of Damascus and its Countryside's Telegram Channel](#).



Another image showing an aspect of the fires erupted in the popular market of Kafr Batna following the bombardment with napalm-like incendiary substance on March 16, 2018.

Photo credit: [Media Men of Damascus and its Countryside's Telegram Channel](#).



3. Massacres in Kafr Batna and Douma:

On March 16, 2018, Syrian regular forces re-bombed residential buildings and the main market of Kafr Batna, where those violent bombardments killed more than 50 people and injured scores of others that day alone, according to STJ field researcher, the civil defense teams were unable to pick up the dead and injured due to heavy bombardment on the town that day.



Image shows an aspect of the devastation caused to Kafr Batna as a result of the bombardment during March 2018.

Photo credit: [Ghota Media Centre](#).





Analysis of visual evidence.

On March 18, 2018, the city of Douma also witnessed violent and brutal bombardment, as the residential neighborhoods were targeted with high-explosive rockets, which resulted in scores of civilian deaths and injuries, according to an [earlier report](#) prepared by STJ.



Image shows an aspect of the devastation in Douma, following the violent bombardment of March 18, 2018.

Photo credit: STJ.

On March 19, 2018, at 6:30 p.m., a military aircraft believed to be Russian bombed a shelter in al-Saroot neighbourhood in Irbin town, resulting in 20 civilian casualties, mostly women and children. Several days before, specifically on March 16, 2018, 15 civilians were killed following the aerial bombardment on a shelter in Zamalka, according to an [earlier report](#) by STJ.

On March 20, 2018, the city of Douma was once again subjected to heavy bombardment, where the Syrian regular forces used several types of weapons, such as barrel bombs, cluster munitions and high-explosive missiles, that was confirmed to STJ by "Siraj al-Hasan", an activists from Douma, where he said:

“That day was one of the toughest and most difficult days for the people of Douma, given the many victims of the use of all types of weapons, where at 9:00 a.m., the helicopter started dropping its barrel bombs on the residential neighbourhoods, followed by the bombardment of the warplanes firing high-explosive rockets carried with parachutes, also cluster munitions-laden rockets were thrown on the whole town. Many buildings were demolished over the heads of their occupants who most of them were buried under the rubble. The ambulance teams did not dare to go out and rescue the injured civilians, we transferred some injured to inside the basements, trying to rescue them with the necessary aid. 60 civilian dead and dozens injured that day alone.”



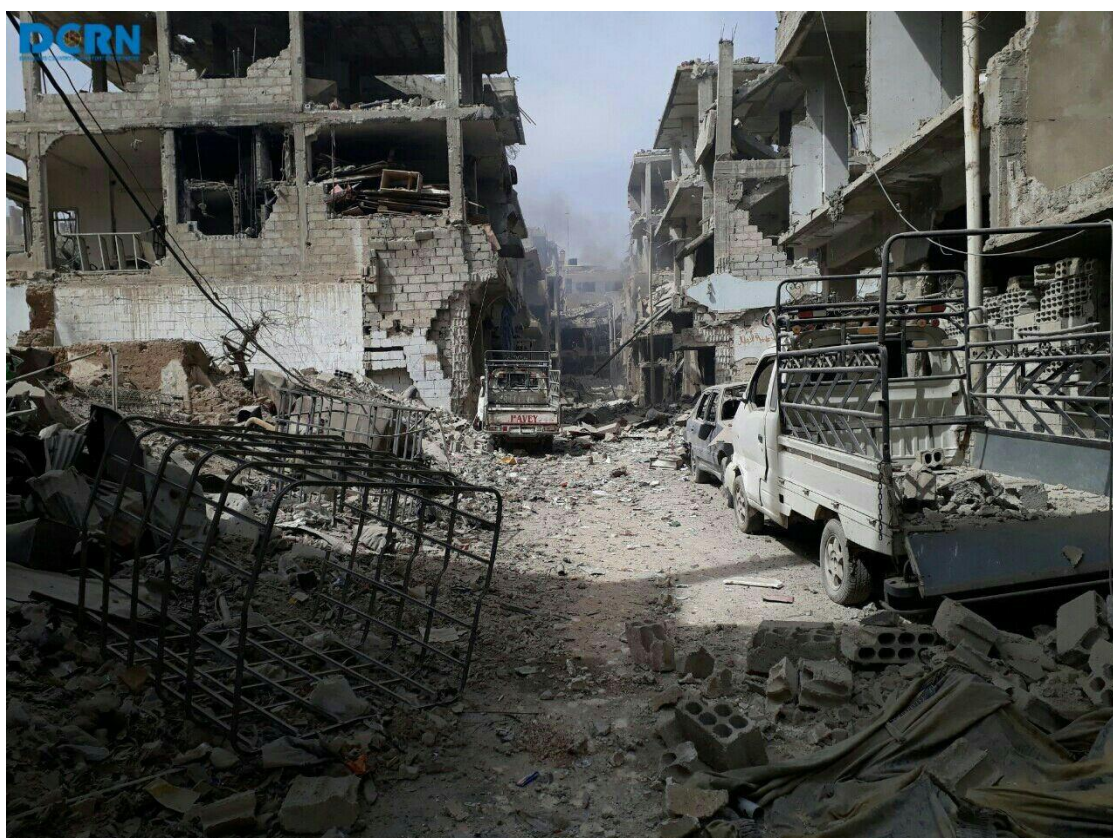
STJ field researcher documented the names of some civilian victims who were killed following the brutal bombardment on Douma on March 20, 2018, they are:

1. Imad omar Sheikh al-Deia'a (a child).
2. Muhammad Qudeih.
3. Abdul Kareem al-Awwa.
4. Musa'ab al-Haja.
5. Basem Hujairati.
6. Yazeed al-Tabaji (a child).
7. Nour Arif Saryoul.
8. Badr Al Din Zokani.
9. Muhammad Ali Badr Al Din Zokani.
10. Tariq Dawoud.
11. Basheer al-Najjar.
12. Ibrahim al-Sa'aour (a child).
13. Qamar al-Kurdi.
14. Rateb Hamad (a child).
15. Bushra Hamad (a girl child).
16. Basheer Raheem.
17. Muhammad Rafeeq Abdel Qader.
18. Abdel Hadi Ghazi.
19. Khaled Halawa.
20. Mustafa Naser.
21. No'uman al-Barghouth.
22. Unidentified child.
23. Unidentified child.
24. Unidentified child.
25. Subhi Mustafa Abdul Haq.
26. Ghassan al-Rayes.
27. Bashar Muhammad Ali Naji.
28. Najem Areda.
29. Asa'ad Muhammad al-Howayed.
30. Hussein al-Bukaei.
31. Izzo Balalah.
32. Sama Anees (a girl child).
33. Sali Baqdounsi (a girl child).
34. Elaf Adnan al-Tubaji.
35. Mustafa al-Najjar.
36. Omar Abdul Hadi (a child).



37. Abdul Raheem Abdul Hadi (a child).
38. Muhammad Kheir al-Shami.
39. Ghiath al-Masho'ut.
40. Unidentified child.
41. Unidentified man.
42. Adel Awad.
43. Wissam Awad.
44. Laila al-Toukhi.
45. Ahmed Awad.
46. Osama Mahmoud al-Toukhi.
47. Rula Awad.
48. Muhammad Jawad Kheiti.
49. Muhammad Ibrahim al-Hajja.
50. Khaled Mahmoud Badran.
51. Mahmoud Mustafa Khabia.
52. Muhammad Izz Al Din.
53. Hayat Osama al-Toukhi.
54. Omran Dawoud.
55. Omran Aref al-Shami (a child).
56. Unidentified man.





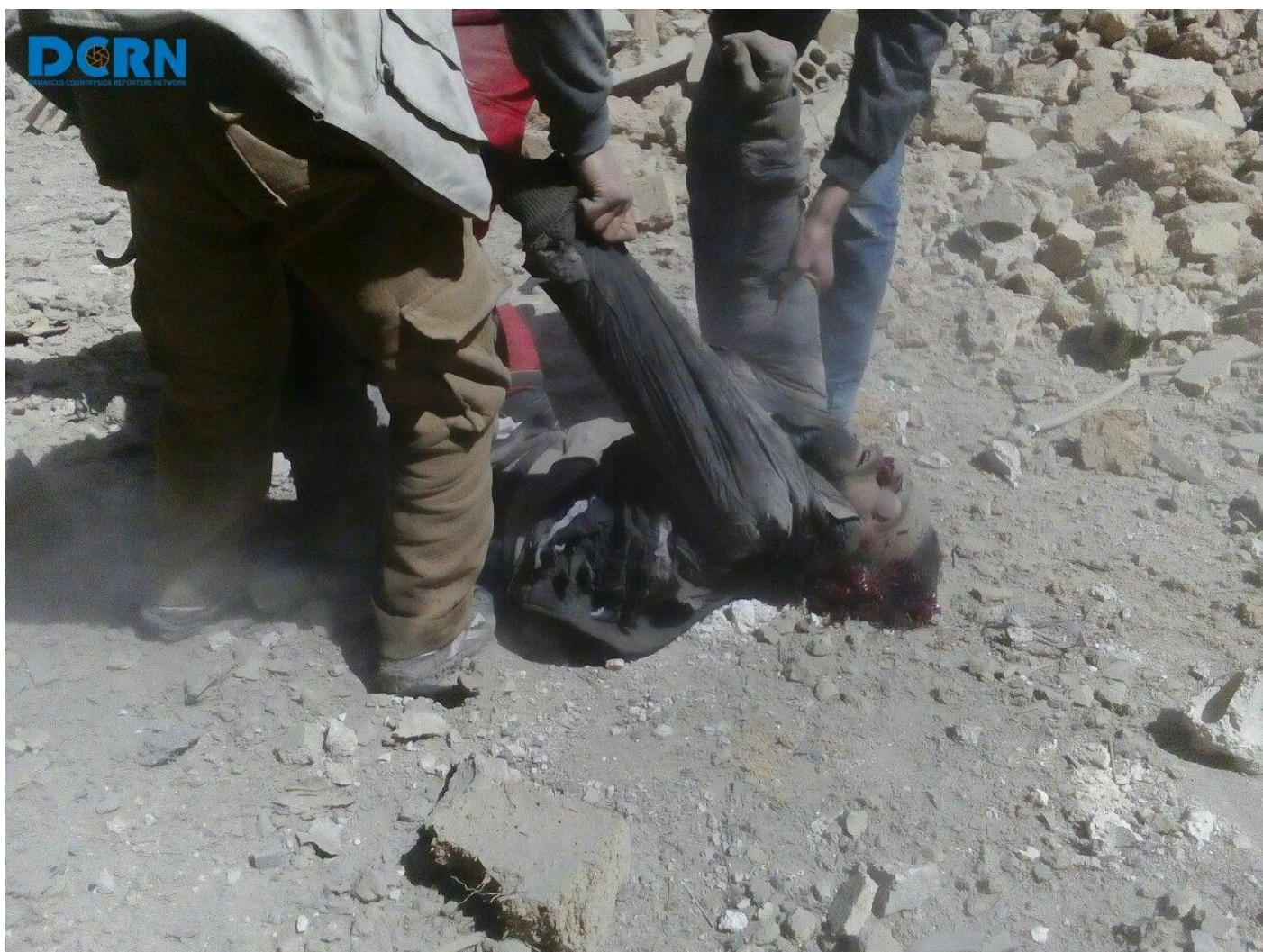


Image shows some of the victims and an aspect of the devastation caused to Douma, following the violent bombardment of March 20, 2018.

Photo credit: [Damascus Countryside Reporters Network](#).



Image shows an aspect of the devastation caused to Douma, following the violent bombardment of March 20, 2018.

Photo credit: [Damascus Countryside Reporters Network](#).

v. Fifth week Incidents (18 to 24 March 2018):

After the Syrian regular forces and their allies reached a settlement agreement with Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement on March 21, 2018, they became fully available to bombard the Central Sector of Eastern Ghouta, which is under the control of The al-Rahman Legion, in addition to areas of The Army of Islam in Douma and its environs:



1. More than 44 people, mostly children and women, killed in bombing a shelter in Irbin:

On 22 and 23 March 2018, Syrian regular forces conducted airstrikes on Douma using incendiary weapons loaded with phosphor-like substance, which resulted in significant material damage to civilian property, but no casualties were reported, according to an [earlier report](#) by STJ on this incident. The Syrian regular forces and their allies have deliberately targeted the residential buildings in the city of Douma with incendiary weapons, in an attempt to inflict physical damage to houses and properties of civilians, aiming to render those houses inoperable and made them unfit for habitation.

On March 22, 2018, a shelter in Irbin town was also hit by napalm-like incendiary substance, which resulted in the death of more than 44 people, mostly children and women, as "Obada Abdul Rahman", an activist from Irbin confirmed to STJ, where he said:

"People of Irbin were particularly affected by this massacre, where entire families were burnt alive, mostly children and women, and what increased the magnitude of the tragedy that those families had spent long days inside shelters to escape the bombardment. However, at 9:00 p.m. that day, Russian warplanes launched a single raid on the city, in which six rockets were fired at once, all of them were loaded with incendiary napalm, one of which fell into a two adjacent basements where many families hid, they tried to get out of the basement's door, but they were surprised to find it closed by the backfilling of the bombardment, they started screaming, but no one could get them out because of the heavy bombardment and fire intensity on the area. Whole families burnt to death and no one was able to get into the basement until the fires went out. A complete slaughter was what happened inside that place, I saw families' members hugging each other, waiting for fire to devour them, the death toll of this massacre was more than 44, mostly children and women."

STJ field researcher documented the names of some civilian victims resulted from bombing a shelter in Irbin on March 22, 2018, they are:

1. Muhannad Shahoud (a young man).
2. Nadia Sharaf (a young woman).
3. Louai Shahoud (a child).
4. Rahaf Shahoud (a girl child).
5. Mouayad Shahoud (a child).
6. Moutaz Shahoud (a young man).
7. Huda al-Rizz (a young woman).
8. Ameera Shahoud and her daughters.
9. Safa Shahoud (a young woman).
10. Rawa'a Shahoud (a young woman).



11. The young woman Duha al-Qalish and her daughters.
12. Ameer Shahoud (a child).
13. Yousif Shahoud (a child).
14. Sedra Shahoud (a girl child).
15. Sundus Shahoud (a girl child).
16. The young woman Marwa Shahoud and her daughters,
17. Amer al-Mubakher (a child).
18. Shahed al-Mubakher (a girl child).
19. Wa'ad al-Mubakher (a girl child).
20. Yaseen Shahoud.
21. Nadra al-Hashash.
22. Nada al-Mubakher.
23. Fayez Shahoud (a child).
24. The young woman Nour al-Mubakher and her son.
25. Muhammad Shahoud (a young man).
26. Kawthar al-Hallaq (a young woman).
27. Bashar Shahoud (a young man).
28. Riyad al-Tun(a young man).
29. Maher al-Malla (a young man).
30. Ibrahim Abu Ahmed (a young man).
31. Majed Abu Ahmed (a young man).
32. Muhammad Zuhair al-Qarsa (a young man).
33. Yaseen Shafrat (an old man)
34. Muhammad Shaqran (a young man).
35. Mustafa Shaqran (a young man).
36. Omar Shahoud (a young man).
37. Eman Kuka (a young woman).
38. Roua'a Shahoud (a girl child)
39. Mahfouth Shashoud.
40. The young woman Marwa Kishka and her children.
41. Kinan Shahoud.
42. Raghad Shahoud.
43. Yaman Shahoud.









Images show some of the civilian victims who had burnt to death, following bombing a shelter in Irbin, on March 22, 2018.

Photo credit: [the Unified Media Office in Irbin](#).

According to STJ researchers, this massacre was the end of the massacres that took place in the Central Sector of Eastern Ghouta, as it was followed by a settlement agreement between The al-Rahman Legion on the one hand and the Syrian regular forces and their allies on the other, on March 23, 2018. Noting that, as of April 2018, Syrian regular forces began to concentrate their shelling on areas under the control of the Army of Islam, such as Douma city and its environs.

VI. Sixth week incidents (March 25, 2018 to April 1, 2018):

According to STJ researchers, this week was relatively calm, as negotiating processes were taking place between Russian side and The Army of Islam who controlled Douma Sector, but when this negotiation failed, the violent military escalation began on April 6, 2018.



VII. Seventh week incidents (2 to 8 April 2018):

The military campaign entered its seventh week, and only Douma Sector was out of the Syrian regular forces' control, which had thrown the city into bloody days during that period:

1. Military escalation claims the lives of dozens of civilians in Douma:

On 6 and 7 April 2018, the city of Douma witnessed unprecedented violent bombing throughout the last military campaign, where several types of weapons used, such as high-explosive rockets and barrel bombs, resulting in dozens of civilian casualties dead or wounded. This violent escalation coincided with conducting negotiations between the Army of Islam on the one hand and the Russian side on the other, with a view to reaching a ceasefire agreement. Muhammad al-Sleek, a native of Douma confirmed that to STJ by saying:

“When news of reaching a cease fire agreement between the Army of Islam and the Russians spread in the city of Douma, the people began to feel comfortable, they came out of basements and started to spread everywhere. They were happy of the safety returning to their city, that made them move comfortably everywhere during the cooling-off period, but that did not last long, where at about 4:00 p.m. on April 6, 2018, the entire city of Douma was targeted with 15 air raids in 40 minutes, with the intention of causing as much civilian casualties as possible.”

Sleek continued that Syrian regular forces and their allies deliberately shelled civilian communities such as markets and residential neighborhoods on April 6, 2018. He also pointed out that military aircraft deliberately hit medical points on the same day, where the “Hamdan Hospital” and The Syrian Arab Red Crescent Division had been directly targeted, rendered them completely inoperable and caused a medical crisis in the city of Douma, which is already suffering a major shortage of medicines and medical equipment, he continued:

“Regime forces did not only do this, it also bombed Douma, on the same day, with more than 200 rockets, not to mention the artillery shelling and barrel bombs. Fires spread everywhere, and entire buildings have been destroyed over the heads of their occupants, resulting in 40 civilians deaths and 200 injures on April 6, 2018 alone.”



Images showing an aspect of the devastation caused to Douma, following the violent bombardment of April 2018.

Photo credit: [Coordination of Douma](#).



Image shows an aspect of the devastation caused to Douma city, following the violent shelling that occurred during April 2018.

Photo credit: [Douma Coordination](#).





Analysis of visual evidence.



Douma was subjected to relentless fire on April 7, 2018, by pro-government forces, where the people could no longer move, in this regard "Sleek" goes on to say:

“On that day, I saw three helicopters flying over the city dropping barrel bombs on all the neighborhoods, not to mention the air raids that reached 250 raids, which made emergency and medical personnel absolutely exhausted, as a result of the ongoing work, as dozens of injured were transferred to the medical points that day, some of them suffered serious injuries and were in need of urgent surgical operations.”

A [footage](#) published by activists, on April 8, 2018, also showed an aspect of the violent bombardment of April 7, 2018, on Douma (video credit: Douma Coordination).



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بلال المحشي

Published on Apr 8, 2018

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A shot taken from the [previous mentioned footage](#), shows effects of the violent bombardment of April 7, 2018 on Douma.



Image shows an aspect of the destruction caused to Douma, following the violent bombardment of April 7, 2018.

Photo credit: [Douma Coordination](#).



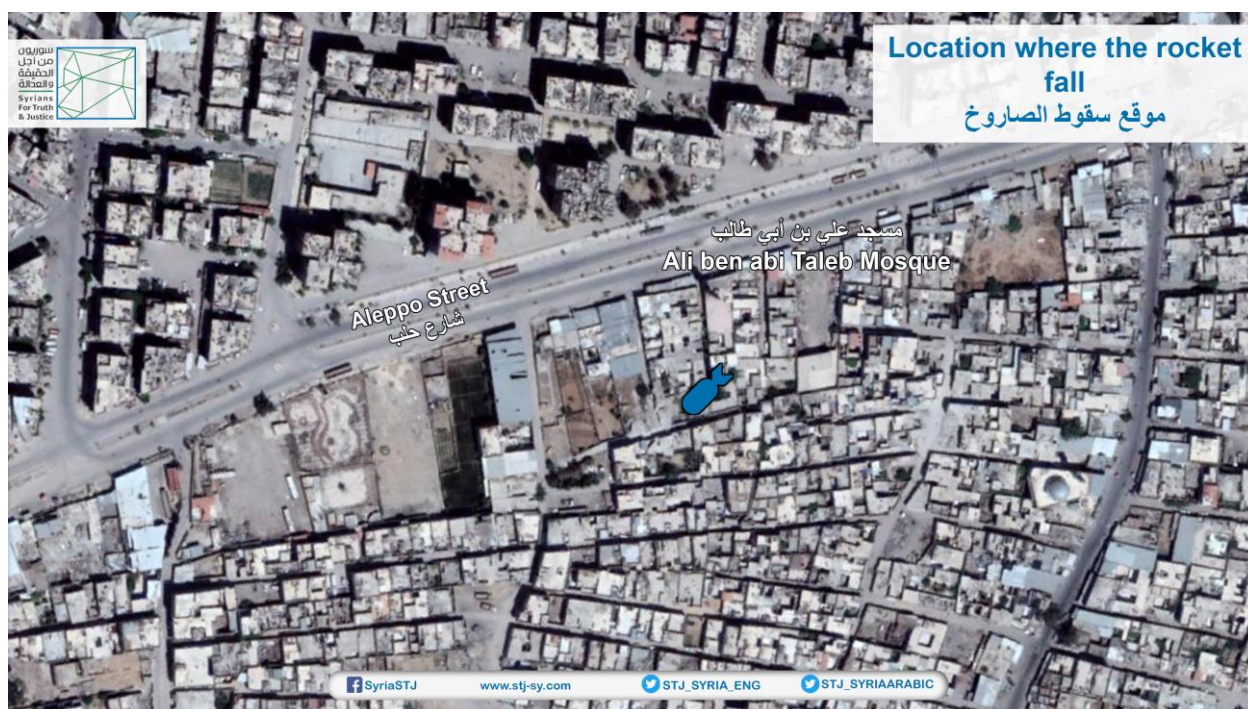


Analysis of visual evidence.



Image shows a side of the violent bombardment of April 7, 2018 on Douma.

Photo credit: [Douma Coordination](#).





Analysis of visual evidence.



2. A toxic gas attack kills more than 50 civilians in Douma:

Syrian regular forces and their allies did not only use rockets and barrel bombs in bombing Douma, where on April 7, 2018, the city was subjected to a toxic gas attack, with two cylinders dropped on the city by helicopters, one of which exploded but the other did not, which resulted in scores of civilian casualties dead or wounded. Muhammad Abdel Ghani, an alias of a native of Douma, confirmed that to STJ by saying:

“6, 7 and 8 April 2018 were the most difficult days for civilians trapped in Douma, as the bombardment never stopped, especially after the surrender of all the areas around the city. I've never witnessed such days throughout the all years I had spent in Douma, we dug trenches under basements, since they were no longer safe, as many of my relatives and friends were killed while sheltering inside. However, at 7:45 p.m. on April 7, 2018, things were quite different, the warplanes dropped two barrels, one of which fell on the building next to ours, but we heard no explosion sound, we began to smell strange smells instead, so me and my family put the gags immediately and left the basement we were sheltering in”.

Abdel Ghani continued that hundreds of civilians had inhaled toxic gas, most of them were children and women sheltering in cellars, and he goes on to say:

“I saw the bodies of people scattered along the way I passed with my family fleeing the building, some of them were struggling and breathing their last breaths, but I couldn't do anything for them, the situation was worse than anyone might imagine.”



Image shows child victims died of suffocation, following the toxic gas attack of April 7, 2018, on Douma.

Photo credit: [Douma Coordination](#).



Another image shows a child victim died of suffocation, following the toxic gas attack of April 7, 2018, on Douma.

Photo credit: [Douma Coordination](#).



"Muhammad Hnan", an alias of a doctor at a medical point in Douma, told STJ that many persons were transferred to the medical point suffering symptoms such as dyspnea, central cyanosis, foaming at the mouth and pinpoint pupils, at 7:45 p.m. on April 7, 2018, in this connection he continued:

"Hundreds of injured were transferred to the medical point, as we received about 600 injured, besides a child who died shortly before his arrival as a result of suffocation, and there was another woman who died at the medical point, not to mention many of the dead who had been suffocated and died inside their houses."

[Footage](#) published by Douma Coordination, showed the bodies of the victims who were killed after being suffocated by the toxic gas attack of on April 7, 2018 on Douma. Activists also have circulated another [footage](#), which shows some of the people suffered foaming at the mouth and other symptoms prior to their deaths, following the toxic gas attack of April 7, 2018, on Douma.



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A shot taken from the previous [footage](#) shows a side of bodies of victims died of suffocation, following the toxic gas attack of April 7, 2018, on Douma.



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YASER ALDOUMANI2
Published on Apr 7, 2018

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A shot taken from the previous [footage](#) shows a child suffering symptoms of poisoning prior to his death, following the toxic gas attack of April 7, 2018, on Douma.

Ahmed Abdullah, an alias of an activist from Douma, reported to STJ, that the first cylinder fell near the well known Martyrs' Square and specifically near the major medical point in the city, which was numbered as (1), and in this connection he added:

At about 7:45 p.m. that day, a friend of mine contacted me from the medical point and told me that there were people suffered from suffocation, and asked me to come up to document that, so I tried to get out of my office, but that was not possible because of the intensity of the bombardment. About an hour after I managed to get out, but I was unable to reach the medical point quickly, as on my way there I was occasionally sheltering inside the buildings to escape the bombardment, and at 9:00 p.m., I finally arrived, and I was shocked when I saw many people mostly women and children suffering suffocation" .

Abdullah said that, upon his departure from the medical point, he had encountered a number of young medics, asking him to go with them to document and take photos of some of the bodies, and in that connection he continued:

"I saw chilling scenes which made me cry, there were entire families who had been suffocated to death hugging each other, and when I'm filming, I'm starting to hold my breath, that my



breast was getting tight until I almost choked on the smell of gas. The smell was getting intensified as I walked up to the third floor of the building where the gas-laden barrel fell. None of the residents of the building survived, they were all dead, and the foam was coming out of the mouths of some, with a very white limestone-like substance around their the eyes.”



Image shows a child victim died of suffocation, following the toxic gas attack of April 7, 2018, on Douma.

Photo credit: [Douma Coordination](#).

Abdullah noted that Syrian regular forces also targeted Douma at the same time with a further cylinder loaded with toxic gas, which landed next to the "Abu al-Rahaj" mosque in Douma but it did not explode, and he said in this regard:

“The Regime targeted the area around “Abu al-Rahaj” mosque with another cylinder, but it did not explode, and later it began to release strange smells, and only a few choking infections were recorded in this area, but I had noticed strange signs appearing on the cylinder, as I observed a greenish-yellow substance leaked out of it. Since the regime and the Russians controlled the city of Douma, they have started to distort the facts, bringing witnesses from injured and medical and emergency personnel, forcing them to overturn the facts, confirming their statements and forcing them to say that all that happened was media lies.”

Muhammad Qattan, a civil defence member, who was present at the moment of the incident, also gave a testimony in which he told STJ, that they had received a circular from the aviation



observatories, to take precautions because the helicopter was flying over the Eastern Ghouta that day and he goes on to say:

"We were informed that the helicopter had dropped a barrel on one of the residential buildings close to the major medical point, (number 1) the ambulance teams immediately went to the scene of the attack, and since the Regime was constantly targeting our teams directly, we used to move only on foot in the necessary cases, and indeed this is what happened when the city of Douma was targeted by toxic gas, we went to the area on foot, then we were divided into groups so that we could inspect the entire buildings, and then we started to aid the injured, so we initially treated anyone who could get out of the cellars or houses, to the streets, and then we tried to get into the cellars where the people were sheltering, but unfortunately we couldn't get into most of them to search for survivors, due to the increased smell of poison gas, I was shocked to see some families choking on the toxic gas, and the foam coming out of others' mouths and their eyes expanding abnormally, it was a very horrible scene."

Yahya Zakaria, a doctor at the Syrian American Medical Society- SAMS, told STJ that he was at the medical point number (1) when the chemical attack occurred in Douma, where he said:

"At about 7:40 p.m., and while I was with my wife and children at the medical point number (1), one of the paramedics came and told us that there were three civilians suffered suffocation, we predicted that they were infected as a result of inhaling chlorine gas, since we were familiar with this substance infection symptoms, but when I examined those people I realized that their situations is far worse than those who were previously transferred to the point as a result of chlorine inhalation. So, we started undressing and washing them with water, we placed them on nebulizers and gave them bronchodilators. Ten minutes later, flocks of infected people were transferred to the hospital, and within one hour their number reached 500 including children, women and men, the extent of infection varied among them, but the late-coming infections were the most serious, as they suffered from foam detachments, central cyanosis on lips and fingertips, dyspnoea, oxygen shortage, and slow pulse. Five people died while we were aiding them. We gave the people infected, atropine and hydrocortisone injections, as well as nebulizer. Some of them responded to treatment and got better, but others not. At 12:00 a.m., a paramedic told us that they were unable to evacuate more infected people from residential neighborhoods because of the heavy bombardment and the spread of the toxic gas' smell. When we got out the next day, we were shocked by the large scale of the massacre, as we saw 40 scattered bodies before our eyes, all of them belonging to children and women."



Zakaria said that the gas used in the attack was of a new kind, as it was unlikely to be chlorine or Sarin, justifying that by saying:

"Sarin gas is more dangerous than the gas used in this attack, and I think the attack was intended to hit our medical point, and it was a threatening message to us., where the targeting occurred at the entrance to the medical point, and the gas was leaking into the point, but owing to the length of distance between the entrance and the center of the point, which exceeds 200 meters, the gas does not affect the people inside the point significantly" .

STJ field researcher documented the kill of 43 people, mostly women and children, following the toxic gas attack of April 7, 2018, on Douma, they are:

1. Nour Nseer.
2. Qamar Nseer.
3. Nada al-Sheikh (a girl child)
4. Yousef al-Sheikh (a child)
5. Mahmoud al-Sheikh.
6. Hiba al-Sheikh.
7. Isra'a To'uma.
8. Sarah al-Smadi.
9. Waleed Reslan.
10. Joud al-Sheikh.
11. Fatima Qarouq.
12. Hamza Hnan.
13. Muhammad al-Sheikh.
14. Hasan al-Sheikh.
15. Ghada Hamou.
16. Joury Bakria.
17. Ali Bakria.
18. Qamar Diab Bakria.
19. Hanadi Bakria.
20. Haitham Bakria.
21. Insaf al-Hallaq.
22. Muhammad Rateb Bakria.
23. Hadeel Bakria.
24. Joury Diab Bakria.
25. Rahaf Bakria (a girl child).
26. Sarah al-Tabbakh.
27. Ameera Hamou.
28. Jana Hnan (a girl child)
29. Asya Hnan (a girl child)



30. Tuqa Hnan.
31. Judy al-Sheikh (a girl child).
32. Rateb Bakria.
33. Muhammad Tawfiq Bakria.
34. Rawda To'uma.
35. Ammon Muhammad Daher.
36. Unidentified child.
37. Unidentified child
38. Unidentified child
39. Unidentified man.
40. Unidentified man.
41. Unidentified man.
42. Unidentified man.
43. Unidentified man.

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), [sent](#) a Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to Syria, on 14 April 2018, to investigate the recent chemical attack which Douma experienced. FFM team carried out a visit to Douma on April 21, 2018 and collected some samples. It stressed that it will continue to carry out its independent and impartial mission based on interviews with relevant people, its findings from the site visits, analysis of the sample results.

For its part, The **Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria (IICI)**, condemned through a [statement](#), it released on April 13, 2018, the use of chemical weapons by any party to the Syrian conflict, only a few days after it Douma was subjected to a toxic gas attack, it stated the following:

“The Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic is gravely concerned by the continuing reports of use of chemical weapons in Syria. As of January 2018, we had reported on 34 documented incidents of the use of chemical weapons by various parties to the conflict. The Commission welcomes both the technical investigation about to be despatched by the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the commitment of the Syrian Arab Republic's representative at the United Nations Security Council that it will have full and unfettered access and freedom of movement in fulfilling its task.”

[The World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) stated on April 11, 2018, that “according to reports from Health Cluster partners, during the shelling of Douma on Saturday, an estimated 500 patients presented to health facilities exhibiting signs and symptoms consistent with exposure to toxic chemicals. In particular, there were signs of severe irritation of mucous membranes, respiratory failure and disruption to central nervous systems of those exposed. More than 70



people sheltering in basements have reportedly died, with 43 of those deaths related to symptoms consistent with exposure to highly toxic chemicals. Two health facilities were also reportedly affected by these attacks.”

Bellingcat said in a [report](#) issued on May 30, 2018, that there was a great similarity between the chemical attack on Douma by Syrian regular forces, on April 7, 2018, and other previous attacks in which chemical weapons were used, as of that which [hit Saraqib- Idlib countryside on February 4, 2018](#). OPCW confirmed in a [report](#) released on May 16, 2018 that chlorine was likely used as a chemical weapon on 4 February 2018 in Saraqib, Idlib Governorate, indicating that chlorine was released from cylinders as well.

<https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2018/05/30/watch-upcoming-opcw-ffm-report-douma-chemical-attacks>

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Two munitions were filmed and photographed following the April 7th 2018 attack, two yellow gas cylinders, one of which had an external structure. The second munition did not have an external structure attached to it when it was documented, but the remains of the same design of external structure were nearby, suggesting it was either removed during impact, or removed following the impact for as yet unknown reasons.



Identical yellow chlorine cylinders, some with matching external structures as those seen with the Douma munitions, have been [repeatedly documented](#) at the sites of previous aerial chlorine attacks, and the OPCW FFM report on the [February 4 2018 chemical Saraqib attack](#) includes detailed photographs that confirm the same type of munitions were used in both the Saraqib attack and Douma attack.

Image taken from the [report](#) published by the "Bellingcat", shows remains of the cylinder used in attacking Douma on April 7, 2018.

Amnesty International, in turn assured in a [report](#) released on April 23, 2018, that the images collected from Douma are not faked, since they were verified by trusted organizations using well-established methodologies, it also confirmed that the type of weapons used in attacking Douma were very similar to those used in other previous attacks.