

April 2018

Brutal Attacks of 18 and 19 March 2018, on Douma-Eastern Ghouta

During These Two Days, the City was Subjected to the Use of High-Explosive Rockets, Incendiary"



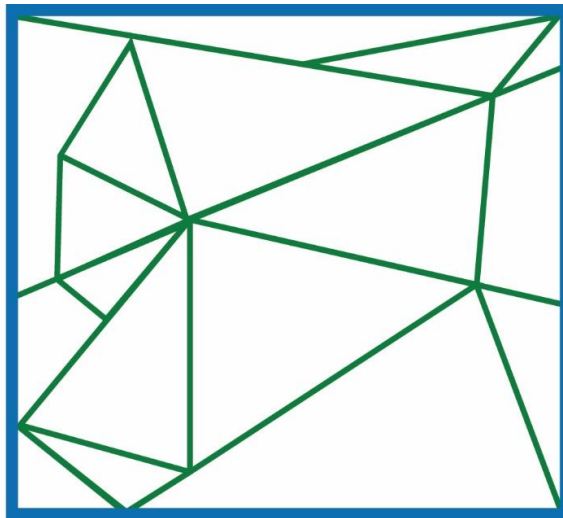
About Syrians for Truth and Justice:

[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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For Truth
& Justice





Brutal Attacks of 18 and 19 March 2018, on Douma-Eastern Ghouta

*"During These Two Days, the City was Subjected to the Use of High-Explosive Rockets,
Incendiary Weapons as well as Toxic Chemicals"*



Preface

All Eastern Ghouta, especially [Douma](#) city, were subjected to one of the most violent military attacks by the Syrian regular forces and their allies during March 2018. On March 18, 2018, residential neighborhoods in Douma witnessed aerial bombardment with highly explosive rockets, leaving scores of civilian casualties dead or wounded, including women and children. On the same day, the Syrian regular forces bombard the city with chemical weapons, but no casualties were reported.

On March 19, 2018, a warehouse of the Local Council in the city of Douma was subjected to a heavy aerial bombardment, destroying a part of the United Nations/UN assistance, while the use of incendiary weapons, on the same day, caused fires in a number of houses in the city.

According to [STJ](#) field researcher, the violent bombardments on Douma on 18 and 19 March 2018 coincided with a military attack carried out by The Army of Islam, in order to retake the areas recently controlled by the Syrian regular forces such as Mesraba¹ village. From its part, the Syrian regular forces responded with shelling Douma, which is crowded with thousands of locals and displaced persons, noting that the warplanes did not leave the sky of the city during these two days, targeting it with more than 50 air raids loaded with rockets and barrel bombs, which has led to many civilian casualties, pointing out that some of them remained under the rubble for a long time, before the medics were able to get them out.

It should be recalled that the Syrian regular forces and their allies had reached an [agreement with Faylaq al-Rahman](#), on March 23, 2018. Which required evacuating Faylaq al-Rahman, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham/Al-Nusra Front fighters with their families, and any other civilians who did not wish to come back under Assad's rule to northern Syria. The agreement, which included the towns of Irbin, Jobar, Ein Tarma and Zamalka, was preceded by a [similar one between the Syrian regular forces and Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement](#) in Harasta on March 21, 2018, this agreement led to evacuate the militants of the Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement along with their families and civilians who wish to leave to northern Syria as well.

¹ The Syrian regular forces managed to control Mesraba on March 10, 2018, which was held by of The Army of Islam.



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.

STJ had earlier prepared a report entitled "[The Neutral Safe Triangle Turns into a Triangle of Death!](#)", which is a flash report documenting the military escalation on Zamalka-Eastern Ghouta on 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 March 2018. STJ had also prepared a report entitled "[Targeting Ovens in Eastern Ghouta Deprives Tens of Thousands Residents from Bread](#)", which is a flash report highlighting several incidents of bombing bread ovens in Eastern Ghouta-Damascus countryside.

First: High-explosive Rockets on Residential Neighborhoods in Douma City

On March 18, 2018, the city of Douma witnessed violent and brutal shelling on its neighborhoods with high-explosive rockets, which led to the fall of scores of civilians dead or wounded. That was confirmed by "Khaled al-Turk", a resident of Douma, where he spoke to STJ Saying:

"Throughout the military campaign of the regime forces on Eastern Ghouta, Douma was subjected to an alternate light and intensified shelling, however, on March 18, 2018, we could never sleep or rest, as whenever, me and my children, closed our eyes trying to sleep, we heard the sound of explosions from everywhere, they were close to the cellar we were sheltering in. it was a rough night, The regime shelled every single place in Douma with various types of weapons, the warplanes did not leave the city sky that day, where they launched a raid on one of the buildings in al-Quwatli Street, demolishing its floors over each other as if they were carton boxes."



Image shows a side of the devastation caused to Douma as a result of the violent bombardment of March 18, 2018.

Photo credit: STJ

Scores of civilian casualties, dead and wounded, were the victims of the violent shelling on residential neighborhoods of Douma, specifically on 18 and 19 March 2018, the field researcher of STJ documented some names of those killed on these days, including women and children, they are:



1. Muhammad Omar Balalah.
2. Mustafa Nader Khitei.
3. Radwan Bakri Haroon.
4. Maher Obaida al-Tabakh (a child).
5. Hayat al-Barghouth.
6. Wafiqa al-Barghouth.
7. Basel al-Shami.
8. Yaser al-Ajwa.
9. Ali Muhammad Sulaiman.
10. Enas Aiman al-Maleeh (a girl child).
11. Muhammad Khalid al-Ajwa (a child).
12. Manal Muhammad al-Maleeh.
13. Safaa Muhammad al-Maleeh.
14. Muhammad Mustafa al-Basha (a child).
15. Ahmad Muhammad al-Tabaji (a child).

Second: Air Raids Deprive Thousands of Civilians from UN Aid

The Syrian regular forces' shelling on Douma city hasn't spared the UN aid, where on March 19, 2018, the warplanes targeted one of the Local Council warehouses, where a part of UN assistance that entered Douma on 9 and 15 March 2018 was placed, which led to the damage of a large part of it, according to "Osama Saab", an activist from the city, who said:

"At 8:00 p.m., one of the Local Council warehouses in Douma was targeted with a highly explosive rocket, resulting in the total destruction of the building, where the rocket slammed into the building reaching the food assistance that the UN has brought to Douma to ease the siege on its people."



The Syrian regular forces had already bombed a food warehouse of the Local Council of Douma on November 15, 2017, which resulted in the destruction of a part of the UN aid stored within it, according to a [previous report](#) prepared by STJ.



Image shows a side of the damage caused to the UN assistance in one of the warehouses of the Local Council of Douma, following the aerial bombardment of 19 March 2018.

Photo credit: [The Local Council of Douma](#).



Another image shows a side of the damage caused to the UN assistance in one of the warehouses of the Local Council of Douma, following the aerial bombardment of March 19, 2018.

Photo credit: [The Local Council of Douma](#).

Third: The Use of Toxic Gases and Incendiary weapons on Douma

In addition to explosive rockets, the Syrian regular forces bombed residential neighborhoods in Douma with toxic gases and incendiary devices, specifically on 18 and 19 March 2018. In this regard, the activist, Osama Saab, spoke to STJ saying:

"At 9:00 p.m. on March 18, 2018, and while the ambulance teams were heading for "Qubban Badran" area, which is located east of Douma, in order to aid those injured as a result of the brutal shelling, the regime's forces targeted the same area with chlorine-loaded missiles, but, the wind speed and direction and the lack of toxic substances helped to prevent civilian casualties."



Saab also noted that the city of Douma has also been shelled with "Rajmah" missiles loaded with phosphorus-like incendiary substance at (8:00 p.m. on March 19, 2018, where the city was bombed with more than 40 rockets armed with incendiary substance. In this regard, he added:

"The sky of Douma lit up as a result of the explosion of these rockets as if the night turned to day!, which made the people feel terrorized. Several neighborhoods in the city were targeted with rockets, which led to many fires, where an entire neighborhood, adjacent to the Souq Al-Hal in Douma, had been burnt. The rockets were fired on various parts of the city, which seriously hampered and confused the medics, especially since the fires began to devour the houses gradually and no one knows what to do."



Image shows a side of shelling Douma with weapons loaded with phosphorous-like incendiary substance on March 19, 2018.

Photo credit: [Damaski Media Agency](#).



[Video footage](#) published by “Damaski Media Agency” showed an aspect of shelling Douma with weapons loaded with incendiary substance, similar to phosphorus, on March 19, 2018.

Another [video footage](#) also published by “Damaski Media Agency”, showed an aspect of the recovery of the dead and wounded civilians from under the rubble, following the violent shelling on Douma on March 19, 2018.