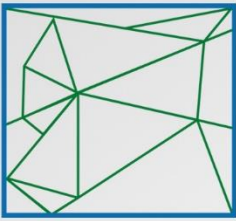


سوريون
من أجل
الحقيقة
والعدالة
Syrians
For Truth
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September 2018



Hama: Regime-led offensive Causing Civilian Casualties

*Kafr Zita town is Almost Empty following
Moscow's warnings of a "possible" Chemical
Attack*

Hama: Regime-led offensive Causing Civilian Casualties

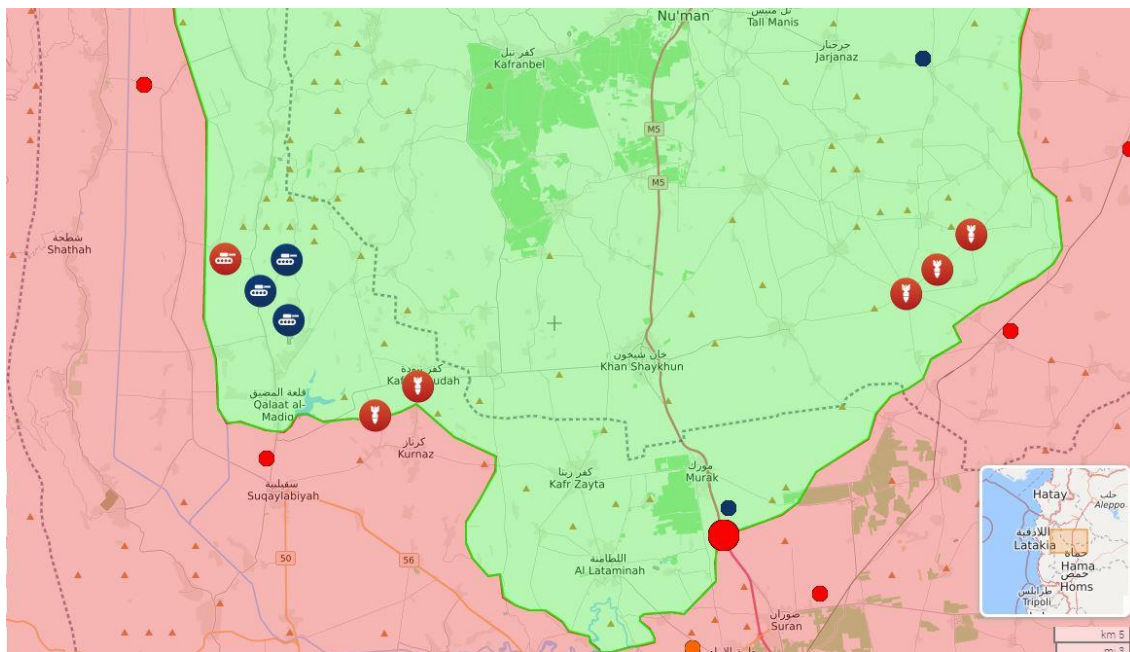
Kafr Zita town is Almost Empty following Moscow's warnings of a "possible" Chemical Attack

Syrian regular forces and their allies stepped up an unprecedented offensive against the northern and western Hama countryside¹; Morek, Kafr Nabudah, Latmeen, Zayzoun, Lahaya, al-Boyda, Tell Othman, Tell al-Sakher besides Kafr Zita and al-Lataminah, the most bombed, during September and August 2018, leaving dozens of civilian casualties and a significant material damage besides creating a climate of fear and constant watchfulness.

Military escalation led to displacement waves towards refugee camps in northern Syria, as Kafr Zita town became almost empty of its 30,000 population specifically after the Russian Defense Ministry's declaration, on August 26, 2018, of a possible chemical attack being staged by the rebels against the town, according to STJ field researcher.

Concurrently, Idlib province, particularly Jisr al-Shughour and its surroundings, witnessed unprecedented attacks on Sep 4, resulted in the kill of at least 14 and the injury of scores.²

STJ prepared a report on the dire humanitarian conditions suffered by IDPs from Hama eastern countryside who proceeded to makeshift camps in Ma'arat al-Nu'man that lacks the basic needs to survive.³



A map illustrates who controls what in Hama until September 6, 2018.

¹ Hama northern and western countryside controlled by several armed factions notably Jaysh al-Izza.

² "Idlib: Civilian Casualties in Aerial Attacks on Jisr al-Shughur", STJ, September 5, 2018; <https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/722>. (Last visit: September 6, 2018).

³ "Idlib: Thousands of IDPs living Catastrophic Humanitarian Conditions in Refugee Camps", STJ, August 28, 2018; <https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/700>. (Last visit: September 6, 2018).

I. Civilian casualties in violent attacks against Hama countryside:

Abdul Majeed al-Omar, Hama media office staff member, told STJ that more than 30 dead and 45 wounded, during August only, as a result of the fierce offensive launched on Hama countryside by the Syrian army. Al-Lataminah village and Kafr Zita town were the most bombed, since they were on the line of contact with Regime-held areas: Halfaya, Zalaqiyat, and Tyba al-Imam. He said:

"Hama countryside was subjected to 7 air strikes by Russian jets, 6 barrel bombs by the Syrian Regime helicopters, 50 grad missiles, 195 artillery shells, 69 mortar shells, 59 heavy machine gun fires, 4 tank shells, and 2 guided thermobaric missiles during August 2018. That violent bombardment resulted in many deaths, as on August 4, Khair al-Din Mohammed ar-Rahmoun, from al-Lataminah, was killed by artillery shells fired from Syrian regime forces stationed in al-Zalaqiyat village and Tayseer Abdussalam al-Issa, from Zayzoun village, killed by shells fired from Syrian regime forces stationed in Joreen Camp. On August 6, Yehiya Hasan al-Ali, from Kafr Zita, was killed by Explosive Remnant of War/ERW. On August 12, Muna Abdulaziz al-Othman, from Zayzoun, western Hama countryside, was killed by artillery shells fired from Syrian regime forces stationed in Joreen camp. While a psychopath woman was shot to death as she approached a Regime checkpoint in al-Mughayr town, with no awareness. On the same day in Latmeen village, northern countryside of Hama, four children and two women, one handicapped, were injured because of heavy artillery shells and heavy machine guns fired from Syrian-regime forces stationed in Suran city."



Bombardment on Kafr Zita, Hama countryside, August 10, 2018.

Photo credit: [Local Facebook pages](#)



Devastation of civilian houses in al-Lataminah after the attacks of August 2018.

Photo credit: Fayyad as-Satouf, activist.



Devastation of civilian houses in al-Lataminah after the attacks of August 2018.

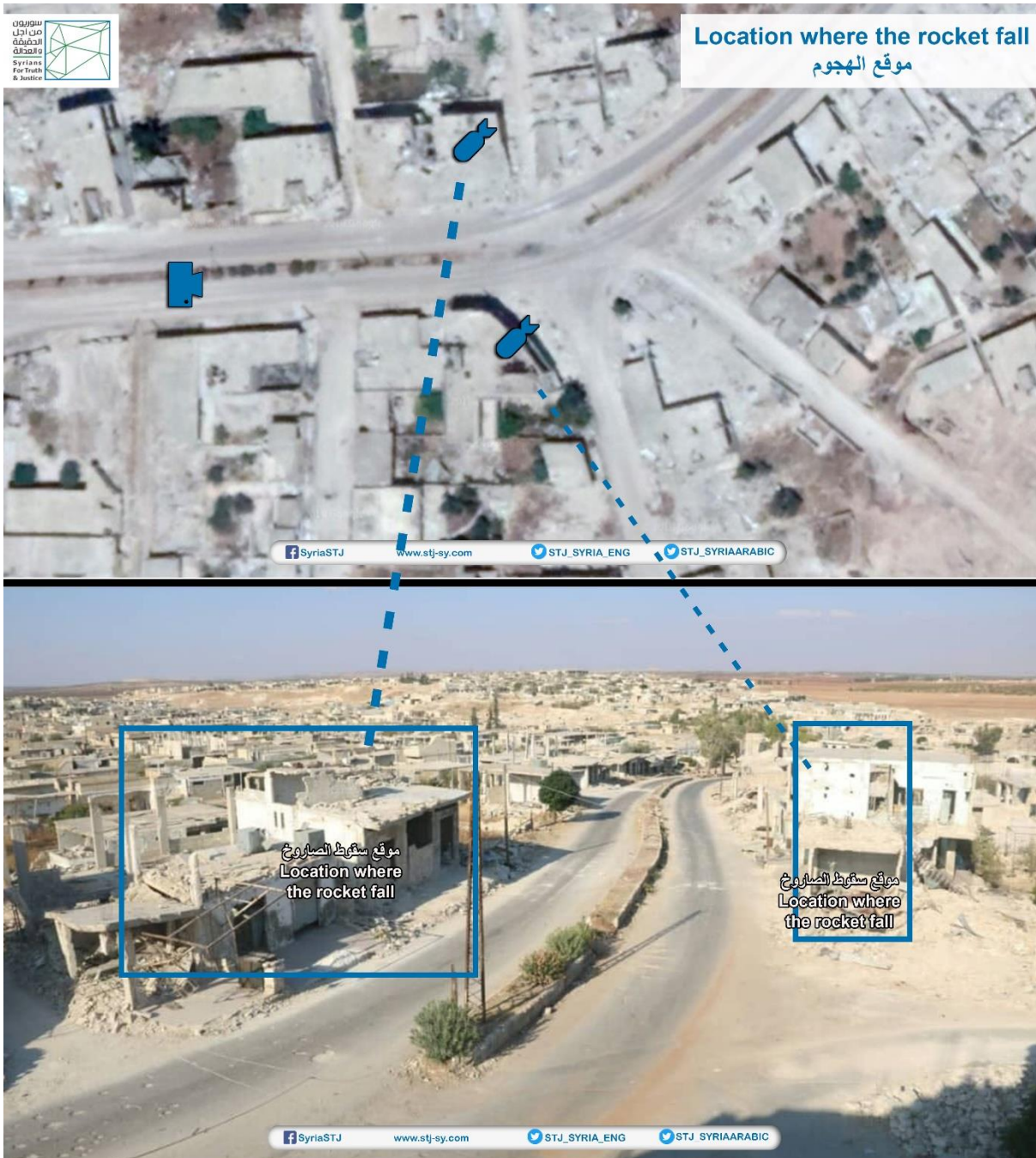
Photo credit: Mohammed Howyish, activist



Location of Al-Ilatamna
موقع اللطامنة



Location where the rocket fall
موقع الهجوم



Analysis of visual evidence

Mohammed Abdulaziz al-Othman, from western Hama countryside, brother of Muna, who fall in August 12 attacks, testified to STJ:

“I was living with my wife and 7-members family, including Muna, in a two-storey house. Muna born in 2000, she couldn’t pursue her education after the elementary stage because of the war events, she got engaged a short while ago, but, alas, she died.

It was midnight when we woke up to a boom sound of a shell hit our house. We rushed to the basement and there we realized the absence of Muna, I hurried upstairs and found her lying dead and covered with blood as the shell, which turned out to be fired from Joreen Camp, had fallen next to her. I and all my family broke down and cried and we still living that painful moment.”



The destruction caused to the witness Mohammed Abdulaziz Othman's house following shelling Zayzoun town, Hama countryside on August 12, 2018.

Photo credit: STJ

Ahmad Hasan al-Ali, from Kafr Zita, told STJ how his brother died on August 22 saying:

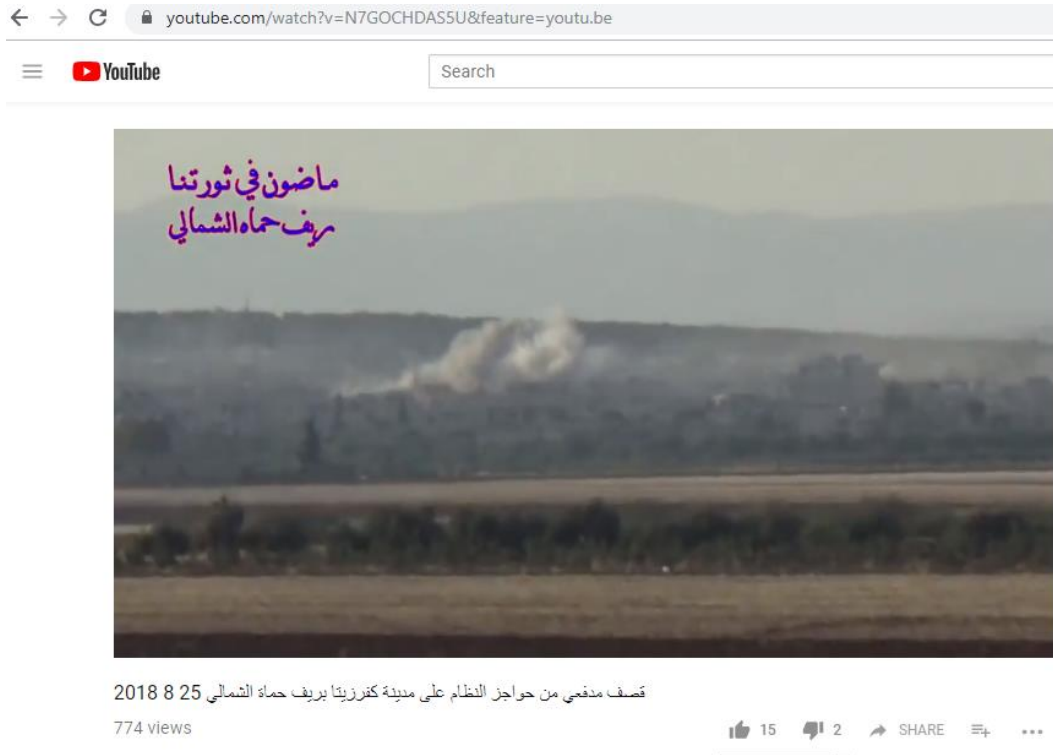
“My brother was married with no children, he did several jobs like farming and construction to make living for my poor family. After the outbreak of war in Syria, he learned the ERW dismantling and from time to time, he was asked to carry out missions to search for, dispose of and destroy such remnants. At 2:45pm on August 22 we heard an explosion which we thought at first it might be an air strike on the town’s surrounding, but we learned later that it was an ERW explosion which injured my brother seriously, I lost control when I heard that news and hurried with few young men to take him to a nearby medical post, where the doctors told us that he must be transferred immediately to Turkey as he might die at any moment, so we took him to a hospital in Antakiya city, but unfortunately he had been dead.”



Yehiya Hasan al-Ali from Kafr Zita, killed in ERW explosion on August 22, 2018.

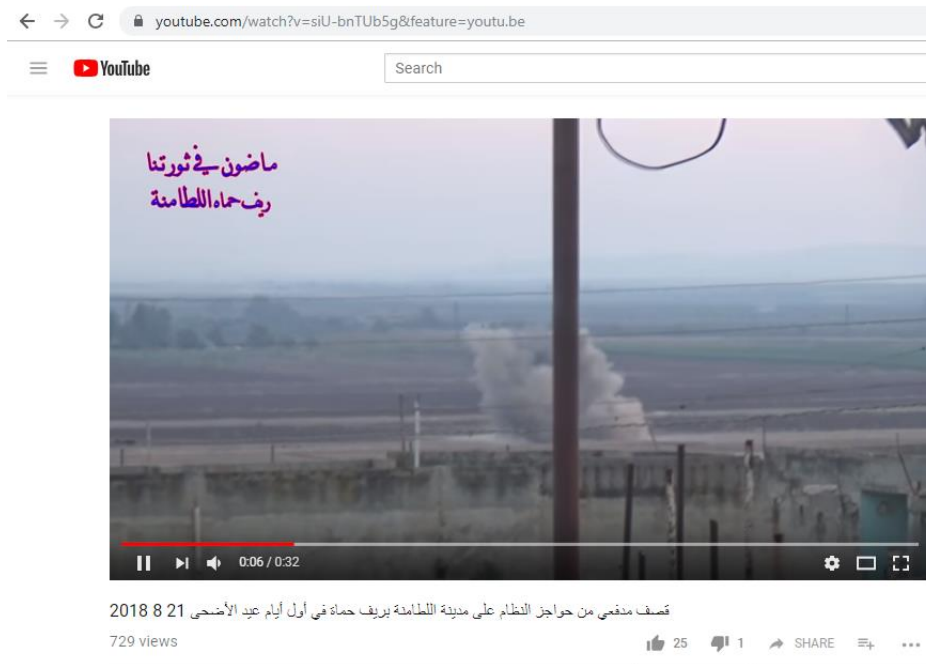
Photo credit: STJ

Activists circulated a [video footage](#) showed Kafr Zita being shelled by the Syrian army on August 25, 2018.



A still taken from the aforementioned [video footage](#).

Activists also circulated another [video footage](#) on August 20 showed artillery shelling on al-Lataminah.



A still taken from the aforementioned [footage](#).

II. Kafr Zita town became almost empty:

Hostilities against Hama countryside over August 2018 caused significant displacement wave, especially from Kafr Zita, and from south Idlib countryside to the camps in northern Syria. Iyad Abu al-Joud, a media activist from Hama countryside reported;

"Kafr Zita has been emptied gradually from its 30,000 population, given the violent attacks during August and the months before. It became a ghost town after its population displaced, particularly following the Russian Ministry of Defense's⁴ announcement of possible chemical attack being prepared by armed opposition factions against it",

النسخ الرابط 5888

A- A A+

مشاركة 11 أعجبني

أفادت وزارة الدفاع الروسية، اليوم الأحد، بوصول خبراء أجانب إلى إدلب لتنظيم مسرحية "الهجوم الكيميائي" باستخدام الذخائر المليئة بالكلور.



الدفاع الروسية: الضربة

الخربية المرتقبة على سوريا

تهدف لتغطية هجوم

للمسلحين على حماة وحلب

شركة "Olive Group"

البريطانية تنفي تورطها في

الاستفزاز المحتمل بسوريا

ونقل المتحدث باسم وزارة الدفاع الروسية الجنرال إيغور كوناشينكوف عن مركز المصالحة الروسي أن الضربة (الهجوم) من منصات الإطلاق الصاروخية على التجمع السكني كفرزيتا الواقع على بعد 6 كيلومترات جنوب مدينة الهبيط، باستخدام المواد السامة، ستجري وفق الخطط في اليومين القادمين.

وأضاف أنه يتم في كفرزيتة إعداد مجموعة من السوريين الذين تم نقلهم من الشمال للمشاركة في مسرحية "إصابتهم" بـ "الذخائر الكيميائية" و"قنابل البراميل" التابعة للقوات الحكومية السورية، ومسرحية تقديم المساعدة الطبية من قبل المنقذين المزيفين من "الخوذ البيضاء" وتصوير تقارير مصورة لنشرها في وسائل الإعلام الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية ووسائل الإعلام في الشرق الأوسط.

المصدر: وكالات

News from RT on the potential chemical attack by armed opposition on Kafr Zita.

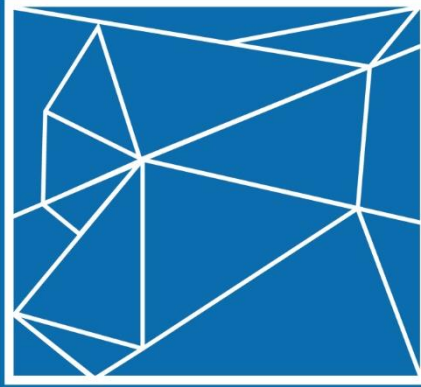
Photo credit: [RT](#)

⁴ "Terrorists & White Helmets met in Idlib to prep for final stage false flag chem attack – Russian MoD", RT, 8 Sep, 2018; <https://www.rt.com/news/437953-idlib-syria-attack-terrorists/>.

Abu al-Joud added that the pro- government forces lowered using of air power while escalating their ground shelling specifically from Joreen Camp in Sahl al-Ghab area and Halfaya town, and he goes on to say:

“This fierce military campaign has resulted in severe human and material losses, beside displacements especially from Kafr Zita on August 31, 2018, following a statement made by Russian Ministry of Defense on the rebels’ intention to conduct gas attacks against the town, which the opposition considered it to be a ploy aims to accuse them with a forthcoming chemical attack by the Regime. Reinforcements for pro-government forces were brought to the Hama’s northern countryside and Aleppo’s southern countryside fronts. It seems that the Syrian regular forces become ready to bomb Hama countryside after their full control over Daraa, Damascus and Homs provinces and Hama southern countryside.”

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About 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 (females and males) have dignity, equality, justice and equal human rights.

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