



Shelling Civilian Objects and Facilities in Eastern Ghouta Deprives Thousands of Residents from Services

“The Syrian/Russian Alliance’s Repeated Targeting of Duma’s Local Council, Put it out of Service”



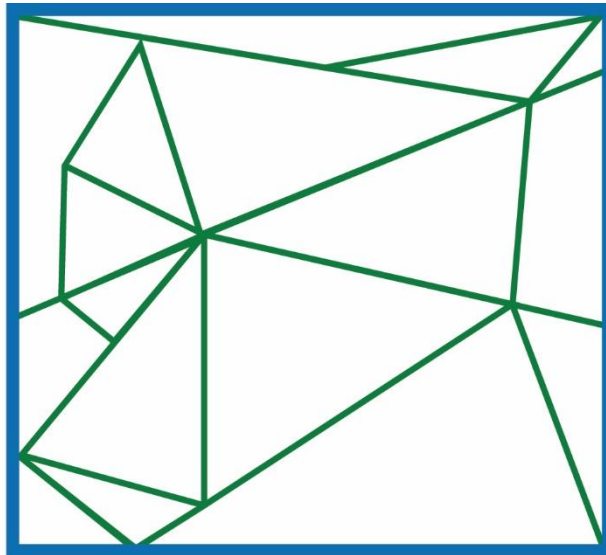
About Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ

[Syrians for Truth and Justice /STJ](#) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental, independent Syrian organization. STJ includes many defenders and human rights defenders from Syria and from different backgrounds and affiliations, including academics of other nationalities.

The organization works for Syria, where all Syrians, without discrimination, should be accorded dignity, justice and equal human rights.

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For Truth
& Justice





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Preface

The Syrian regular forces and their Russian allies have not only targeted civilian concentrations during their successive military campaigns on Eastern Ghouta cities and towns, but also service and civil institutions had a share of the campaigns. One of which was the Local Council of [Duma](#)¹ city, as it had been bombed four consecutive times, resulting to its significant destruction which led to put it out of service.

According to [a previous report prepared by Syrians for Truth and justice/STJ](#), the first targeting of the Local Council in Duma city was on November 15, 2017, only 48 hours after the UN convoys entered Duma, where the Local Council warehouses were shelled, resulting in the damage of a large portion of the humanitarian assistance stored in them.

On November 19, 2017, pro-government forces and their allies re-targeted the Local Council for the second time, by firing missiles loaded with cluster munitions, killing one of its staff .

By the beginning of 2018, specifically on January 13, 2018, the council was targeted for the third time by ground-to-ground missiles, causing significant material damage.

On February 6, 2018, the Local Council was targeted for the fourth time in a row, where it was subjected to aerial bombardment, which put it out of service and suspended its staff's attendance.

First: Successive Military Campaigns on Eastern Ghouta:

The Syrian regular forces and their allies have launched several military campaigns on Eastern Ghouta cities and towns have. The first campaign began on November 15, 2017, following Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya opposition Movement's announcement of the battle "[They Were Wronged](#)"² on November 14, 2017, which aimed at controlling the "Military Vehicles Management" in Harasta city. This campaign lasted until the end of the month, leaving

¹ Duma city is under the control of Army of Islam.

² The first stage of "They Were Wronged" battle resulted in the kill of several soldiers from the Syrian regular army besides Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement's taking control over large sections of the Military Vehicles Management located in Harasta city.



hundreds of civilian killed or injured. Once the first campaign finished, the Syrian regular forces launched a second one on December 29, 2017, coinciding with Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement's announcement of the second stage³ of the battle. This campaign lasted until mid-February 2018, the aim of the Syrian regular forces behind it was to retake buildings they lost in the "Military Vehicles Management" in Harasta city, east of Damascus.

On February 17, 2018, pro-government forces and militias mobilized a very large number of vehicles and soldiers on several adjacent points for Eastern Ghouta, according to military sources, these crowds were as a part of preparations for the military operations in which "Tiger Forces", affiliated to "Suheil al-Hassan" nicknamed The Tiger, al-Nimr, are involved, to control the Eastern Ghouta region. This campaign has begun with intense bombardment, by warplanes, helicopters and heavy artillery, leaving more than 200 civilian deaths, from the day it begins to the date of preparation of this report according to the field researcher of STJ.

Second: Targeting the Local Council Four Times in a Row:

The Local Council of Duma has been targeted four times in a row, during previous campaigns, the first of which was on November 15, 2017, only 48 hours after the UN delegation entered Duma city to deliver humanitarian assistance. The Local Council of Duma received the delegation and the food baskets it brought for the people and placed them in the main warehouse of the Council to be distributed to people later. However, aerial bombardment was the former, where the warehouses were directly bombed by air raids, resulting in the damage to almost (40%) of food stored in them, which means the deprivation of besieged civilians from it. According to a [report](#) prepared earlier by STJ.

Only four days after the first target, specifically on November 19, 2017, the Local Council was targeted for a second time, by warplanes which fired missiles loaded with cluster munitions, resulted in the injury of a Council's presidential office member, who died later of his wounds.

³ The battles in the second stage led to impose siege on Military Vehicles Management by Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement, in addition to the latter's control of Al-Ajami neighborhood, the Automated oven, and Al Hadaeq neighborhood, which stretches along the road between Harasta and Irbin from the west side of the Military Vehicles Management.



A side of the devastation caused to Duma's Local Council, following the aerial bombardment of February 6, 2018. Photo credit: [Syrians for Truth and Justice](#)



The warehouse of the Local Council, which was first targeted on November 15, 2017. Photo credit: [Syrians for Truth and Justice](#)



With the end of 2017, the military campaign carried out by the Syrian regular forces and its allies in Eastern Ghouta has increased in violence and ferocity, and this has impeded many employees of the Local Council staff to reach their workplace their, which resulted in a three-day holiday, starting from December 31th, 2017.



The Local Council's holiday resolution, issued on December 30, 2017. Photo credit: [Douma Local Council](#)

On January 13, 2018, the Local Council of Duma was subjected to a third target with four high-explosive ground-to-ground missiles, which hit the garage that was containing a number of vehicles used to open roads, lifting the debris resulted from shelling, checking infrastructure, etc. The target also affected the civil service operations because of disrupting the work of service institutions.

The Local Council of Duma city subsequently issued a statement on January 20, 2018, condemning the shelling, which destroyed the infrastructure of its garage.



A side of the destruction caused to the Local Council of Duma by the bombardment of January 13, 2018.

Photo credit: [Douma Local Council](#)



A side of the destruction caused to the Local Council's vehicles, used for lifting debris, as a result of shelling the Council's garage on January 13, 2018. Photo credit: [Douma Local Council](#)



الجمهورية العربية السورية
محافظة ريف دمشق
المجلس المحلي لمدينة دوما

بيان

20 / 01 / 2018

تعرض مرآب المجلس المحلي لمدينة دوما لعملية قصف متعمدة بأربعة صواريخ أرض أرض شديدة الانفجار بتاريخ 13 / 01 / 2018 في تمام الساعة 5:20 مساءً. أدى هذا القصف إلى دمار جزء كبير من البنية التحتية للمرآب وخروج عدة آليات عن الخدمة. وتم تأخير الإعلان عن الحادثة لتاريخ اليوم نظراً لظروف نقل المرآب وتأمين ما تبقى في مكان آخر بسبب الاستهداف المتكرر للمكان المذكور بشكل متعمد علماً أنه يمثل عمل مدني ولا يتواجد فيه أي مظاهر مسلحة.



f Douma.local.council G Douma4all S Douma.ic Doumalc.com

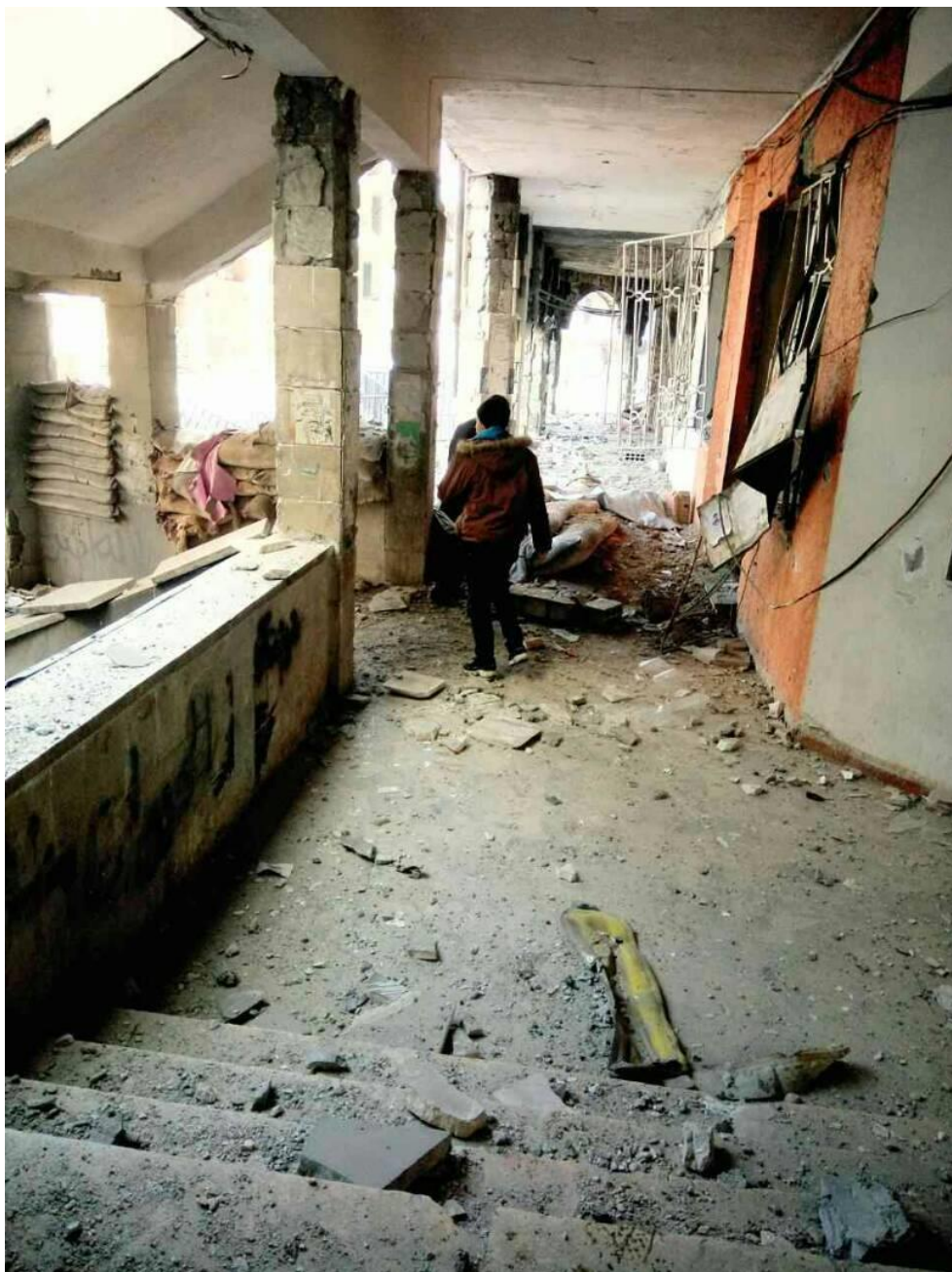
The statement issued by the Local Council of Duma on January 20, 2018, condemning the shelling of the Council and damaging the vehicles. Photo credit: Douma Local Council

The fourth target occurred on February 6, 2018, where the Local Council was subjected to heavy bombardment by warplanes, which destructed a part of it, caused material damage to staff offices and put it out of service as a result.

Subsequently, the Local Council issued a statement on February 6, 2018, in which it announced that the staff's attendance is completely suspended as a result of the inability to conduct the work because of the damage caused.

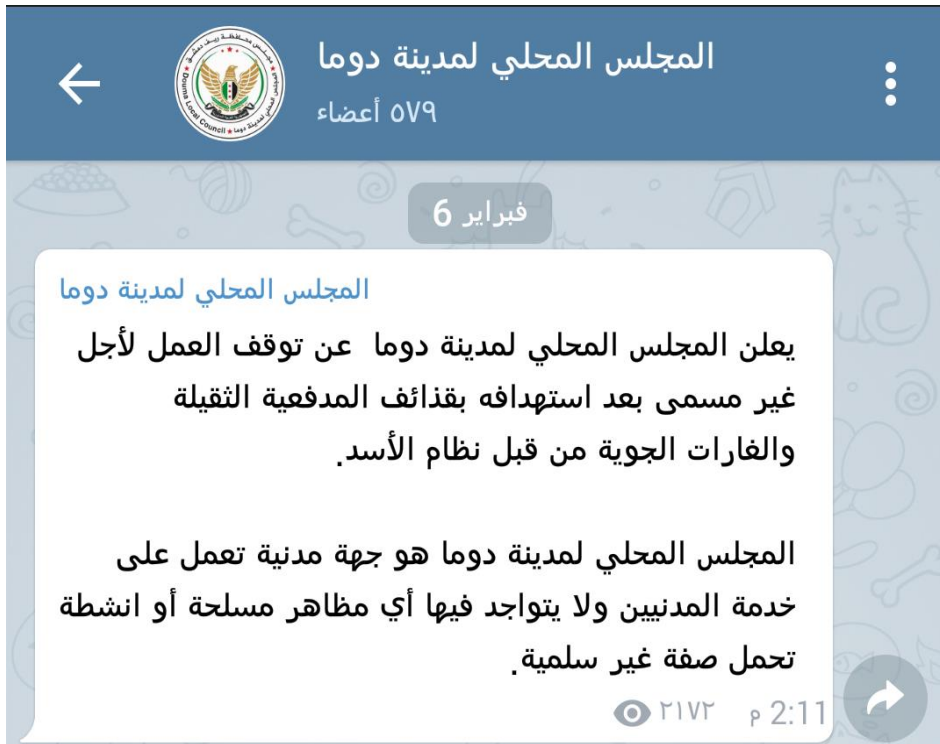


Several days later, an emergency plan was announced, including the return of some Local Council offices to a part-time work, including the cleaning office, the debris lifting, roads opening and the presidential office, as the city needs their services, especially in the light of the deteriorating security situation and the need for the civilian service to operate.





The destruction caused to the Local Council building in Duma city, following the aerial bombardment of February 6, 2018. Photo credit: [Syrians for Truth and Justice](#)



The resolution issued by Duma's Local Council, on February 6, 2018, in which it announced the indefinite suspension of its staff's attendance. Photo credit: [Douma Local Council](#)



The resolution issued by Duma's Local Council, on February 12, 2018, in which it announced the start of the part-time work in the Council under an emergency plan. Photo credit: [Douma Local Council](#)



As confirmed by STJ field researcher, the Syrian regular forces aimed behind targeting the Local Council four consecutive times, to impede the services operations, and destruct infrastructure in Eastern Ghouta, by which the civilians overcome the cruel siege imposed on them several years ago. In addition to the desire of the Syrian regular forces to disrupt life in Eastern Ghouta and to pressure civilians to accept any choice put forward at any negotiating session.

"Bayan Raihan", the head of the information office of Duma's Local Council, spoke about the repeated targeting of the Council and the underlying goals, saying:

"Regime forces have been targeted the Local Council four times in a row since November 2017, and still to this very day, by warplanes and artillery. It is clear that the Local Council was being targeted directly and deliberately in order to disrupt civil service operations, since the Local Council is the city's civil service foundation. The shelling caused damage to a number of projects, such as the electricity project, which we worked on in cooperation with "Tatweer" Organization to supply the electricity to Duma besides the construction of an electric power plant, with its necessary accessories. The shelling also affected other projects such as agricultural projects as well as administrative work. We can say that the targeting damaged 90% of the Local Council, including its foundation and infrastructure. Almost a month ago, four vehicles of the council, used for lifting debris, were destroyed by shelling. Now we need to re-establish the Local Council, so that we can get back to work" .

Raihan added that the Council staff was also affected by shelling, as two employees were killed, the first is (Riad Na'san) who was injured in targeting the Local Council on November 19, 2017 and died of his wounds on November 26, 2017. While the other was killed with his wife and two children in shelling his house in Duma city, on February 4, 2018.

STJ has earlier issued [a fact sheet entitled "As if it's Doomsday!"](#) in which it summed up the most prominent attacks and massacres in Eastern Ghouta cities and towns from late December 2017.