

December 2017



## Shelling a Popular Market in Mesraba town Leaves a Massacre of Up To 20 People

"The Massacre Came in the Context of the Military Escalation on Eastern Ghouta, Damascus Countryside"



## About Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ

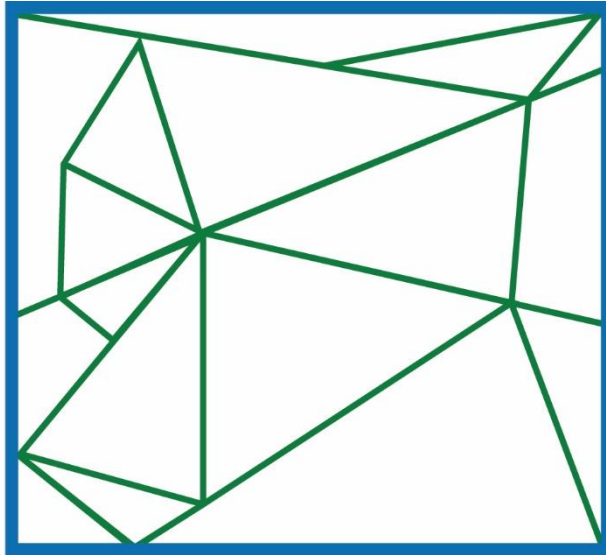
[Syrians for Truth and Justice /STJ](#) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental, independent Syrian organization. STJ includes many defenders and human rights defenders from Syria and from different backgrounds and affiliations, including academics of other nationalities.

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

سوريون  
من أجل  
الحقيقة  
والعدالة  

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Syrians  
For Truth  
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At least 20 civilians were killed and up to 80 others injured, following the shell on a popular market that was crowded with civilians in [Mesraba](#) village<sup>1</sup>, Damascus countryside on November 26, 2017. According to many village residents and eyewitnesses, warplanes, likely to be affiliated to Syrian regular forces, attacked the village's market with four high-explosive rockets, which resulted in many deaths among civilians, including women and children.

According to [Syrians for Truth and Justice \(STJ\)](#) reporter, the attack was parallel with the fierce military campaign launched by the Syrian regular forces on Eastern Ghouta since Tuesday, November 15, 2017, following Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement's announcement of the Battle "[They Were Wronged](#)" which began on Monday morning, November 14, 2017. According to STJ reporter, these battles caused the death of several Syrian regular forces fighters including some officers, headed by Lieutenant General, Walid Khawashkji, deputy commander of the Military Vehicles Management, in addition to that, combatants of Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement managed to control large parts of the Military Vehicles Management as well as the seizure of weapons and ammunition.



Image shows some of the civilian casualties resulted from the shelling of a popular market in Mesraba village on November 26, 2017

Photo credit: [Mesraba coordinating's Facebook page](#)

<sup>1</sup> Mesraba village is under the full control of the Army of Islam faction.

Ahmed al-Khouli, one of Mesraba natives, who were near the targeted site, spoke to STJ about what happened saying:

**"At 10:30 a.m., while I was around the town market, Syrian warplanes launched a raid on it. Several rockets were dropped, one of which landed in the middle of the market, which is usually crowded with civilians, and that led to the increase in the number of the dead and the injured. Many families lost their sons besides many children killed, and many have been maimed, not to mention the material damage to civilian houses. However, the scene that stick in my mind is for the woman who was shopping with her children, who in just a few seconds, turned into scattered pieces."**

Ahmed said that the targeted market located in the midst of heavily populated civilian buildings, at the intersection of four roads, which connect several areas in Eastern Ghouta. Noting that a large number of those injured, died later, not only because of their serious injuries, but also as a result of the siege imposed on Eastern Ghouta several years ago by Syrian regular forces who deny medicines entry, furthermore, many of the wounded wish they would die to end their torture.



Satellite image shows the strike location, at the popular market in Mesraba village, Damascus countryside.



A [video footage](#) published by the coordination of Mesraba on November 26, 2017 showed the rising of smoke plumes following the targeting of a popular market within the town at the same date. [Another video footage](#) published by the civil defence team of Damascus countryside showed the arrival of the civil defence teams to the strike location, at a popular market in Mesraba, on November 26, 2017.

In another testimony, Amer Rihan, a civil defence member in Mesraba village, assured that warplane likely to be affiliated to the Syrian regular forces, fired four high-explosive rockets at a popular market where there are no military headquarters inside or near it in Mesraba. The rockets landed in places that were only a few metres away from each other, in this regard, he said:

**"While we were at the Civil Defence Centre in Mesraba, we heard the sound of a warplane raiding the town market, we rushed directly to the targeted location, and we were shocked with the scene of the dead bodies scattered everywhere, most of which belonged to children and women. The smell of burning bodies was filling the place. Immediately we transferred the dead and the injured to all medical points in Eastern Ghouta but because of the enormous number of casualties, support was summoned from several civil defence centres. (12) Civilians instantly died, and the death toll began to rise. Many injured died of their wounds, and the final death toll was (21) dead, as well as more than 80 injured. It is noteworthy that Mesraba is one of the most densely populated villages in Eastern Ghouta, where many displaced persons came to it from other cities and towns in Eastern Ghouta."**



Images show some civilians killed in the shelling of a popular market in Mesraba on November 26, 2017

Photo credit: [Mesraba coordinating's Facebook page](#)



**In turn, STJ reporter documented the names of some civilians killed, including:**

1. Ghosoun al-Qabouni along with her son and daughter
2. A girl child from Mahjoub Family
3. The girl child Soumaya Anas Shihab
4. Mohammed Basha's son, a child
5. The child Mohammed Yasser Awad
6. Yousef Mohammed Abu Wahda
7. Adnan al-Khawlie, Abu Okasha's son
8. Isam al-Khawlie, Abu Okasha's son
9. Omar al-Khawlie, Abu Fahed al-Tatar's son
10. Omar Abdul-Rahim, Abu Mahmoud's son
11. Ahmed Ibrahim Shehada
12. Ibrahim Balla
13. Khalid al-Ali

It is worth mentioning that Eastern Ghouta is included in de-escalation zones in Syria. That on May 4, 2017, sponsor states of Astana Talks (Russia, Turkey and Iran) signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) for establishment of de-escalation zones in Syria. It included Eastern Ghouta in Damascus countryside, Idlib province and some parts of northern Homs, as well as some parts of adjacent provinces (Latakia, Hama, and Aleppo) and some parts of southern Syria. One of the most prominent items is cessation of hostilities between conflicting parties and creation conditions for access medical aids.

On July 22, 2017, the Army of Islam participated in [signing](#) de-Escalation Agreement in Syria, [followed](#) by Failaq al-Rahman, on August 18, 2017.

STJ had earlier prepared a [report](#) on a horrific massacre of more than 65 civilians, caused by shelling one of the most popular markets in Atarib town, in Aleppo countryside, by warplanes believed to be affiliated to the Russian Air Force on November 13, 2017. STJ had also prepared [another report](#), which recorded the dozens of civilian casualties resulted from the shelling of a popular market in Ma`arat al-Nu`man city on October 8, 2017.