

## Statement

# On the Second Anniversary of Khan Sheikhoun Attack, the UN Has to Punish the Syrian Regime

Russian Forces Have Been Politically and Militarily Involved in the Syrian Regime's Use of Chemical Weapons

# SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.



For the Syrian people, today's date, April 4, brings back painful memories; this year is the second anniversary of the second most lethal chemical attack in Syria after the attack of the western and eastern Ghouta in August 2013, when a fixed-wing SU-22 warplane of the Syrian regime targeted the northern neighborhood of Khan Sheikoun in the southern suburbs of Idlib on Tuesday morning, April 4, 2017, using a missile containing poison gas believed to be sarin, killing at least 91 civilians, including 32 children and 23 women (adult female), all of whom were fatally asphyxiated.

The Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack was also the first of the regime's chemical attacks to be clearly supported by Russian forces. We have documented several indicators supporting our claim against the Russian regime, with the Russian air force launching air strikes shortly after the chemical attack targeting several roads leading to Khan Sheikoun city that hindered ambulances and the transfer of critical cases to hospitals and medical centers located at the Turkish border. The Syrian Network for Human Rights' team also recorded additional Russian air strikes targeting al Rahma Hospital and the Civil Defense Center in Khan Sheikoun city, which were providing first aid to the injured. These attacks took place nearly three hours after the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) confirmed the use of chemical weapons in Khan Sheikoun city without identifying the perpetrator; the attack took place in the period before its mandate allowed it to ascribe responsibility. However, the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) established by Security Council Resolution 2235 of August 2015 has confirmed the Syrian regime's responsibility for the Khan Sheikoun attack. In addition, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria documented the Syrian regime's responsibility for the Khan Sheikoun attack. It was assumed that after these accurate and highly credible investigations, the Security Council would move to implement its relevant resolutions - Resolution No. 2118 of September 27, 2013, Resolution No. 2209 of March 6, 2015 and Resolution No. 2235 of August 7, 2015, to militarily penalize



the Syrian regime, or at least to impose economic sanctions on the Syrian regime, including organs and individuals involved in the use of chemical weapons; unfortunately, it has failed to achieve any of this.

The Security Council and the international community bear responsibility for the subsequent uses of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, because their shameful and weak reaction to this atrocity encouraged the Syrian regime to repeatedly perpetrate violations that constitute war crimes safe in the knowledge of its impunity. According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights' database, the Syrian regime carried out at least 14 chemical attacks following the Khan Sheikhoun attack, the most recent of which was the Douma attack on April 7, 2018.

The total number of chemical weapons attacks documented on the Syrian Network for Human Rights' database now amounts to at least 221 chemical attacks since December 23, 2012, the date of the first use of chemical weapons in Syria which we documented, up until April 4, 2019. These attacks are distributed according to the perpetrator party as follows:

- The Syrian regime: 216 chemical attacks, mostly in the governorates of Damascus Suburbs and Idlib.
- ISIS: Five attacks, all in Aleppo governorate.

These attacks resulted in the deaths of at least 1,461 individuals, listed on our lists by name and in detail; all of the victims who died in attacks carried out by the Syrian regime are distributed as follows:

- 1,397 civilians, including 185 children and 252 women (adult female).
- 57 Armed Opposition fighters.
- Seven prisoners of Syrian Regime forces who were in a prison run by the opposition.

A further 9,885 individuals were injured in these attacks, with these cases distributed as follows:

- 9,753 were injured as a result of attacks carried out by the Syrian regime.
- 132 were injured as a result of attacks carried out by ISIS.

[The following link](#) includes reports documenting 221 chemical weapons attacks, including details of all incidents we were able to document, such as the time and location of the attack, weather conditions at the time, death toll of victims; the deaths and injuries, the type of weapon used, and interviews with eyewitnesses and survivors of incidents, as well as a wide range of images and videos that we received, checked and verified, in addition to

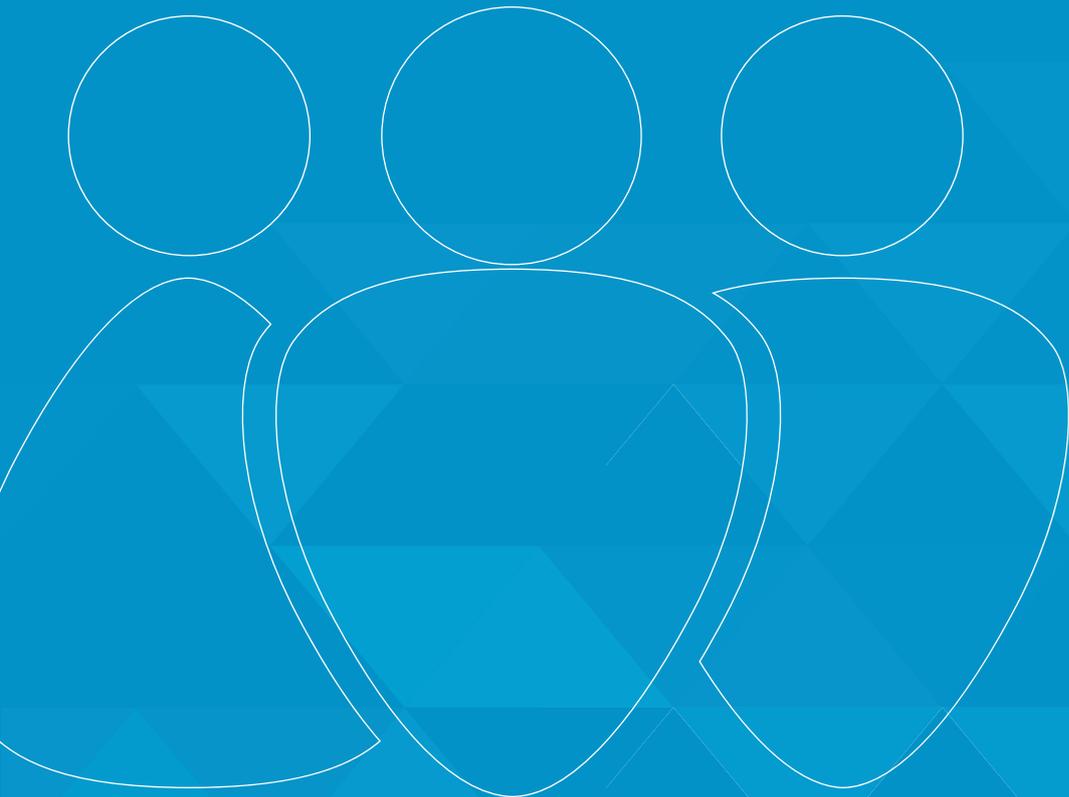


other evidence.

It is true that we, at the Syrian Network for Human Rights, haven't recorded any chemical attack after the two chemical attacks on Douma on April 7, 2018; however, we have recorded the continuing violations perpetrated by the Syrian regime; violations that constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity through the use of improvised explosive devices, cluster munitions, and even torture to death in detention centers.

Given its new mandate, the OPCW must identify those responsible for the Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack and other chemical attacks, and thus hold the Security Council and the international community, including the Syrian regime's allies, more responsible; such action might prompt them not to consider any kind of relationship with a regime that uses weapons of mass destruction against civilians in this modern age before the eyes of the whole world. The international community must create a humanitarian and civilized alliance aimed at protecting Syrian civilians from chemical weapons and all types of killing that have been used against them for eight years, and compensate the victims; the most pressing requirement is to hold the Syrian regime accountable for the crimes against humanity which it has perpetrated against the Syrian people. This alliance also should lead a political process aimed at achieving political transition towards a representative democratic government that respects human rights and democracy and contributes to the fight against chemical weapons and crimes against humanity.





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