

The First Anniversary of Khan Sheikhoun Chemical Attack

The Syrian Regime Has Carried out 214 Chemical Attacks, including 11 after Khan Sheikhoun Attack, and yet no Accountability



SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Wednesday, April 4, 2018

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.



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I. Introduction and Methodology

One year has passed since the horrifying massacre of Khan Sheikhoun, when the Syrian regime used chemical weapons against the residents of Khan Sheikhoun city, killing 91 civilians who suffocated to death, including 32 children. Consequently, The American Administration dealt an airstrike against al Shayrat Airbase from which the warplanes that attacked the city took off. This didn't, however, stop the Syrian regime's continued use of chemical weapons, as the Syrian regime didn't face any serious opposition that would represent a real red line. SNHR team has documented 11 attacks using chemical weapons after Khan Sheikhoun attack. In this context, the international community, and most notably the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany, are obligated to uphold their pledges of stopping the use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people in order to never repeat the sight of residents suffocating to death.

The American-Russian agreement that was struck after the infamous two Ghouta attack in August 2013 stated that the Security Council will conduct regular reviews with regard to the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime. All of the Security Council Resolutions that have been adopted on chemical weapons in Syria stated that the Security Council shall take measures against the Syrian regime under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations in the event of non-compliance to the American-Russian agreement and Security Council Resolutions. The Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), which was established in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2235, have proved that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons three times at least, while the Mechanism was still investigating other incidents when Russia ended its mandate by using a veto.

Based on the above, and according to what we've recorded at SNHR in 30 reports, the Syrian regime has violated the American-Russian agreement, the CWC, and all Security Council



Resolutions on chemical weapons. Therefore, the OPCW, as an affected entity and as an organ of the United Nations, should submit a case to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to call for holding those who were responsible for the use of chemical weapons accountable, seeing that they violated the provisions of the agreement that have been signed by the Syrian regime and the OPCW. This is achieved through referring to the members of the organization, where the case is submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations after meeting a quota of two-thirds of the OPCW's members. The Secretary-General, then, would refer it to the Attorney General for investigation, as the file would be prepared and submitted to the International Criminal Court. In light of the Security Council's utter failure, the United Nations General Assembly should assume this role in this regard, and an extraordinary session should be held to achieve a similar resolution to Resolution 377 of 1950. This would require, however, the approval of seven states, including permanent members of the Security Council.

Between November 16-18, 2017, a period of time during which the Security Council saw heavy international efforts to reach a formula that would satisfy all parties, especially the Russians, in the hopes of passing a resolution to extend the mandate of the JIM. Which was established in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 2235, the Syrian regime had carried out three attacks using chemical weapons in an utter and major disregard for all of these efforts. SNHR team recorded that no less than 28 individuals were injured, including six media workers, in Harasta city, Eastern Ghouta. One of these attacks were carried out merely hours after Russia used veto for a second time in less than 48 hours. This was a message addressed to the Syrian people by Russia, the Syrian regime, and the Security Council.

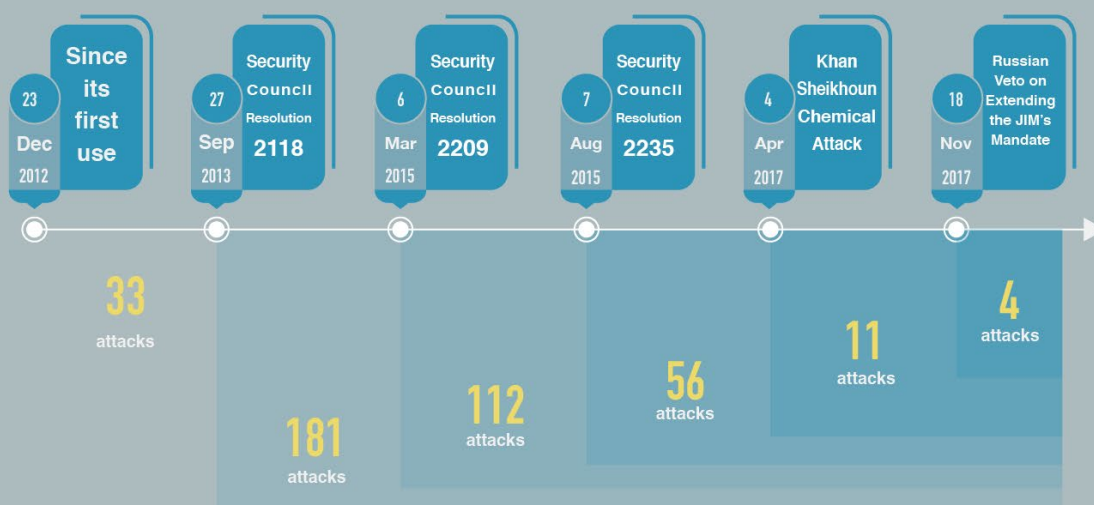
While we never monitored that Russia used chemical weapons since the start of its military intervention in September 2015, Russia was a major backer of the Syrian regime in all of the battles that aimed to seize control from armed opposition factions which saw the majority of the chemical attacks. Also, Russian directly backed the Syrian regime in a number of chemical attacks as we've documented in Khan Sheikhoun attack, April 4, 2017, and Saraqeb, February 4, 2018. More recently, Russia backed the Syrian regime in its offensive on Eastern Ghouta, Damascus suburbs which has seen the most ruthless and vicious offensive since the start of the popular uprising in March 2011. In this offensive, improvised ammunitions and chemical weapons have been used against Eastern Ghouta on November 14, 2017. The Syrian regime carried out one of these chemical attacks after Security Council Resolution 2401 was adopted, while three other chemical attacks are still being investigated.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, says:

“The repeated and widespread use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime constitutes crimes against humanity. The members of the OPCW should uphold their responsibilities before the Syrian people. We haven't seen any serious response to the Syrian regime shattering the CWC. It is time to take action.”



214 ATTACKS USING CHEMICAL WEAPONS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT BY THE SYRIAN REGIME



All of these attacks resulted
in the killing of no less than
1,421 individuals



No less than **6,904** individuals
were injured

Russia backed the Syrian regime in
2 chemical attacks at least

Khan Sheikhoun attack
April 4, 2017

Saraqeb attack
February 4, 2018

As documented by SNHR



Methodology

We relied mainly in this report on interviews with survivors who were injured in the chemical attacks, as well as doctors who treated them, paramedics, eyewitnesses, and civil defense members. We spoke to 32 individuals and outlined 19 accounts that we've collected through by speaking directly to eyewitnesses, and are not cited from open sources. We have explained the purpose of these interview for the witnesses who gave us permission to use the information they provided in the report without offering or giving them any incentives. Also, SNHR team tried to spare them the agony of remembering the violations as much as possible, and we concealed the identity of any witnesses who preferred to use an alias.

This report doesn't include the social, economic, and mental ramifications and damages. In addition, we couldn't take any blood or soil test samples for in light of the present circumstances. Eyewitnesses' accounts corresponded with the pictures and videos we had analyzed, which yielded a high degree of credibility.

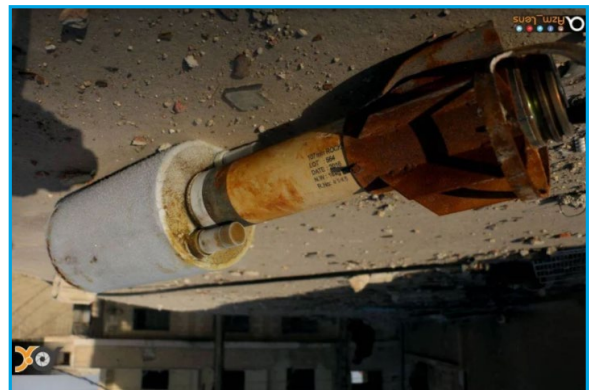
SNHR has analyzed videos and pictures that were posted online, or sent by local activists via e-mail, Skype, or social media. Some of the pictures showed remnants of yellow cylinders that we believe were loaded with a poison gas, while other pictures showed IRAM rockets on which tanks were installed, as we suspect that these tanks were loaded with a poison gas. Other pictures showed injured, including children, who were suffocated due to the use of poison gases.

We used the website "www.worldweatheronline.com" to assess the weather conditions in the attack sites or the sites closest to them, in order to obtain temperature and windspeed figures.

II. Used Munitions

In the course of our search and monitoring, we've noticed that the Syrian regime concentrated on using three types of munitions that were loaded with poison gases.

1- IRAM rockets (Improvised Rocket Assisted Munitions). These rockets are manufactured by replacing their standard warhead with a large pressurized gas tank, while tails are added to them. These rockets are fired from a launcher. Most of the attacks that saw the use of these rockets were in Eastern Ghouta, Damascus suburbs.



2- Yellow cylinders loaded with gas. These cylinders are dropped from helicopters or fixed-wing war-planes. One of the pictures that were sent to our team from a chemical attack that took place in Aleppo city in November 2016 shows a warning sticker on one of the cylinders, [highlighting that the tank contains gas](#).



3- Hand grenades: these grenades are used during clashes between the Syrian regime with factions from the armed opposition, especially in cases where the two groups are clashing at close proximities. In this case, the desired scope of the gas impact is small. We've monitored some attacks in which these grenades were used inside tunnels used by the armed opposition.



III. Executive Summary

The following table outlines all of the chemical attacks carried out by the Syrian regime that we've been able to document after our most recent [extensive report](#) – between January 1, 2017 and March 10, 2018. Most of these attacks were [highlighted](#) in [separate comprehensive reports](#) that we've released earlier.



Date	Area	Governorate	Weapon	Death Toll	Injury Toll
3-Jan-17	Bassima Village	Damascus suburbs	Ground shells		25
11-Jan-17	Bassima Village	Damascus suburbs	Surface-to-Surface rockets		17
30-Jan-17	Al Nashabiya town	Damascus suburbs	Shells		11
9-Feb-17	Irbeen city	Damascus suburbs	Ground shells		4
10-Feb-17	Irbeen city	Damascus suburbs	Ground Shells		2
21-Feb-17	An area between Housh Nasri and Housh al Dawahra	Damascus suburbs	Surface-to-Surface rockets		
26-Feb-17	Harasta city	Damascus suburbs			20
25-Mar-17	Al Latamena town	Hama	A barrel bomb	2	30
29-Mar-17	Al Qaboun neighborhood	Damascus	Surface-to-Surface rockets		35
30-Mar-17	Al Latamena town	Hama	A missile fired from a fixed-wing warplane		82
3-Apr-17	Al Habeit village	Idlib	Barrel bombs	1	13
4-Apr-17	Khan Sheikhoun city	Idlib	Missiles fired from fixed-wing warplanes (su-22)	91	520
7-Apr-17	Al Qaboun neighborhood	Damascus	Hand grenades		2
22-Jun-17	Jobar neighborhood	Damascus	Hand grenades		6
2-Jul-17	Zamalka city	Damascus suburbs	Hand grenades		9
6-Jul-17	Ein Tarma town	Damascus suburbs	Hand grenades		8
14-Jul-17	Ein Tarma town	Damascus suburbs	Hand grenades		4
16-Nov-17	Harasta city	Damascus suburbs	Ground shells		7
16-Nov-17	Harasta city	Damascus suburbs	Hand grenades		11
18-Nov-17	Harasta city	Damascus suburbs	Bombs		10
22-Jan-18	Douma city	Damascus suburbs	Surface-to-Surface rockets		18
4-Feb-18	Saraqeb city	Idlib	Barrel bombs		11
5-Mar-18	Hamouriya town	Damascus suburbs	A barrel bomb		25

By adding those attacks to what we have documented already, we conclude that the Syrian regime has used poison gases no less than 214 times. By using the adoption of Security Council Resolution as milestones, we can distribute these attacks, while outlining how many times the Syrian regime breached each Resolution with no deterrent so far:

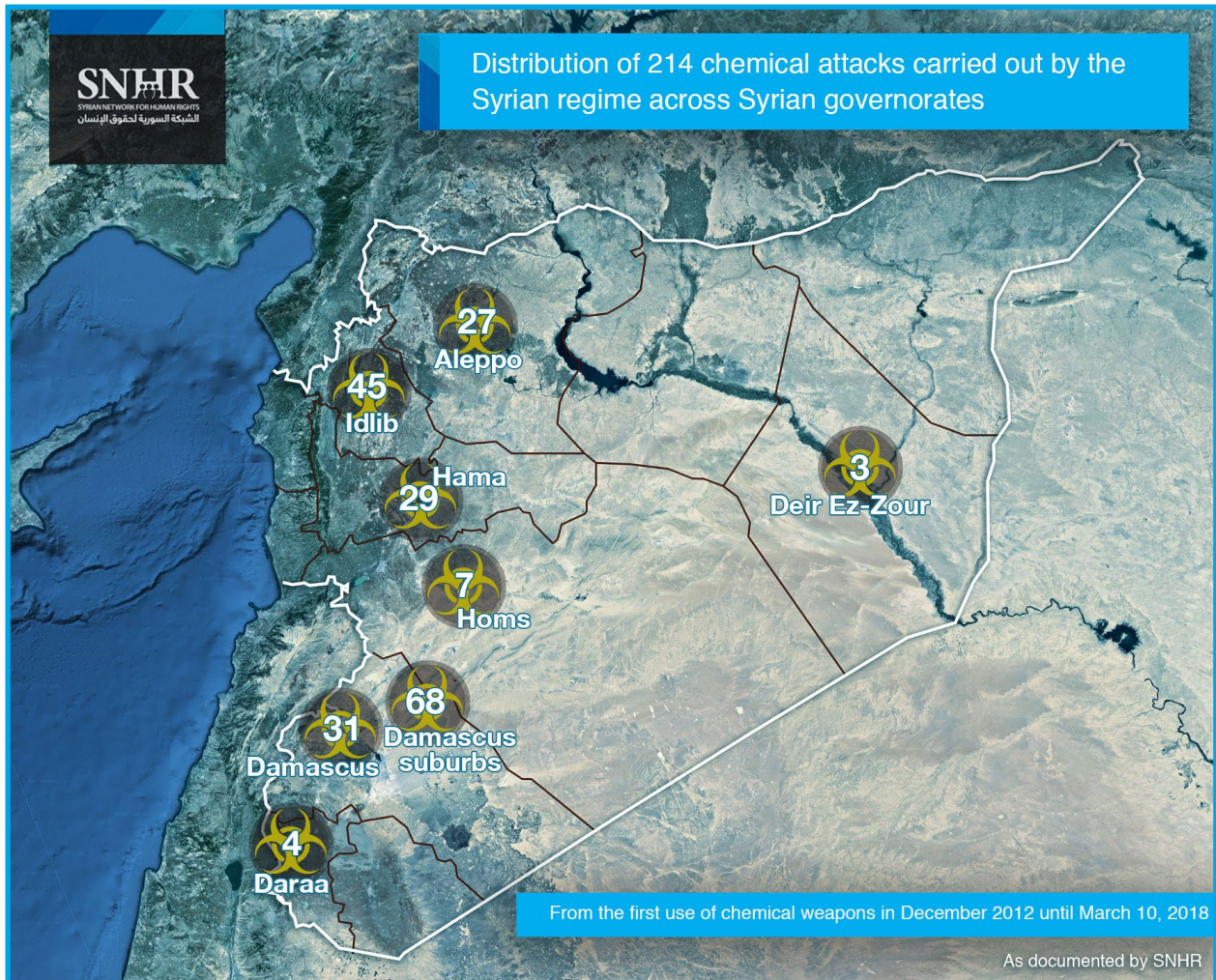
- 1- Before Security Council Resolution 2118, adopted on September 27, 2013: 33 attacks.
- 2- Since Security Council Resolution 2118, adopted on September 27, 2013: 181 attacks.
- 3- After Security Council Resolution 2209, adopted on March 6, 2015: 112 attacks.
- 4- After the JIM was established and Security Council Resolution 2235, adopted on August 7, 2015: 56 attacks.
- 5- After the Russian veto on extending the mandate of the JIM on November 18, 2017: 4 attacks



All of these attacks have resulted in the killing of no less than 1,421 individuals, recorded by names and details in our lists. The death toll is distributed as follows:

- 1,537 civilians, including 187 children and 244 women (adult female).
 - 57 armed opposition fighters
 - 7 captives from Syrian regime forces who were being held at an opposition prison
- Additionally, no less than 6,904 individuals were injured.

These attacks are distributed across governorates as follows:



IV. Details

Damascus governorate

Al-Qaboun neighborhood - Wednesday, March 29, 2017

Around 17:00, Syrian regime forces, stationed in the military station affiliated with Special Units Forces and located next to al Qaboun neighborhood, northeastern Damascus, targeted the residential neighborhoods in al Qaboun neighborhood with three rockets loaded with poison gases. About 35 individuals were injured, mostly civilians. The injured exhibited symptoms including breathing difficulties, agitated bronchus, burning in the eyes, teary eyes, nausea, and dizziness.



According to the data on the website 'worldweatheronline', the temperature in Damascus city was estimated at 23 Celsius, while windspeed was 7 mph.

Ammar Aqel¹, who works on documenting victims at the makeshift hospital in al Qaboun neighborhood, told us that he was at the medical point when he identified a smell that was similar to that of the chlorine after the attack: **“That was around 17:00. The targeting was with three rockets that landed on the residential neighborhood. We were able to smell chlorine at the medical point. We counted 35 injuries across all medical points in the neighborhood.”** Ammar recorded the symptoms on the injured: **“They were suffering from breathing difficulties, agitated bronchus, coughing, nausea, and vomiting. We provided treatment such as bronchodilator and spraying sessions.”**

Fadi Serafi², a local media worker, said that the shelling targeting areas where civilians usually gather, rather than clash zones with armed opposition fighters. Fadi headed for one of the medical points: **“I saw 15 individuals who were laying on the ground. They were coughing intensely, and their eyes were blood-like red. Someone told me that the gas affected the nearby Tishreen neighborhood, and a 23-year-old man died there, named Mahmoud Mar’e Amr.”**

Samer³, a local media worker, headed for the [makeshift hospital](#) in al-Qaboun neighborhood in the aftermath of [the attack](#): **“I saw two of the injured, one an elder and the other was a youngster who is no older than 18 years old. They both were suffering from breathing difficulties and nausea. I saw another injured who was laying on a bed. It seemed he was moving involuntarily as if he was hallucinating. I was able to identify the smell of chlorine near the hospital even though I was wearing a mask, but the smell was stingy and intense.”** Samer said that the rockets were mostly likely fired from the Special Units headquarters that is located near al Qaboun neighborhood.



Remnants of a shell that was allegedly loaded with a poison gas found in the aftermath of an attack by Syrian regime forces on al Qaboun neighborhood, Damascus – March 29, 2017

¹ We contacted him via Facebook

² We contacted him via Facebook

³ We contacted him via Facebook



Damascus suburbs governorate

Bassima village

On Saturday, December 23, 2016, a number of villages, including Bassima, fell to a suffocating siege imposed by Syrian regime forces. Three weeks later, escalated air attacks started in parallel with land attacks and raids, as Syrian regime forces used missiles, barrel bombs, and chemical weapons.

The accounts of eight witnesses corresponded about Syrian regime forces carrying out five chemical attacks in Bassima village between January 5-11, 2017. The accounts were nearly identical in describing distinctive aspects that are consistent with chemical attacks, such as the smell of chlorine and the yellow smoke. However, the accounts gave different times and dates for the attacks. As such, we have only been able to pinpoint two attacks that most of the accounts described consistently. Our team is still investigating the other attacks.

First attack: Wednesday, January 11, 2017

Syrian regime forces fired two surface-to-surface rockets loaded with a poison gas on Bassima village. The rockets landed about 200 meters from Ein al Khadra Mosque (known as al Mohammadi Mosque). No less than armed opposition and Fateh al Sham Front fighters were injured in the attack, as they were stationed at their posts. The injured suffered from a number of symptoms that included suffocation, muscle weakness, and others suffered from foaming.



According to the data on the website 'worldweatheronline', the temperature in Bassima village was estimated at 7 Celsius at 18:00, while windspeed was 5 mph.

Loay⁴, one of the fighters who were injured in the attack, said that the attack was between 16:00 and 17:30. The rocket, Loay added, landed in the backyard of a house he was in: **"The rocket didn't create any explosion noise. I was able to identify which type it is after I got close to it. It was a Grad rocket. I distinguished a yellow smoke coming out of it. A few minutes later, I started feeling my bronchus agitated, and I had troubles breathing, and my nerves felt very weak. Then, I felt an urgent need to urinate. I washed my face with water, and tried to get to the nearest medical point. I was coughing heavily for nearly five hours. Things improved after a dexamethasone shot, but the breathing difficulties and pain in my bronchus lasted for about four days to come. About 20 people were injured in the attack. Two of them were with me on the same post, while others were on nearby posts."** Loay said that the military attire he was wearing was green but turned into yellow after the attack. The source of the missile, according to Loay, was Syrian regime forces' Special Units which is stationed to the southeast of Bassima village.

Fadi⁵, one of the armed opposition fighters who were injured in the attack, said he heard a rocket that landed near the window of the house he was holding in: **"We didn't hear an explosion, but a strong chlorine-like smell spread afterwards. I almost died from the suffocation, I felt I was actually dying. I lost the ability to move and speak, and my body was completely paralyzed. I remember also that foam started coming out from my mouth."** Fadi added that a rocket, called a Pheel rocket, targeted the area after shortly after the chemical attack, killing two of his colleagues: **"I was treated in the tunnels where civilians were taking shelter. They took off my clothes and sprayed me with water. A nurse put her finger in my mouth to evoke a vomit reaction before giving me a shot."** Fadi suspects that the source of the rockets was the rocket launcher that was stationed near Ashrafyat al Wadi to the south of the buildings of Kaftaru Residential Association, or the rocket launchers that were stationing in Tatriya area to the west of the village.

Second attack: Thursday, January 5, 2017

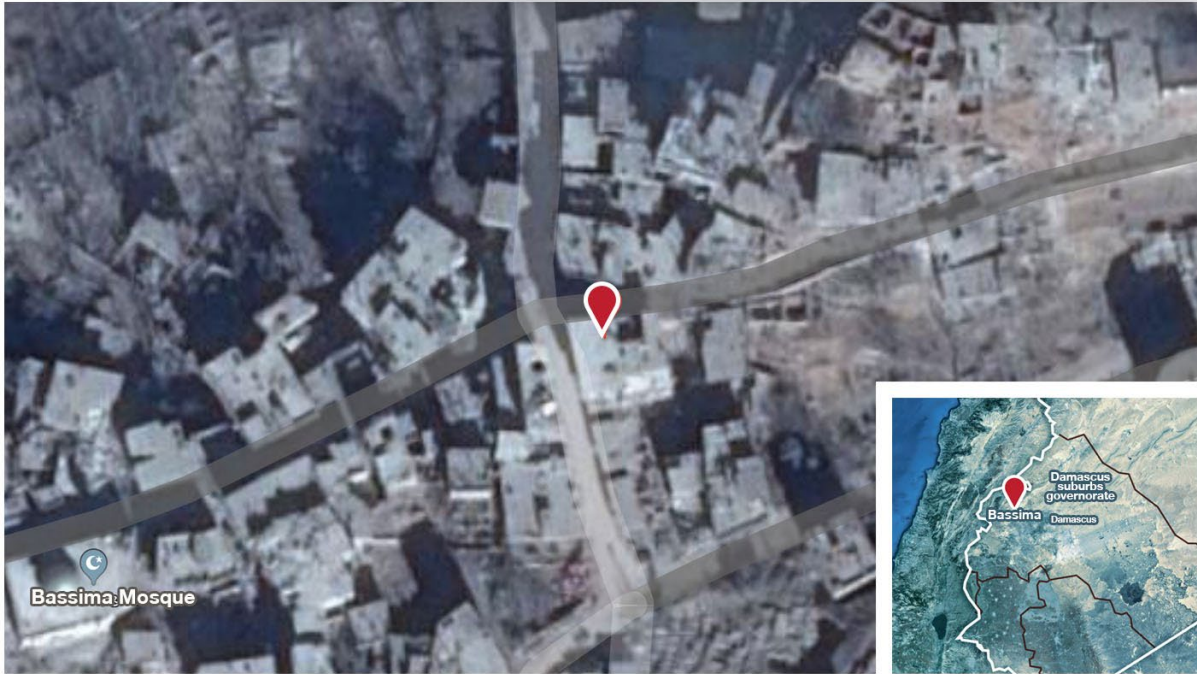
Around 06:00, Syrian regime forces used ground shells loaded with poison gases to target al Hamra area near a wireless communication tower in the middle of Bassima village. About 25 individuals were injured, including children and women.

⁴ We contacted him via WhatsApp on May 13, 2017

⁵ We contacted him via phone, text messages, and WhatsApp on May 17, 2017



The location where a number of ground shells loaded with poison gases landed in the aftermath of an attack by Syrian regime forces on Bassima village, western Damascus suburbs governorate – January 5, 2017



According to the data on the website 'worldweatheronline', the temperature in Bassima village was estimated at 4 Celsius at 06:00, while windspeed was 3 mph.

Ali Karrar⁶, a nurse in the village, described the smell of being akin to the smell of cleaning supplies. He identified the smell after the shelling on the village in the morning: **“I started feeling a dizziness, and my eyes were agitated and I started having a coughing episode. I was feeling that my chest is filling up. I was about to pass out. There were five nurses at the medical points. We treated ourselves by washing our faces with water and consuming bronchodilators. Medical points recorded no less than 33 injuries in the attack, including five medical personnel and 19 women and children.”** Ali added that he heard an announcement by an armed opposition observatory a few minutes before the attack about a rocket launcher installed over a vehicle that was about to fire rockets.

⁶ We contacted him via WhatsApp on April 24, 2017



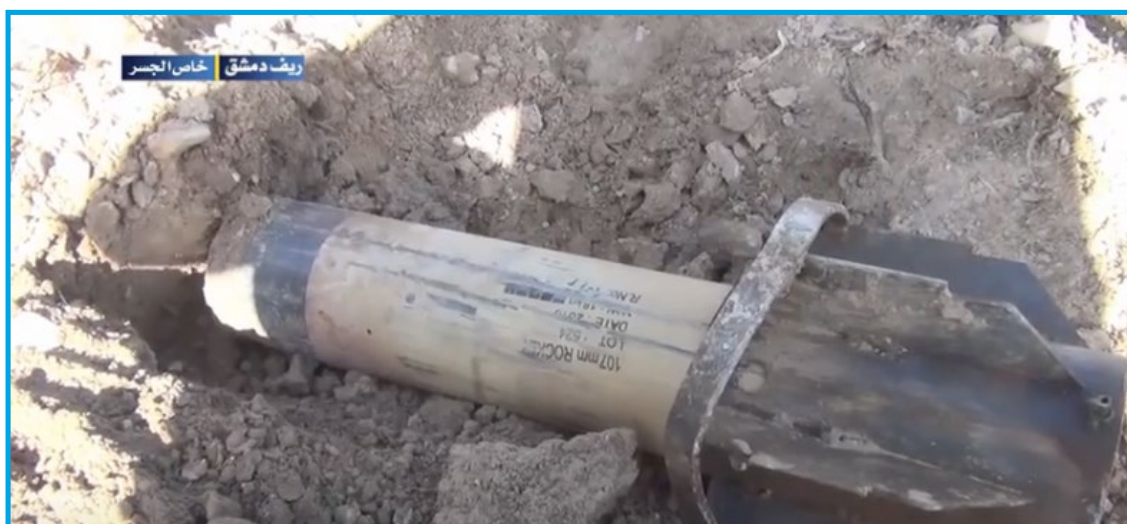
Abd⁷, one of the armed opposition fighters who were injured in the attack, said that three shells landed about 50 meters from the house he was inside. The house I located nearby al Baraka Square. Around 05:30, **“I woke up to the smell of chlorine. I was suffering from breathing difficulties and severe dizziness. I was involuntarily urinating. I was able to put on a protective mask and I stayed where I was while my friend was taken to a medical point.”** Abd found out that other fighters who were closer to the attack site exhibited more severe symptoms.

An area between Housh Nasri and Housh al Dawahra, west of Eastern Ghouta – Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Syrian regime forces used no less than [eight poison gases-loaded rockets](#) that were fired from the ground to target the area between Housh Nasri and Housh al Dawahra, which is a clash line for Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction that controls Eastern Ghouta. Considering that no data were available for the temperature and windspeed in the area that was attacked, we used the data on Damascus city. According to the data on the website ‘worldweatheronline’, the temperature in Damascus city was estimated at 15 Celsius, while windspeed was 6 mph.

The official website for Jaish al Islam posted [a video](#) that shows rocket remnants. The video also identifies its type, adding that the source of the rockets was Marj al Sultan Airbase, located in Eastern Ghouta, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate.

Qasyoun Agency, an opposition media group, posted [a video](#) which featured an armed opposition fighter talking about the targeting of Housh al Dawahra with eight chlorine-loaded rockets. The fighter mentioned that a white smoke came out of the rockets after they exploded.



A ground munitions believed to be loaded with a poison gas found in the aftermath of a chemical attack carried out by Syrian regime forces on Housh al Dawahra area - February 21, 2018

⁷ We contacted him via WhatsApp on May 12, 2017





A cylinder believed to be loaded with a gas found in the aftermath of a chemical attack carried out by Syrian regime forces on Housh al Dawahra area – February 21, 2018

Harasta city – Sunday, February 26, 2017

Sunday evening, Syrian regime forces carried out a chemical attack that targeted the western groves to Harasta city, Damascus suburbs. About 20 individuals were injured, including children and women. The injured showed symptoms that included [suffocation](#), [dizziness](#), and [nausea](#). The area was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Two civil defense members' accounts corresponded. The two members mentioned the use of ground munitions loaded with poison gases, while the civil defense in Damascus [said](#) the attack was an air attack.

Harasta city local council, an opposition-affiliated civil body, released [a statement](#) saying that a chemical attack occurred around 18:00

According to the data on the website 'worldweatheronline', the temperature in Harasta city was estimated at 18 Celsius, while windspeed was 3 mph.

Mohammad⁸, one of the civil defense members who helped tending to the wounded and showed some symptoms in the aftermath of the attack, said that a surface-to-surface rocket was used in the attack. The rocket landed in the vicinity of al Wawi Mosque, adding that the area is a civilian area which is away from the clash lines: **“We aided about 20-30 individuals who were transferred to medical points. The injuries were mostly from al Baidar neighborhood, al Sheikh Mousa neighborhood, and the neighborhoods that are located near the highway’s side. The wind was strong on that day, which helped spread the poison gases into the town. Seeing the children gasping for air was very agonizing.”**

⁸ We contacted him via Facebook on May 26, 2017



Mohammad described some of the symptoms he exhibited after he treated some of the injured: **“My vision was blurry, and then I lost my consciousness. I was transferred to the medical point, and received first-aid as my body was washed with water and I was provided with oxygen.”**

We contacted Khaled Abu Suliman⁹, a civil defense member in eastern Harasta: **“The attack took place in the western groves to the city. The gas reached the eastern neighborhoods about half an hour later due to the wind. I saw 20 people who were injured. They exhibited symptoms such as dizziness, fatigue, and breathing difficulties. Some of them passed out completely.”**

Harasta city – Tuesday, November 16, 2017

Around 09:45, Syrian regime forces used a number of hand grenades that are loaded with a poison gas to target the Idarat al Markabat front, which is a military point that saw clashes between factions from armed opposition and Syrian regime forces. About 11 individuals were injured (two media workers and nine armed opposition fighters). The injured exhibited symptoms that included breathing difficulties, coughing, a burn in the eyes, and tearing. According to the data on the website ‘worldweatheronline’, the temperature in Harasta city was estimated at 16 Celsius, while windspeed was 3 mph.

Mohammad al Hakim¹⁰, a photographer who was injured as he was covering the clashes, said that he was on the first lines with armed opposition fighters when Syrian regime forces tossed a number of poison gases-loaded hand grenades: **“It was around 10:00. I was injured along another media worker as well as 14 opposition fighters. I suffered from breathing difficulties, a burn and redness in the eyes, and heavy coughing. We were aided by the medical team immediately after who put wet cloths over the face and an oxygen mask. I couldn’t distinguish the smell as the smell was too nasty. After the bombs exploded, I couldn’t see anything. I couldn’t have taken the necessary precautions.”**

Mohammad provided us with [a video](#) that he appears in after he was exposed to the poison gases

The media worker Yaman al Sayed¹¹ was injured in this chemical attack. He told us that he was stationed along with opposition fighters at Idarat al Markabat front no less than 40 meters away from the Syrian regime fighters: **“I heard one of the rebels screaming ‘chlorine, chlo-**

⁹ We contacted him via Facebook on May 25, 2017

¹⁰ We contacted him via Facebook, December 2017

¹¹ We contacted him via Telegram on January 30, 2018

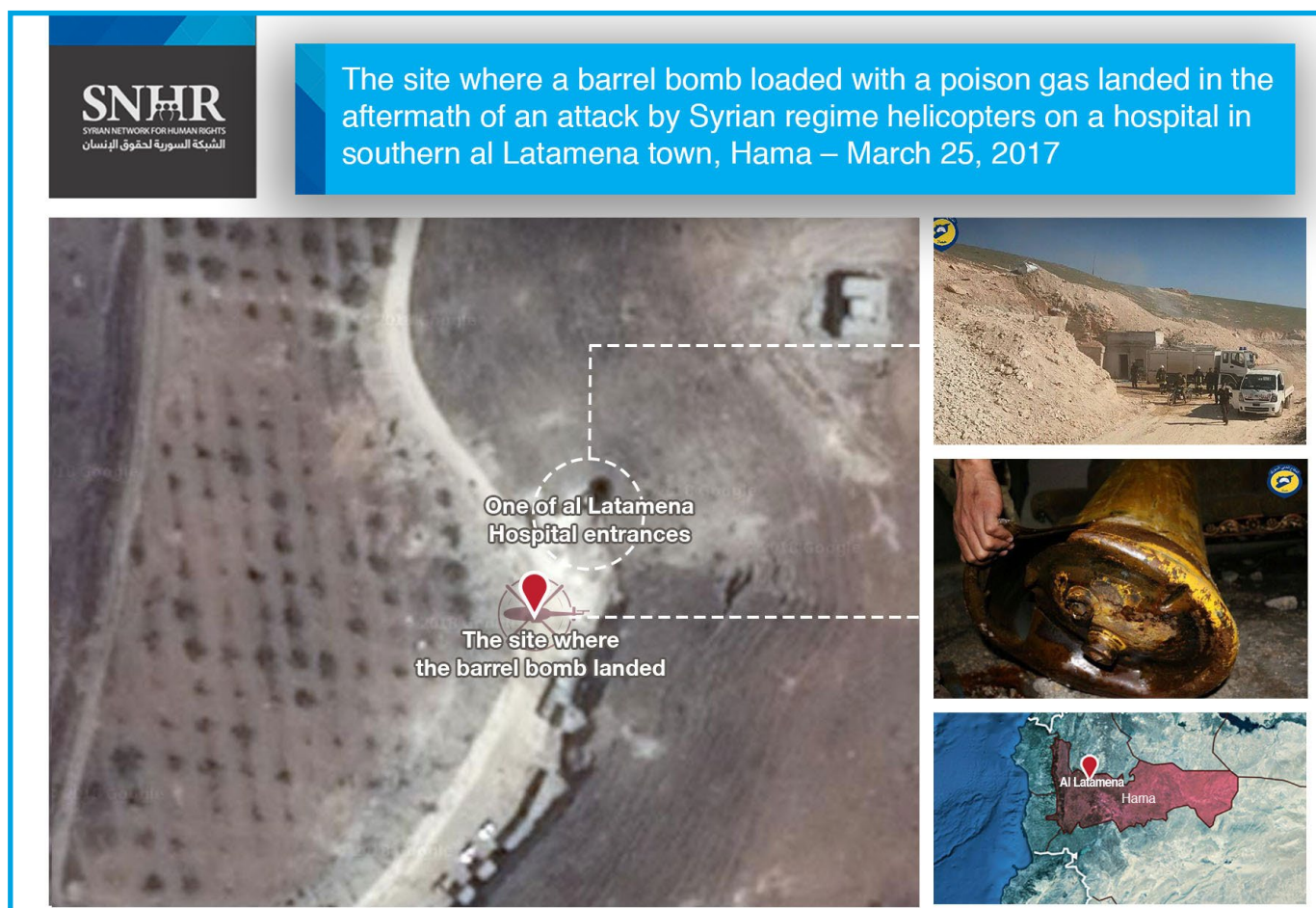


rine, put your masks on.’ Afterwards, a very nasty smell got out. I had a blurry vision for 20 minutes, in addition to feeling suffocated. I tried to drink water and wash my face, but the burn was getting more severe. This lasted for 24 hours before the symptoms wore off completely.” Yaman said that the grenade used was similar to a grenade that was found by armed opposition fighters on a fighter from Syrian regime forces after he was killed on the outskirts of Jobar neighborhood in July 2017. He provided us with [a video](#) showing the bomb.

Hama governorate

Al Latamena town – Saturday, March 25, 2017

Between 14:30 and 15:30, Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped [a barrel bomb loaded with a poison gas](#). The barrel bomb landed at the entrance of al Latamena Surgical Hospital, which resulted in the [killing of the doctor Ali Darwish](#) who was performing a surgery at the time of the attack. Also, Abdul Hamid al Hdiri, an armed opposition fighter, suffocated to death due to the effects of the poison gases. In addition, [no less than 30 individuals were injured](#), most of them were patients at the hospital. The injured suffered from symptoms that included breathing difficulties and teary eyes.



According to the data on the website 'worldweatheronline', the temperature in al Latamena town was estimated at 24 Celsius, while windspeed was 9 mph.

Doctors Without Borders said, [in a statement](#), that al Latamena Hospital, which is supported by the organization, was attacked using a bomb dropped from a helicopter. The attack resulted in the killing of two individuals, one of whom was a doctor, according to the statement which also contains some information that suggests the use of chemical weapons.

The Health Administration in Hama governorate, which is affiliated to the opposition said [in a statement](#) that a poison gas-loaded barrel bomb dropped from a Syrian regime helicopter fell over the entrance of al Latamena Hospital around 15:00. About 32 of the medical personnel were injured, according to the statement, in addition to some of the injured and the wounded who were being treated at the hospital. The statement contains accounts from some injured who talked about a yellow smoke and a chlorine smell that spread after the attack.

[One of the pictures](#) published by the civil defense show the roof of the hospital after it was penetrated by [one of the barrel bombs](#). The organization also posted a picture of [a barrel bomb that was allegedly loaded with chlorine gas](#).

Mohammad¹², a media worker who works for Kafr Zita Specialized Hospital (located approximately 9 kilometers from al Latamena town to which the injured were transferred) told us that among the injured who arrived at the hospital were doctor Ali Darwish who was suffering from an acute pulmonary edema after he inhaled large amounts of the gas **“so the hospital transferred him to the hospitals on the Syrian-Turkish borders, but he didn’t survive and died as he was being transferred.”**

One of the media workers posted [a video](#) showing one of the people who were injured in al Latamena attack as he was wearing an oxygen mask. The video also shows an individual explaining the clinical signs, where the injured had one severely constricted pupil while the other was severely dilated.

Accounts from eyewitnesses, as well as civil defense statements, confirmed that the vicinity of [the hospital](#) was targeted with barrel bombs in parallel with the chemical attack. This resulted in heavy damages to the hospital building which was rendered temporarily out of commission.

¹² We contacted him via WhatsApp on April 3, 2017





Doctor Ali Darwish who suffocated to death in the aftermath of the chemical attack on al Latamena hospital, Hama – March 25, 2017



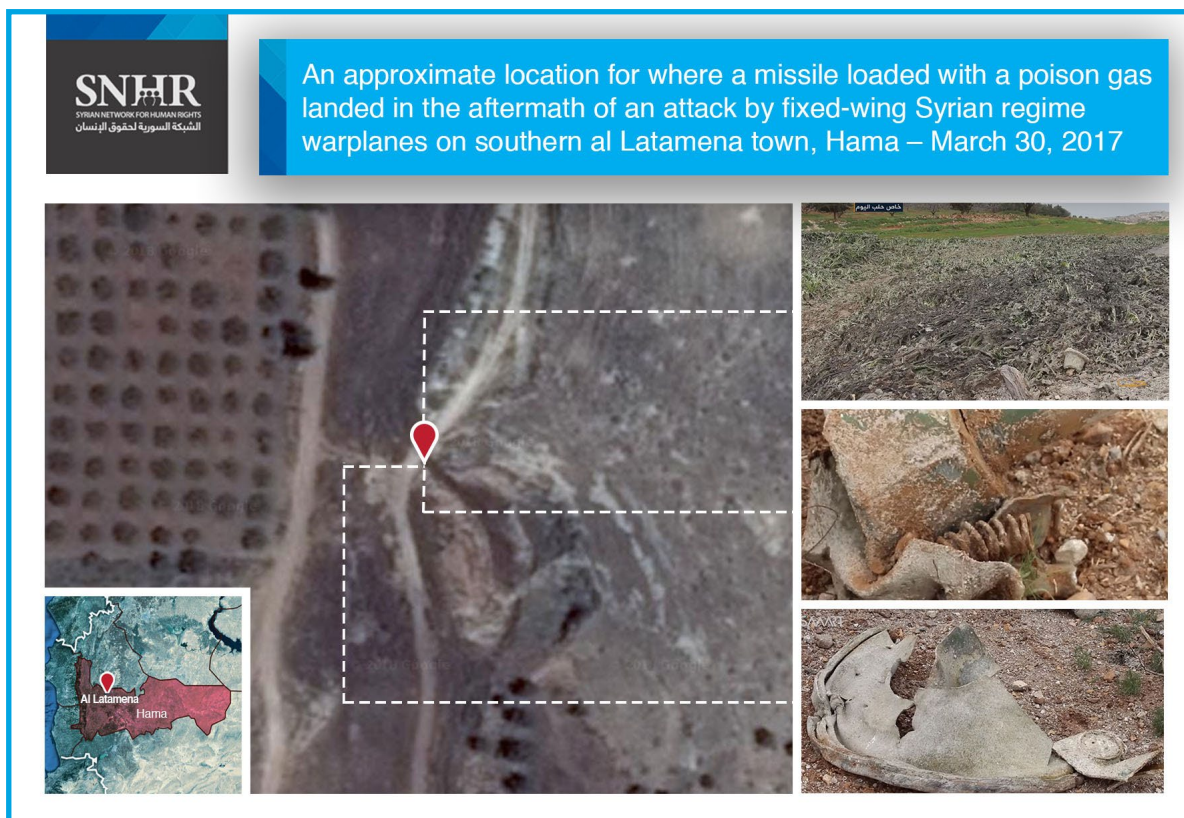
A cylinder we believe was loaded with a poison gas found near al Latamena hospital, Hama – March 25, 2017

Al Latamena town – Thursday, March 30, 2017

Between 06:00 and 06:15, fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired about four missiles in various areas in al Latamena town. One missile at least was loaded with poison gases. The missile landed in south of the town near a military center for an armed opposition faction located in an area near the clash lines, and near it were a number of agricultural lands and caves where civilians and farmers were present at the time of the attack. About



82 individuals were injured, including civilians and armed opposition fighters. The injured exhibited symptoms that included [breathing difficulties](#), [redness in the eyes](#), [foaming](#), and others had episodes of hallucinations. The aiding efforts [resulted in some of the aiding medical personnel](#) getting [injured as well](#).



According to the data on the website 'worldweatheronline', the temperature in al Latamena town was estimated at 14 Celsius, while windspeed was 6 mph.

We spoke to four of the medical personnel. Three of them were exposed to the poison gases after treating the injured. All of them said it is unlikely that chlorine was the gas that was used in this attack, as the symptoms shown on the injured of the March 30 attack were different from the symptoms shown in previous chlorine attacks, the most recent of which was the attack on al Latamena town on March 25.



A constricted pupil on one of the injured in the aftermath of a chemical air attack carried out by the Syrian regime on al Latamena town – March 30, 2017



All of the medical personnel we've spoken to confirmed that they couldn't distinguish any smell on the clothes of injured, as some of them suspected that a nerve agent was used in this attack.

[An OPCW report released](#) on October 4, 2017, concluded that sarin gas was used in al Latamena attack on March 30, 2017

Four eyewitnesses at least said in their accounts that a number of attacks that involved the use of poison gas have taken place in areas on the outskirts of al Latamena attack, which was further supported by [a statement](#) released by the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) who counted 166 injured civilians and seven medical personnel who were injured as well.

Yaser Salloum¹³, one of the injured in the attack, said he heard four missiles exploding. One of the explosions was about 100 meters away from the cave where four of his neighbors sought shelter: **"The voice caused by the missile that landed near me was the weakest. My friend left the cave. A few minutes later, I saw him stumbling and asking me for help. He was hallucinating and his body was shaking as if he was having an epileptic episode. I pulled him inside the cave and washed his face with water, and then I started suffering symptoms as well as the others who were in the cave. I passed out and woke up two days after the incident at Ma'aret al Nu'man Hospital. The nurse told me that they had to give me 125 shots before I'd recovered."** Yasser said that he couldn't distinguish any smell after the attack. He told us that he felt a general weakness in his body in the day that followed.

Tareq Ksheima¹⁴, one of the medical personnel who are active in al Latamena and had helped in treating the injured, told us; **"Not every doctor was able to diagnose these cases, so we had to transfer some of them to hospitals in Hama and Idlib. I saw some of the injured and they suffered from breathing difficulties and coughing."** Tareq spoke about three missiles on the day of the attack, two of them were loaded with poison gases. He added that he saw 20 Hay'at Tahrir al Sham fighters who were injured by the poison gases as a result of a chemical attack on the outskirts of the town.

The civil defense took part in the aiding efforts. Manaf al Saleh¹⁵, head of the civil defense in al Latamena town, told us that the initial diagnosis from the hospital suggested that the injuries were the result of a chemical attack: **"Their eyes were red, and some of them suffered from convulsions, itching, and breathing difficulties, while some of them had hallucination episodes where they weren't aware of the time and place."** Manaf told us

¹³ We contacted him via WhatsApp on July 31, 2017

¹⁴ We contacted him via WhatsApp on August 10, 2017

¹⁵ We contacted him via WhatsApp on May 26, 2017



that the team specialized in chemical attacks at the civil defense was able to acquire and test some samples. The findings suggested that sarin gas was used in the attack.

Mohammad Kayyal¹⁶, head of the Chemical Strike Respond Center at the civil defense, visited the attack site and acquired some samples from the munitions: **“We’ve collected samples from two sites. One of the two samples at least was contaminated with the effects of the gas. An SU bomb was used in the attack. The impact site was directly to the south of al Latamena.”**

Due to the limited medical resources in al Latamena town, most of the injured were transferred to hospitals in other areas in Hama and Idlib governorate.

Abdul Halim¹⁷, a nurse at Kafr Zita hospital which some of the hospitals were transferred to, said: **“We’ve received 12 injuries including civilians, military men, and women. One of the injured was passed out. The rest of the injured suffered from breathing difficulties, chest pain, and dizziness. We treated them using oxygen masks and bronchodilators. As for the patient who had passed out, we worked on restoring his consciousness before he was transferred to al Ma’ara National Hospital.”** Abdul Halim accompanied that patient to a hospital in Ma’aret al Nu’mān city in Idlib governorate. On his way back, Abdul Halim started exhibiting the symptoms of an injury caused by a poison gas: **“I suffered from severe breathing difficulties and started losing feeling in my limbs. I treated myself using oxygen before I’d passed out. I woke up to the screams of my colleagues who pulled me and were trying to aid me. I felt like I was dying, couldn’t move my fingers, the blood oxygen levels I had were no more than 70%. The effects of the gas were disposed of by washing my body with water and giving me atropine shots.”**

A doctor¹⁸ at Kafr Zita Hospital described the injured shown on the injured: **“There were two groups. The first one had less severe injuries, they were agitated, sweating, and had constricted pupils but no symptoms such as coughing, or respiratory problems. The second group was in poorer conditions. They were foaming, severely sweating, and they were pale and suffering from severe respiratory problems. Some of them weren’t aware of the time and place. We injected the veins of all the injured with brines that contained atropine.”** The doctor added that he tried to take all precautionary measures to avoid any resultant injuries, but the symptoms started showing on him, as well as the medical personnel in Kafr Zita Hospital: **“I wore a number of protection masks and gloves. Nonetheless, as I was finished with treating the injured, I started feeling some**

¹⁶ We contacted him via WhatsApp on August 3, 2017

¹⁷ We contacted him via WhatsApp on July 27, 2017

¹⁸ We contacted him via WhatsApp on July 27, 2017



sort of metallic taste in my stomach and started losing feeling in my limbs, and my entire body felt dry. Some of the female nurses lost their grip on reality, time, place, and people for more than two days.”

Khadija¹⁹, a nurse at Kafr Zita Hospital, told SNHR about the symptoms exhibited on her as a result of inhaling gas from the clothes of the injured: **“I felt a faintness, suffocation, and a burn in the eyes, and suffered from a blurry vision, before I lost my consciousness. I woke up and found myself in al Ma’ara National Hospital. Some of the gas was on the clothes of the injured and we suspected it was sarin rather than chlorine because chlorine has a very distinct smell and leaves a burn in your throat.”**

The YouTube account [Health Edlib](#) posted a video that shows a number of the injured who were transferred to the hospitals of Idlib after the chemical attack in al Latamena. The video shows an individual who appears to be a doctor explaining the symptoms they examined and their suspicions that organic phosphorus was used in the attack.

Hama Health Administration, which is affiliated to the opposition, released [a report](#) that noted that tens of the injured were treated in a number of hospitals in Hama suburbs.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Syrian regime has, through the use of chemical weapons, violated the customary international humanitarian law, which prohibits the use of chemical weapons regardless of the circumstances. Secondly, the Syrian regime has, beyond any doubt, violated the CWC, to which the Syrian government had acceded in September 2013. The CWC prohibits the use of poison gases and provides for their destruction. Thirdly, the Syrian regime has breached all relevant Security Council Resolutions – particularly 2118, in 2013, 2209, in 2015, and 2235, in 2015. Also, the use of chemical weapons constitutes a war crime according to the International Criminal Court’s Rome Statute.

In addition, the Russian government had ratified the CWC which strictly prohibits any form of assistance or encouragement on the contribution to any prohibited activity by any member state. However, a number of evidences suggest that Russian forces were involved in providing a preliminary and subsequent assistance to Syrian regime forces.

¹⁹ We contacted him via WhatsApp on August 10, 2017



Security Council

- The Syrian regime has violated three Security Council resolutions on multiple occasions, even though all of them refer to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.
- The four permanent members should apply pressure on the Russian government in order to cease its support for the Syrian regime, who is using chemical weapons, as its involvement in this regard has been proven.
- The Security Council should take further and practical action after Resolution 2401 has been adopted and clearly violated by Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance forces.

Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council should shed more light on the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime.

Commission of Inquiry (COI)

The Commission of Inquiry should start investigating the incidents included in this report, as well as the incidents that preceded and the ones that followed and identify their perpetrator.

International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

Address the incident included in this report, as well as past reports. SNHR is willing to co-operate and provide more evidences and data.

European Union and United States of America

Support the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism that was established in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 71/248, adopted on December 21, 2016. And establish local tribunals that enjoy a universal jurisdiction, and address the war crimes that were perpetrated in Syria.

International Community

- States of the world should demonstrate a better unity against the Syrian regime – the main and primary user of chemical weapons in this century. Also, the international community should take serious, joint action to impose deterring, strict, real sanctions immediately.
- Establish a humanitarian alliance that aims to protect civilians in Syria from chemical weapons and barrel bombs since Russia will keep hindering the Security Council and using veto countless times.



Russian government

- Respect Security Council Resolution 2401 that calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities, and apply pressure on the Syrian regime to commit to the Resolution.
- Stop using veto in order to protect the Syrian regime who is involved in perpetrating crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as using chemical weapons.
- Launch an investigation into the support provided by Russian forces in Syria to the Syrian regime in chemical attacks.
- Stop hindering the referral the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

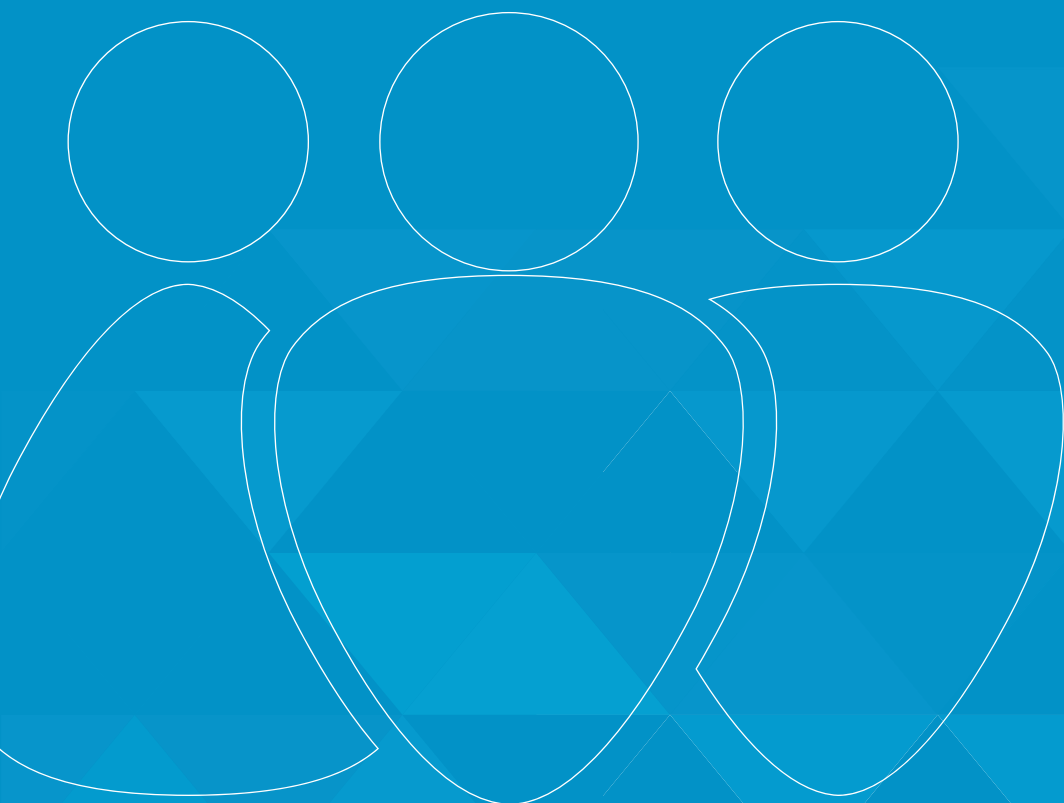
Friends of Syria Group

Provide the areas that have been bombed with chemical weapons (in light of the Security Council's failure to put an end to the attacks) with protective masks. The report estimates that no less than 20,000 protective masks are needed in these areas, in addition to the necessary equipment to eliminate the effects of the chemical pollution.

Acknowledgment

Our most sincere gratitude and condolences to the families of the victims and injured, residents, and activists who contributed effectively to these investigations.





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