

Press Release

To Honour Victims of Chemical Attacks, Ground Assad's Airforce

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

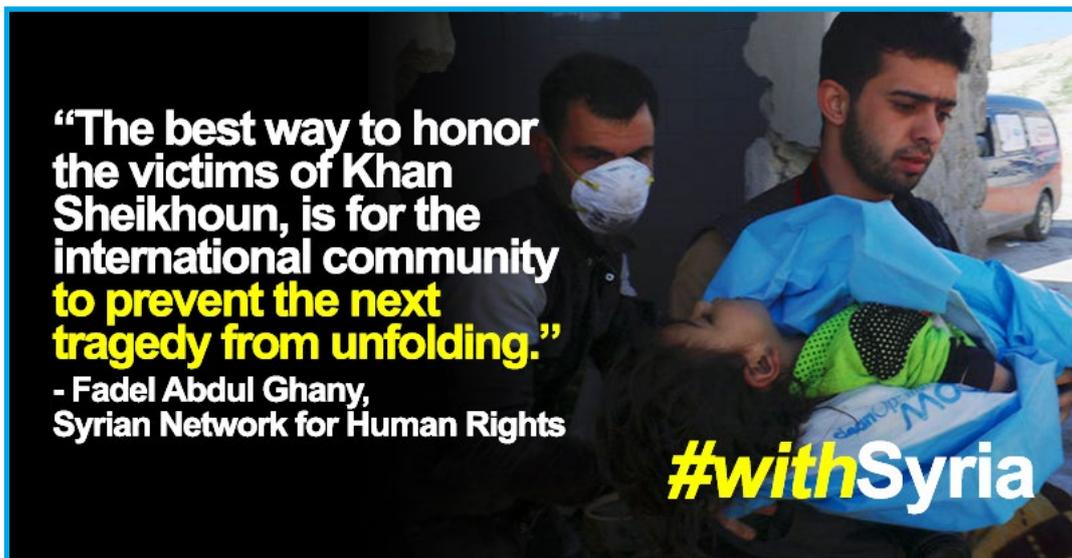
Wednesday, April 4, 2018

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.



On the first anniversary of the Khan Sheikhoun sarin gas attack, Syrian human rights defenders honour the victims of chemical weapons attacks in Syria and call for intensified action to protect Syrian civilians from the regime's merciless onslaught. The Khan Sheikhoun atrocity - one of at least 211 chemical weapons attacks since 2011 - killed at least 91 civilians, a third of them children. No less than 520 others were injured in the attack. Though the US responded to the April 4 attacks with a retaliatory strike against a Syrian regime airbase, the absence of a comprehensive strategy to deter future indiscriminate attacks has enabled indiscriminate violence - including lethal chlorine attacks - to continue unabated, including most recently in Idlib, where the Khan Sheikhoun atrocities took place.

“One year ago today, Syrian civilians were killed in the most barbaric of ways by a vicious war criminal, who would rather gas his own people than permit freedom and democracy”, Fadel Abdul Ghany, Chairman of the [Syrian Network for Human Rights](#), said. “When the US administration chose to strike Assad's airbase, many Syrians hoped we were witnessing a new US approach, with real US leadership. Finally, Assad's genocide would be met with credible consequences. But the strikes were ultimately more symbol than substance. They were detached from any larger strategy and in contrast to what we had advocated for, they were one-off. Since Khan Sheikhoun there have been a further 11 documented chemical weapons attacks by the Assad regime with total impunity, while the main cause of civilian death in Syria - indiscriminate airstrikes by Assad and Russia - have escalated.”



“The best way to honor the victims of Khan Sheikhoun, is for the international community to prevent the next tragedy from unfolding.”
- Fadel Abdul Ghany,
Syrian Network for Human Rights

#withSyria

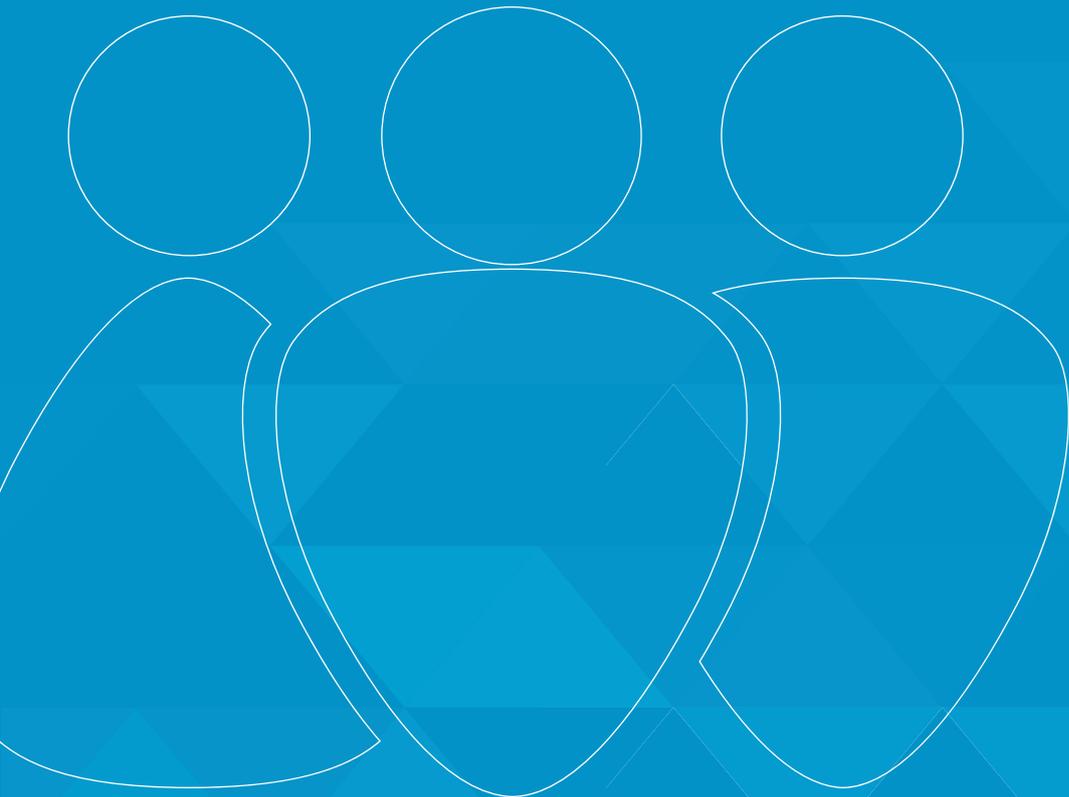


“Rather than offer empty condolences, the best way to honour the victims of Khan Sheikhoun, is for the international community to take the steps needed to prevent the next tragedy from unfolding. This will only happen through comprehensive international action designed to ground Assad’s air force and deter future attacks. The Trump administration and its European allies should commit themselves to a civilian protection strategy, designed to stop all war crimes - and not merely chemical atrocities - and make clear that political negotiation is Assad’s only recourse. Millions of Syrian civilians in Idlib, Daraa and Homs are in grave need of protection. Their lives can be saved - and a political solution reached - if the international community shows the leadership the Syrian people deserve”.

On the anniversary of the Khan Sheikhoun chemical weapons attack, the international community should:

- **Protect civilians** by adopting a comprehensive deterrence strategy to deter future indiscriminate attacks, including but not limited to chemical weapons;
- **Increase aid** to independent Syrian civil society organisations and humanitarian aid groups operating in opposition-held areas;
- **Support accountability** by establishing a Special Tribunal for Syria through the UN General Assembly;
- **Step up targeted sanctions** against the Russian government for its complicity in war crimes.





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