

## Joint Statement

**U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL  
SHOULD ACTIVATE  
AN INDEPENDENT MECHANISM  
TO ATTRIBUTE RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR CHEMICAL ATTACKS  
IN SYRIA**



SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Friday, April 13, 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 April 7 the world once again was shocked by the heart-wrenching images of Syrian men, women and children who appeared to have suffocated in their houses in Douma, a suburb of Damascus that has been under furious attacks for weeks by the Syrian-Russian military alliance.

While investigations are still pending, claims have been made that the Syrian government has again used chemical weapons against its own people. The Syrian and Russian governments have vehemently denied that a chemical attack occurred.

The use of chemical weapons constitutes a war crime. The international prohibition on the use, development, production, stockpiling, and transfer of chemical weapons is absolute and cannot be left to political wrangling.

Since 2013, the UN Commission of Inquiry has recorded over 35 chemical weapons attacks in Syria. After refusing to accept findings on Syrian government responsibility for last year's attack on civilians in Khan Sheikhoun, Russia used its Security Council veto to block the UN from maintaining a UN-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons joint investigative mechanism working independently and impartially to uncover the perpetrators for such attacks. On April 10, Russia again vetoed a resolution that would have established a UN mechanism to attribute responsibility for chemical attacks in Syria.

As a result, there is no longer a UN mechanism with the independence, technical expertise, and mandate working to promptly identify who is to blame for these chemical weapons attacks.

We, the undersigned organizations, urge UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to step up in defense of civilians everywhere by activating an independent UN mechanism to attribute responsibility for chemical attacks in Syria.

Previous UN Secretaries General created similar inquiries. We cannot afford more Security Council deadlock, paralysis, or vetoes. Taking this step is fully in line with the Secretary General's authority and would help ensure that the perpetrators of these atrocities are exposed.

It is incumbent on the UN Security Council to hold perpetrators of these crimes to account and make clear to the world that the use of chemical weapons will not be tolerated.





# WILL THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL STEP UP IN DEFENSE OF CHEMICAL ATTACK VICTIMS IN SYRIA?

**35**

**CHEMICAL  
WEAPONS  
ATTACKS IN SYRIA**

UN SYRIA COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**GROUPS  
CALLING FOR  
ACTION**

**45**

HRW, CARE, AMNESTY, SAMS,  
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
& MANY MORE

**4**

**PREVIOUS SG  
INVESTIGATIONS  
ACTIVATED**

SYRIA (2013), AZERBAIJAN (1992)  
MOZAMBIQUE (1992),  
IRAN (1984)

**PREVIOUS SG  
USED THIS  
AUTHORITY**

**3**

PÉREZ DE CUÉLLAR  
BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI  
BAN KI-MOON

U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL  
ANTÓNIO GUTERRES  
SHOULD ACTIVATE AN INDEPENDENT  
MECHANISM TO ATTRIBUTE  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHEMICAL  
ATTACKS IN SYRIA



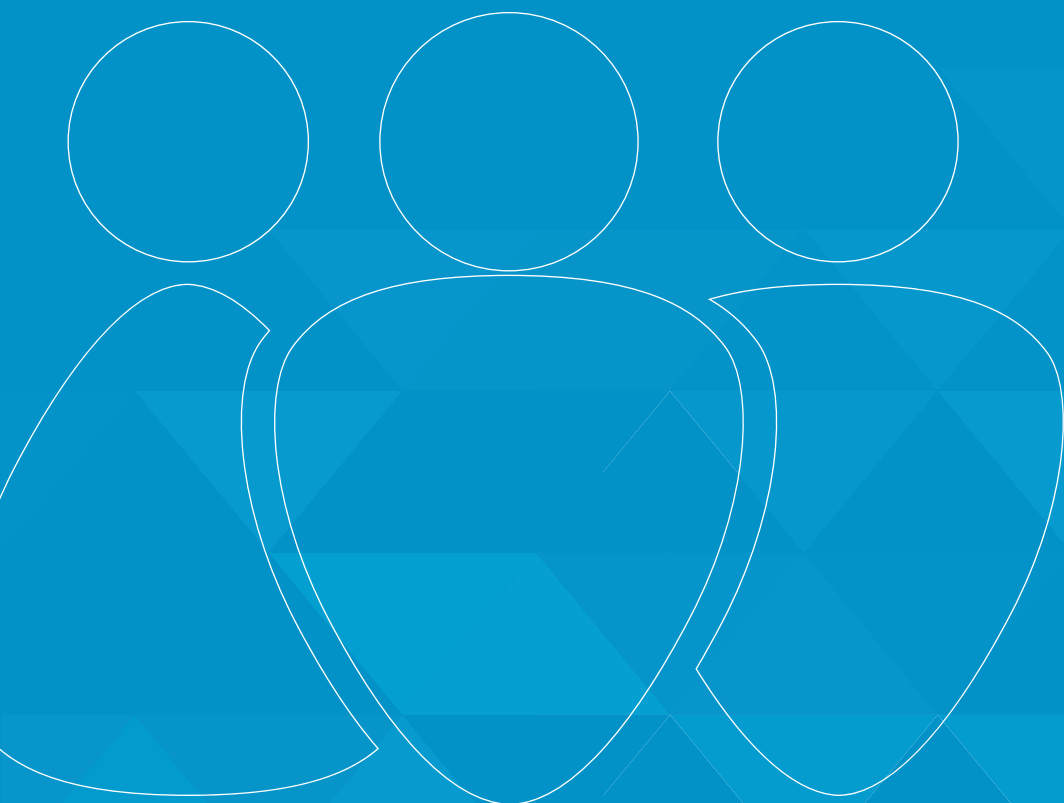
## **Signatories:**

- 1.Adopt a Revolution
- 2.American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS)
- 3.Amnesty International
- 4.ASML/Syria
- 5.Basmet Amal
- 6.Baytna Syria
- 7.Bridge of Peace Syria
- 8.CCFD-Terre Solidaire
- 9.CAFOD (Catholic Agency For Overseas Development)
- 10.CARE International
- 11.Christian Aid
- 12.CIHRS (Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies)
- 13.FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights)
- 14.Ghiras Alnahda
- 15.Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
- 16.GOAL
- 17.Hand in Hand for Syria
- 18.HelpAge International
- 19.Human Appeal
- 20.Human Rights Watch
- 21.Humans of Syria
- 22.IDA
- 23.Islamic Relief UK
- 24.Just Foreign Policy
- 25.Karam Foundation
- 26.Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (Concordia University)
- 27.Nonviolent Peaceforce
- 28.PAX for Peace
- 29.Physicians for Human Rights
- 30.Protection Approaches
- 31.Relief & Reconciliation International AISBL
- 32.Rethink Rebuild Society
- 33.SCM
- 34.Society for Threatened Peoples
- 35.STAND (The Student-Led Movement to End Mass Atrocities)



- 36.Syria Charity
- 37.Syria Relief
- 38.Syrian American Medical Society - SAMS
- 39.Syrian Forum USA
- 40.Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR)
- 41.Syrians for Truth and Justice-STJ سوريون من أجل الحقيقة والعدالة
- 42.Trocaire
- 43.Vision GRAM-International
- 44.War Child UK
- 45.World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP)
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@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

