

Despite the U.N. Confirming its Responsibility, the Syrian Regime Uses Chemical Weapons Again

No less than 20 Chemical Attacks after the New Joint Investigative Mechanism's Report, and 158 Breaches of Security Council Resolution 2118

[SNHR Calls for the Prosecution of Users of Chemical Weapons in Mandated Regional Tribunals](#)

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Monday, February 20, 2017

The Syrian Network for Human Rights, founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, non-profit independent organization that is a primary source for the United Nations on all death toll-related statistics in Syria



Report Contents

- I. An overview of the Issue of Chemical Weapon Use in Syria
 - II. Chemical Weapons in Syria and the Security Council
 - III. The Joint Investigation Mechanism Confirms that the Syrian Regime has been Responsible for the Use of Chemical Weapons on Many Occasions
 - IV. The Updated Toll of Breaches of Security Council Resolutions on Chemical Weapons
 - V. The New Chemical Attacks by the Syrian Regime and ISIS Despite the Joint Investigative Mechanism's Condemnation
 - VI. Conclusions and Recommendations
- Acknowledgment and Condolences

I. An overview of the Issue of Chemical Weapon Use in Syria

SNHR has released 22 reports that follow-up with the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria. We have recorded the following preliminary toll, while using the Security Council Resolutions as the major landmarks:

A. The Syrian Regime:

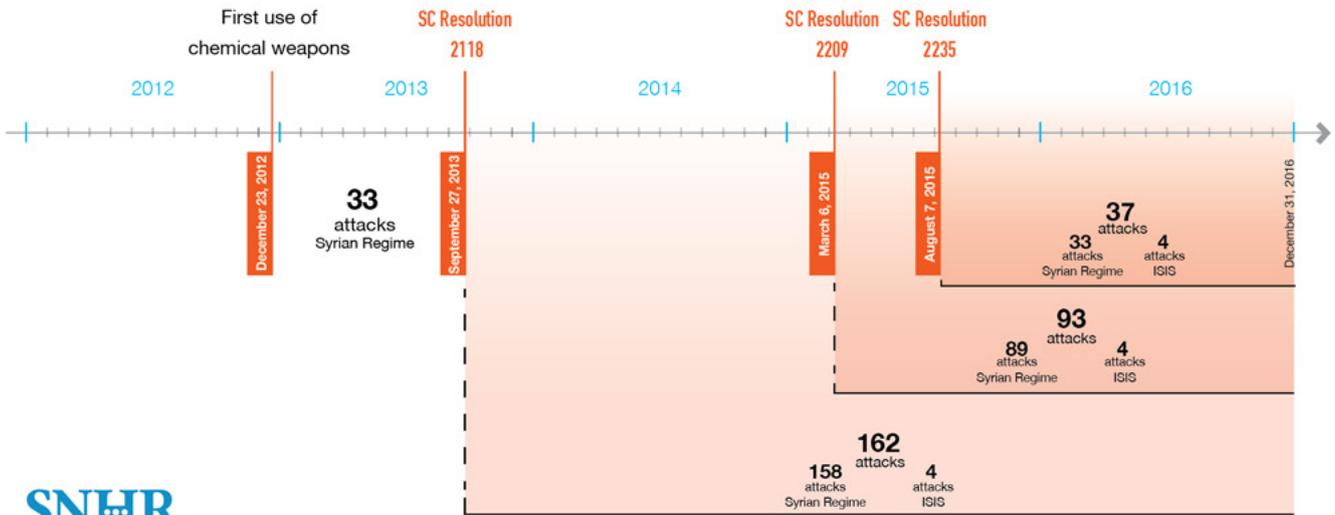
- 1- We documented no less than 33 attacks using chemical weapons by the Syrian regime before Security Council Resolution 2118 was adopted on September 27, 2013.
- 2- We documented no less than 158 attacks after Security Council Resolution 2118 was adopted and the Syrian regime signing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).
- 3- We documented no less than 89 attacks after Security Council Resolution 2209 was adopted on March 6, 2015.
- 4- We documented no less than 33 attacks after Security Council Resolution 2235 was adopted on August 7, 2015, which provided the establishment of a joint investigative mechanism.
- 5- We documented no less than 20 attacks after the Joint Investigative Mechanism condemned the Syrian regime and declared him responsible for the use of chemical weapons.



B. ISIS

We recorded no less than four violations of Security Council Resolution 2118, and, at the same time, Resolutions 2209 and 2235. All of ISIS's attacks took place in Aleppo governorate.

Distribution of attacks by chemical weapons in Syria in light of Security Council Resolutions



According to SNHR documentation

Toll of deaths and injuries caused by the use of chemical weapons

The chemical attacks carried out by the Syrian regime and ISIS resulted in the killing of 130 individuals who all died in the Syrian regime attacks. The death toll is divided as follows:

- 78 civilians including 40 children and 13 women.
- 45 armed opposition fighters.
- 7 captives from the Syrian regime forces who were being kept in an opposition prison.

In addition, no less than 2289 individuals were injured as follows:

- The Syrian regime: 2164 individuals at least.
- ISIS: 125 individuals at least.



II. Chemical Weapons in Syria and the Security Council

The Security Council has adopted three major Resolutions on the use of chemical weapons in Syria. All of the three Resolutions provide that measure must be enforced under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter in the event of non-compliance, as it is stated in provision 21 of Resolution 2118 -adopted on September 27, 2013- provision 7 of Resolution 2209 -adopted on March 6, 2015- and provision 15 of Resolution 2235 -adopted on August 7, 2015-. Furthermore, the Syrian regime signed the CWC in September 2013 after the large-scale attack on the [Eastern and Western Ghoutas](#).

In light of what we have confirmed in many past reports, what the international organizations have recorded, the chemical weapons disarmament deals, and the Joint Investigative Mechanism with regard to the Syrian regime's responsibility for a number of attacks that involved the use of chemical weapons, the Security Council has directly to implement what was included in its resolutions, as it has failed miserably in that regard. The Syrian regime has successfully disregarded the CWC and all of the Security Council Resolutions.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, adds:

“As the Security Council is unwilling to take action, even though it has been proven that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons in tens of attacks and, thus, breached the three Resolutions and the CWC, alternative measures must be adopted. The Syrian Network for Human Rights calls for, in the meantime at least, initial convictions of those who used chemical weapons in mandated regional tribunals. All of the world states have to open their courts to hold the perpetrators of such horrendous acts accountable.”

III. The Joint Investigation Mechanism Confirms that the Syrian Regime has been Responsible for the Use of Chemical Weapons on Many Occasions

On August 7, 2015, Security Council Resolution [2235](#) was adopted. The Resolution's fourth paragraph stresses that: “those individuals, entities, groups, or governments responsible for any use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical, must be held accountable.”, while the sixth paragraph requests the establishment of a Joint Investigative Mechanism between the UN and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to investigate the chemical attacks.



On August 24, 2016, the OPCW-UN [third](#) report was published. The report addresses nine cases in which chemical weapons were used in 2014 and 2015. The report declares the Syrian government responsible for two cases where Syrian regime helicopters dropped barrels loaded with chlorine, while it declared ISIS responsible for one case of chemical weapons use in Marea city in Aleppo.

On 21 October, 2016, the OPCW-UN [fourth](#) report was published. The report declares the Syrian government responsible for three attacks, and ISIS responsible for one attack.

Overall, the reports that were presented by the Joint Investigative Mechanism have only tackled nine attacks that took place in 2014 and 2015 in Hama, Aleppo, and Idlib governorates, even though we recorded no less than 37 attacks by the Syrian regime and ISIS after Security Council Resolution 2235 was adopted on August 7, 2015, which provided for the establishment of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. However, it seems that the Mechanism's methodology is entirely different, as it is, apparently, requires different criteria to prove some incidents. In any case, whether it was confirmed once or a number of times, the result should be the same: The Syrian regime insists on violation any rulings by the United Nations and the Security Council in that regard, and it has, after all these years of crimes and breaches, become perfectly sure that no one will stop it or punish it at least.

The Report Methodology

As with the previous studies, we haven't been able to visit all of the sites where the incidents occurred, and in light of the present circumstances, it is not possible to take samples and conduct tests. Therefore, we have relied on survivors' and eyewitnesses' testimonies, and especially on doctors who treated the injured, and civil defense members. This report contains seven testimonies. We have explained the purpose of the interviews for the eyewitnesses who gave us permission to use the information they provided without presenting or offering any incentives. SNHR tried, as much as possible, to spare them the agony of remembering the violations, and we gave guarantees to conceal the identity of anyone who preferred to use an alias. This report doesn't cover the social, economic, and psychological ramifications.



We couldn't confirm the nature of the chemical substance that was used in the attacks, as doing so requires a lab examination, which is not possible in the current circumstances. However, judging from the symptoms that we noticed and were confirmed by the survivors and a number of medical personnel, Syrian regime forces used chlorine. We affirm the incident to be true, when we reach the reasons that compel us to believe that the attacks have been carried out the way we noted.

We have reviewed the pictures and videos that we received from our approved local activists. Some of the videos show injured exhibiting breathing difficulties, while other pictures show cylinders that are believed to be containing poison gases. We have copies of all the videos and pictures included in this report in a secret online database and on hard drives. For more details, please see our general work methodology.

This report only represents the bare minimum, which we were able to document, of the severity and magnitude of the violations that occurred amid the exceptional conditions of the documentation process in Syria which such as unreliable security, interrupted internet and power, and sometimes the displacement of eyewitnesses, and the severe trauma which blocks the ability to completely recollect the event, in addition to the impossibility to access all the sites of the incident in light of the risks laying in moving from one place to another, the heaviness of the violations that are occurring, and the overwhelming feeling among the Syrian people of the rooted impunity within the international community and its inability to stop the crimes against humanity, the war crimes, and the genocides that are being perpetrated against the Syrian people who, because of all of this, have lost trust in the purpose of the documentation processes let alone taking part in them.

Since 2011, The Syrian regime has been denying most of the crimes, and refuses to respond to any kind of messages including the messages sent by the international organization. Also, the Syrian regime has been obstructing the work of Commission of Inquiry, as well as the international organizations, and pursues and severely retaliates against anyone who documents their violations. The other parties to the conflict have conformed to this method in one way or another.



IV. The Updated Toll of Breaches of Security Council Resolutions on Chemical Weapons

This report includes 21 attacks that involved the use of chemical weapons and were carried out after the most recent report by the Joint Investigative Mechanism (taking place between October 21, 2016 and December 31, 2016)

With adding the new attacks to the previous cumulative documentation by SNHR, the updated toll is now as follows:

162 breaches of Security Council Resolution 2118 -adopted on September 27, 2013- including 93 breaches of Resolution 2209- adopted on March 6, 2015- and 37 breaches of Resolution 2235 -adopted on August 7, 2015. The breaches are distributed by the perpetrator party as follows:

A. The Syrian regime

158 breaches of Resolution 2118 including 89 breaches of Resolution 2209 and 33 breaches of Resolution 2235. The breaches are distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

Aleppo: 24

Idlib: 41

Hama: 27

Homs: 4

Damascus: 22

Damascus suburbs: 33

Daraa: 4

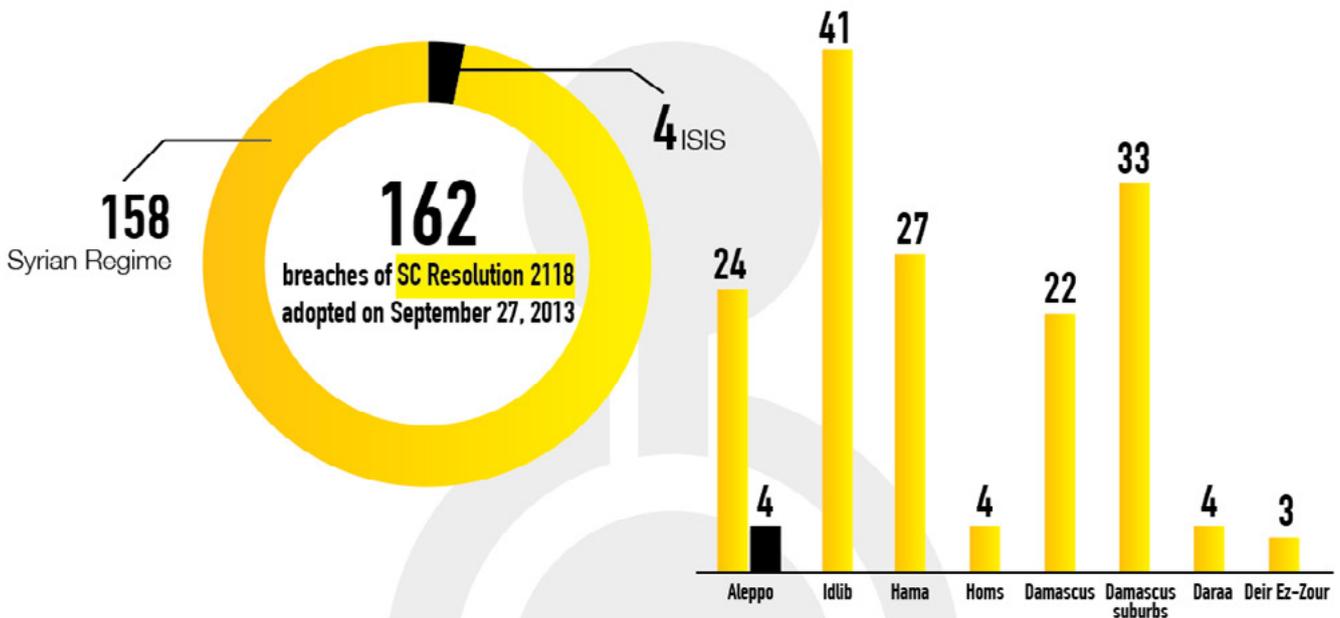
Deir Ez-Zour: 3

B. ISIS

We recorded 4 breaches of Resolution 2118, and, at the same time, Resolutions 2209 and 2235. All of the breaches were in Aleppo governorate.



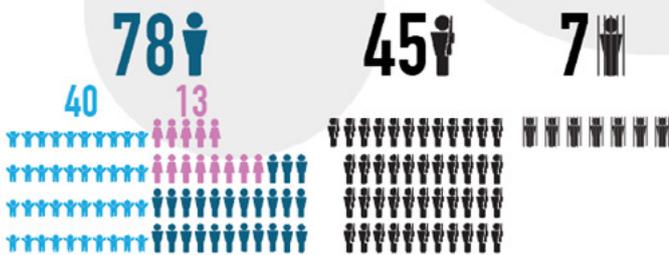
The reality of the use of **chemical weapons** in Syria since the Security Council Resolution **2118** adopted on September 27, 2013 until December 31, 2016



The attacks caused

The death of no less than **130** people

In attacks by the Syrian Regime



The injuries of no less than **2289** people

2164 in attacks by Syrian Regime

125 in attacks by ISIS

According to SNHR documentation



V. The New Chemical Attacks by the Syrian Regime and ISIS, Despite the Joint Investigative Mechanism's Condemnation

A. Syrian regime

1- Areas under the control of armed opposition factions

- Aleppo governorate

Al Rashideen neighborhood, Sunday, October 30, 2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped two [barrel bombs](#) loaded with a poison gas on the 5th al Rashideen area in al Rashideen neighborhood in western Aleppo city. The bombing injured no less than 12 individuals who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms.

Al Rashideen neighborhood, Monday, October 31, 2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped two barrel bombs loaded with a poison gas on the 5th al Rashideen area in al Rashideen neighborhood in western Aleppo city. The bombing injured no less than 10 individuals who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms.

Safwan al Hejazi, a nurse who tended to some of the injured, told us via Facebook:

“Seven of the injured were rushed to the hospital for which I work. They were agitated and experiencing breathing difficulties. One guy was foaming. The bombing took place at roughly 11:00 AM, when two barrel bombs loaded with chlorine were dropped near al Dahiya area in al Rashideen neighborhood.”

Khan al Asal village, Thursday, November 3, 2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped three barrel bombs loaded with a poison gas. The barrels fell in three different locations and injured no less than 15 individuals who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms:



The first location: Jam'ieyat al Kahrbaa area which is located to the west of Khan al Asal village

The second location: Jam'ieyat al Sayyad, which is one kilometers to the west of Khan al Asal village. The barrel bomb injured at least 10 individuals who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms.

The third location: in the middle of Khan al Asal village, which injured no less than five individuals who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms.



Khan al Asal village, Monday, November 7, 2016
Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb loaded with a poison gas on eastern Khan Al Asal village in Jabal Sam'an area in western Aleppo suburbs. The bombing injured no less than 32 individuals, including eight children and three women, who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms in addition to coughing.





Syrian regime forces escalated the use of chemical weapons in their last battle to take over Aleppo city's eastern neighborhoods, where we recorded no less than eight attacks between November 15, 2016 and December 31, 2016. All of the attacks were a result of Syrian regime helicopters dropping barrel bombs loaded with poison gases.

Masaken Hananou neighborhood, Friday, November 18, 2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb loaded with a poison gas on [Masaken Hananou](#) neighborhood in eastern Aleppo city. The bombing targeted residential houses on the road leading to al Haydariya neighborhood. Four individuals, including three children, were injured and exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms.



The neighborhood is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces, whereas it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.



Al Sakhour neighborhood, Sunday, November 20, 2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped two barrel bombs loaded with a poison gas on al Sakhour neighborhood in eastern Aleppo city. One of the barrel bombs was dropped on a residential house in the vicinity of al Khayrat mosque, which resulted in the killing of six [individuals](#), including four children and one woman, who all died suffocating. Additionally, no less than 18 others were injured. The other barrel bomb was dropped on [al Sakhour neighborhood](#) highway.



The neighborhood is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces, whereas it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

We contacted, via Facebook, Mr. Sadeq Najjar, a resident of al Sakhour neighborhood who assisted with the aiding the injured:

“Around 01:15, I heard a barrel exploding. The barrel made an explosion sound that is different from the usual barrel bombs, as it was less severe. I went to the bombed location in the vicinity of Al Khayrat mosque. A nasty smell, that is similar to the chlorine’s, spread all over the place. I put a wet cloth on my mouth and nose and started aiding the injured. There were 20 injured people. We couldn’t continue aiding the victims because of the regime’s artillery shelling that targeted the place. After nearly an hour, we finished aiding the victims. We found an entire family that suffocated to death. Their dead bodies were puffed and their skin turned blue, and their eyes were popping out. Also, we didn’t find any wound signs that would have been a result of shrapnel.”

Victims’ names

- 1- Ayman al Abdullah.
- 2- Mrs. Roudin (Ayman al Abdullah’s wife)
- 3- Female child Zahraa Ayman al Abdullah
- 4- Child Hasan Ayman al Abdullah
- 5- Child Mahmoud Ayman al Abdullah
- 6- Female child Fatima Ayman al Abdullah



Tareeq al Bab neighborhood, Sunday, November 20 ,2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped two barrel bombs loaded with a poison gas that fell on Karm al Bik area in Tareeq al Bab neighborhood in Eastern Aleppo city. [The bombing injured five individuals](#) who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms.

The neighborhood is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces, whereas it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

SNHR spoke to Mr. Mustafa al Sarout, a media activist inside Aleppo city, via Facebook:

“The bombing took place nearly at 6:00 PM, which is the time Syrian regime forces usually pick to bomb us with poison gases. Five individuals were mildly injured, and they were treated at the makeshift hospitals. However, al Sakhour neighborhood was targeted too on the same day with chlorine gas, and six individuals from the same family were killed. I recorded a video that documents the bomb carrying the chlorine. It was yellow and on it was written al Baha company for soda products.”

Tareeq al Bab neighborhood, Tuesday, November 22, 2016

Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped a barrel bomb loaded with a poison gas on Dahrat Awwad area in Tareeq al Bab neighborhood in eastern Aleppo city. The neighborhood is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces, whereas it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

[Video](#) showing a Syrian regime forces helicopter dropping a barrel bomb. The explosion of the barrel bomb spread a green-colored smoke.

Al Jazmati neighborhood, Wednesday, November 23, 2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped a [barrel bomb](#) loaded with poison gas that fell inside a residential house on the road leading to al Myassar neighborhood in eastern Aleppo city. The bombing injured two individuals at least who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms.

The neighborhood is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces, whereas it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the [incident](#).



Masaken Hananou neighborhood, Wednesday, November 23, 2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb loaded with a poison gas that fell on Ard al Hamra area in Masaken Hananou neighborhood in eastern Aleppo city. The bombing injured at least one woman who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms.

The neighborhood is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces, whereas it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Al Ferdous neighborhood, Thursday, November 8, 2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on al Ferdous neighborhood in eastern Aleppo. The neighborhood is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces, whereas it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

A [video](#) by On the Ground News Agency that shows green-colored smoke spreading in al Ferdous neighborhood after Syrian regime forces helicopters dropped a barrel bomb

Al Kallasa neighborhood, Friday, December 9, 2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb loaded with a poison gas on al Hayat medical center in [al Kallasa neighborhood](#) in eastern Aleppo. The bombing injured no less than 29 individuals who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms.

The neighborhood is currently under the control of Syrian regime forces, whereas it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

The nurse Ahmad Sanda, who works at al Hayat neighborhood in Aleppo city, told us, via WhatsApp, of what he saw:

“during my shift at al Hayat medical center, we heard a helicopter soaring and then we heard a collision sound. We didn’t hear a strong explosion. A few minutes later, a strong smell, which was similar to the chlorine’s, started spreading. Everyone in the hospital was affected to various degrees. I was among the injured. We rushed to the upper floors to avoid more gas. My injury was minor, as I was able to treat those who had more severe injuries. The injured exhibited symptoms such as heavy breathing, hypoxia, diarrhea, nausea, dizziness, and epiphora. The injuries were mostly minor and mild except for two injuries that were more severe.”



- Hama governorate

Al Latamna town, Tuesday, October 25, 2016

Syrian regime helicopters dropped no less than 10 barrel bombs, some of which were loaded with poison gases, on the southwest side of al Latamna town in the northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate. The bombing injured no less than 30 civilians who exhibited breathing difficulties symptoms.

SNHR contacted, via WhatsApp, Mr. Abu Hamza, who works at the medical center in the town:

“No less than 35 civilians were injured including 12 children and a number of women. The symptoms were most apparent on the children, as their respiratory system has a weaker immunity. The injured exhibited symptoms such as acute suffocation, cough, sneezing as their mucous membranes were affected. Also, some others exhibited symptoms such as hypoxia, bluishness of nails. We provided the treatment from the available medications such oxygen, bronchodilators, anti-allergies, and anti-toxins.”

“The bombing took place at approximately 17:00, after Syrian regime helicopters dropped no less than 12 barrel bombs, where some of the barrel bombs were loaded with chlorine gas.”

[Video](#) showing Syrian regime helicopters dropping barrel bombs on al Latamna town and some accounts by residents and civil defense members

2- Areas under the control of ISIS

- Hama governorate

Hama's eastern suburbs, Monday, December 12, 2016

Fixed-wing Syrian regime forces warplanes fired no less than eight missiles loaded with poison gases. The missiles targeted five villages in Hama's eastern suburbs, which is under the control of ISIS. The villages are: Eqerbat, Hamadi Omar, al Qastal, al Slaliya, and Jrouh. The bombing resulted in the killing of 35 individuals including 16 children and six women, and injured no less than 100 others who exhibited symptoms such as: heavy breathing, red eyes, narrow irises, vomiting, and foaming. Most of the residents of the targeted villages hid in shelters and basements, which increased the number of victims and injured, as the gas is denser and has a bigger effect in lower levels.

After great difficulties, we were able to reach eyewitnesses in light of the restrictions imposed by ISIS on media activists and medical personnel



SNHR spoke, via Facebook, to Mr. Baker, who is a resident of Eqerbat village

“It was roughly 7:30 AM when I saw a Syrian regime warplane soaring at a low altitude. We headed for the shelters. The warplanes carried out 12 airstrikes on our village, and on al Slaliya, Hamadi Omar, Jrouh, and al N’imiya and al Khdeira villages using missiles that created weak explosions.”

“Just a few minutes later, I had troubles breathing and my vision was blurred. I went to the makeshift hospital, where I found tens of injured including women and children. They were exhibiting suffocation and narrow irises symptoms, while others were vomiting and having hyperthermia. Most of the victims were hiding in shelters which increased the number of the wounded and the casualties.”

“A lot of civilians died, most of them were from al Slaliya village. Among the victims were many paramedics who died aiding the injured. I know nine paramedics who died in this massacre.”

Abu al Yaman, an eyewitness to the bombing from [Eqerbat village](#), told us, via WhatsApp, of what he saw:

“More than 25 missiles were fired by the regime warplanes. 16 of them were loaded with poison gases, A white-colored smoke that has no smell spread across the area. The bombing targeted al Slaliya, Jrouh, Qastal, Hamadi Omar, and Eqerbat villages. However, most of the victims and injured were from al Slaliya and Hamadi Omar villages.”

“Most of the residents were hiding in the shelters. This largely increased the number of the injured and the victims, because the gases concentrate in lower levels. I tried to aid some of the injured. I noticed symptoms such as heavy breathing, hypothermia, and red eyes, while others were vomiting and foaming. We don’t have the necessary medical resources to treat such injuries at our medical centers. The doctors took off the injured people’s clothes and washed their bodies and gave them milk. Also, some of the injured were taken to al Raqqa city.”

Victims’ names



B. ISIS

Al Khaliliya village, Sunday, November 27, 2016

ISIS artillery, stationing in al Bab city, fired a number of shells loaded with poison gases that targeted al Khaliliya village, located in northeastern al Bab city and is under the control of armed opposition factions, which resulted in nine suffocation cases among armed opposition fighters.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

Syrian regime forces have violated the international humanitarian law through the repeated and deliberate use of chemical weapons, which constitutes a war crime. The use of chlorine gas is a violation of Security Council Resolutions 2118, 2209, and 2235, and the agreement that the Syrian regime signed on September 14, 2013, which prohibits the use of poison gases and provides that they must be destroyed. All the states that signed the agreement have to find measure to deter the Syrian regime in order to stop its frequent violations. Also, the crime of willful killing constitutes a crime against humanity according to article 7 of Rome statute, as the Syrian regime has been perpetrating this crime in a systematic and widespread manner since March 2011.

The Joint Investigative Mechanism confirmed that the Syrian regime and ISIS have been responsible for a number of attacks. The Security Council, however, is still standing idly by.

Recommendations

The European Union and the United States of America

Support the neutral international Mechanism which was established in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 71/248, which was adopted on December 21, 2016, and establish regional tribunals that enjoys a universal jurisdiction. This crime, the use of chemical weapons which is one of the most serious crimes in this age, must be addressed.



Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

The Commission of Inquiry has to start immediately investigating the incidents that can be tackled, and take serious steps in order to accelerate the investigation and determine the party that is responsible for using this kind of weapons, especially after the Syrian government had signed the CWC.

Security Council

Under Chapter VII and in accordance with its three Resolutions, the Security Council has to take effective, immediate action after the Joint Investigative Mechanism confirmed that the Syrian regime and ISIS have been responsible for certain attacks. Therefore, the Security Council has to uphold its responsibilities in preserving civil peace and security in Syria, as the Syrian government's violations constitutes a blatant threat to the international peace and security. Also, the Security Council has to stop playing the game of political interests at the expense of the Syrian people's blood. The Syrian regime's utter disregard for Security Council Resolutions 2118, 2209, and 2235 is an unapologetic political disgrace and a grave insult to the Security Council.

Human Rights Council

Shed more light on the Syrian regime's breaches of Security Council Resolutions 2118, 2209, and 2235 in order to apply a greater pressure on the Security Council to take more serious, deterring steps.

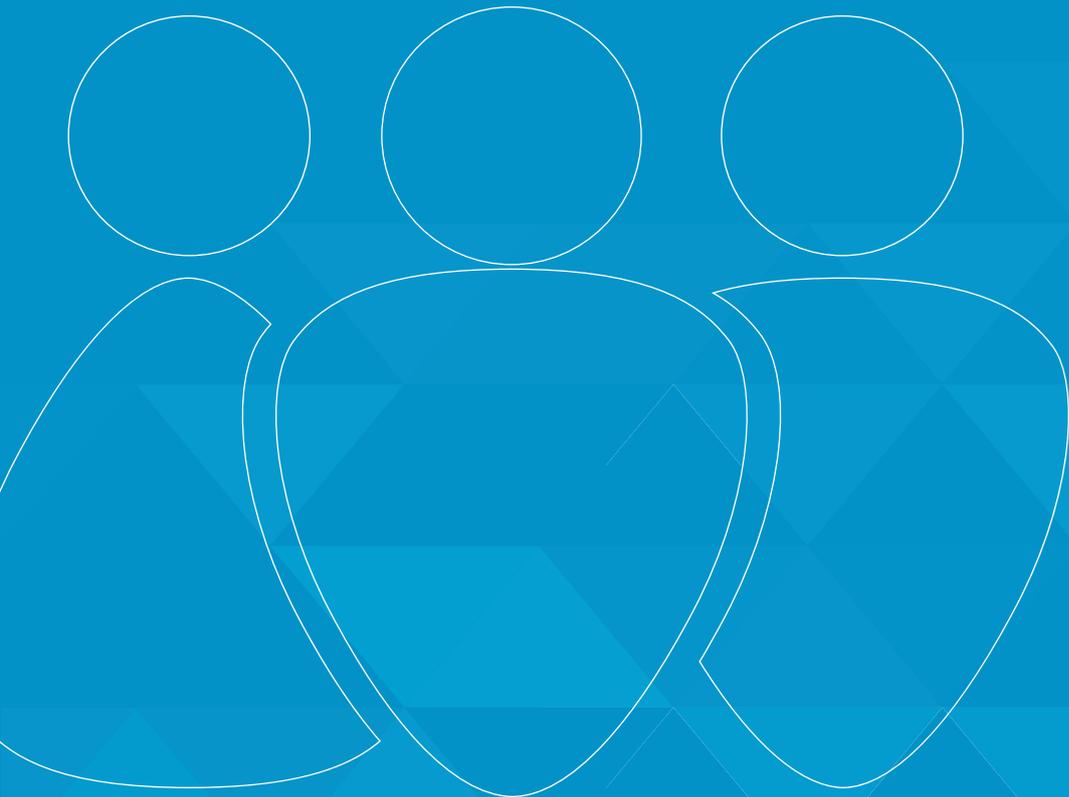
Friends of Syria Group

Provide the areas that are being targeted using poison gases (in light of the Security Council's helplessness to stop these attacks) with protective masks. SNHR estimates that no less than 187,000 protective masks are needed in these areas in addition to the necessary equipment to eliminate the effects of the chemical pollution.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

Our most heartfelt condolences go out for the victims' families. Also, we would like to thank and express our gratitude for the families and activists who effectively contributed to these investigations.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

