

Field study

Documentation of human rights violations in Damascus and its countryside

Sarin and Chlorine

The Internationally Banned Toxic Gases
as a Confrontation Weapon
in the hands of the Syrian regime

Monitoring and documentation unit



CSR-SY An independent research center interested in the Syrian affairs, was established in August 2011. Relying on a network of 148 local sources across the country, we provide brief research studies based on field statistical surveys on human rights violations in Syria. Our aim is to show the complex variables that shed light on these events. CSR has been cited by the UN as an independent source of the conflict.

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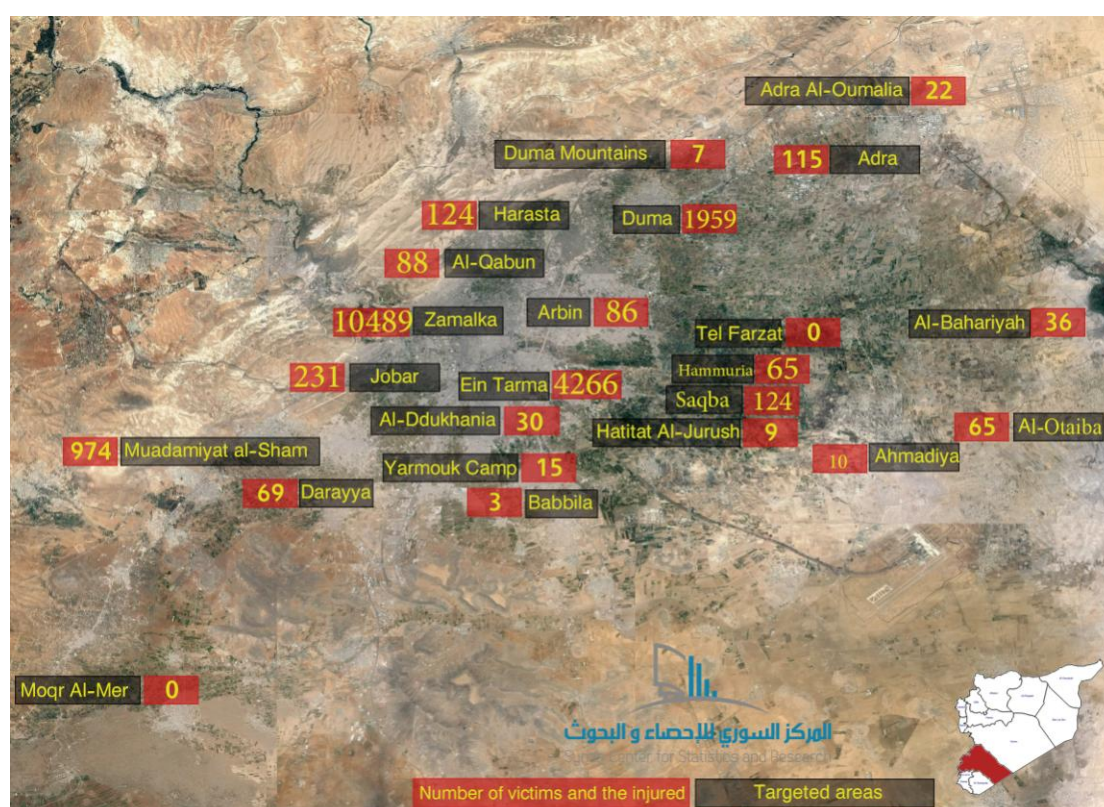
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<map of the areas targeted by toxic gases in Damascus and its countryside throughout the conflict with numbers of casualties>

Introduction

At the end of 2012, Syria witnessed the first use of toxic gases¹ as a weapon of confrontation during the war that erupted in 2011 sprouting from the public protests against the regime in Damascus.

Despite the numerous occurrences monitored by media and legal bodies, the international condemning reaction towards the use of chemical weapons and the issuance of UN Security Council resolutions on this matter, the conflict in Syria still witnesses many incidents of the use of toxic gases in many areas with different levels of intensity.

The last incident was **on 7 April 2018 in Douma**, where a new massacre by toxic gases took place resulting in 80 victims at least and about 850 infected so far, while it is suspected that these numbers are still increasing at the very moment, five years after the infamous chemical attack massacre in Damascus Countryside, which was followed by a resolution by the UN Security Council condemning any act of killing using toxic gases in general, whether they are classified as chemical weapons or not².

Throughout the armed conflict in Syria, the common thing in all cases of toxic gas attacks was the victims being from anti-Assad battalions or their public supporters. Whereas, the variables were the change in the type of gas used, at the beginning of 2014, from sarin to chlorine, the increase of the geographic scope³ and the widening in circle of parties responsible for the use of such gases to include the parties supporting Assad's regime after having been limited to the regime itself.

The following is a study documenting the course of the use of sarin gas and chlorine gas in Damascus and its countryside. This study comes in the context of shedding light on the systematic violations of human rights practiced as a policy that is still ongoing in the same place of the massacre. The total number of the cases of documented use of chemical weapons, according to the database of the Syrian Center for Statistics and Research up to date reached 118 cases in Damascus and its countryside and over 240 cases in Syria .

This study is one of the documentation unit (DU) outputs. DU contains documenting on two levels: documenting victims and documenting events. It follows events, reports victims daily and collects data as well as eyewitness testimonies, therefore, the information and numbers mentioned in this study could be also found in CSR-SY website.

¹ Bayadah district in Homs, watch a [video](#) that documents the condition of the injured in 23 December 2012.

² to access the resolution no. 2118 [here](#)

³ Up to date, toxic gases have been used in five Syrian provinces of the fourteen. The provinces targeted are: Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, Homs, Damascus Countryside and Damascus. This illustrates that areas targeted stretch out along the confrontation lines between the Syrian regime and the armed opposition from north to south, away from the vast areas to the north of the country under control of the Islamic State

Definitions

Sarin: Sarin is one of the artificial nerve gases. It has been used since 1938 in Germany to kill insects. It is similar to a group of commonly known insecticides called organophosphate.

Sarin is a colorless liquid or gas. Its symptoms, depending on the level of exposure, include: a blurred vision, shortness in breath, convulsion in muscles, sweetening, vomiting, diarrhea, fainting, contractions and respiratory standstill leading to death. Prolonged exposure could lead to death as shown by the Sarin gas attack by "Aum Shinrikyo group" 1995 in a train station in Tokyo.

Sarin, also called GB, is one of chemical war artificial elements; it is categorized as a nerve agent. Nerve agents are the most poisonous and the fastest known agents of chemical war. They resemble a certain group of insecticides called organophosphate compounds in the way they work and the types of damage they cause. However, nerve agents are far more effective than the organophosphate insecticides.

Sarin is a clear, colorless and tasteless liquid, odorless when it is pure; it can evaporate (turn into gas) and spread through the environment.

Chlorine: Chlorine gas is a heavy greenish-yellow gas, bad smelling and toxic. Atomic No. 17 and symbol Cl.

Captives: the armed personnel detained by any party to the conflict, both governmental and non-state actors. They are referred to as such in line with the way they are described with locally.

First:

Toxic gases in Damascus and Damascus Countryside

Sarin Gas



1. Cases where toxic gas (sarin) was used

The use of toxic gas (Sarin) began at the beginning of 2013 as it was first used in al-Otaiba on 19 March 2013 causing the suffocation of 65 civilians including children and women, 5 of whom died immediately. The town was targeted by mid-range surface to surface missiles.

The number of attacks by the regime on towns and cities using Sarin reached 24 attacks. However, no cases of Sarin use were documented in Damascus and its countryside by any other party.

Types of weapons used

The Syrian regime used two types of toxic gas weapons to shell cities and towns in Damascus countryside:

1. Surface to surface missiles (mid-range and long-range)
2. Hand grenades.

Areas targeted by toxic gases:

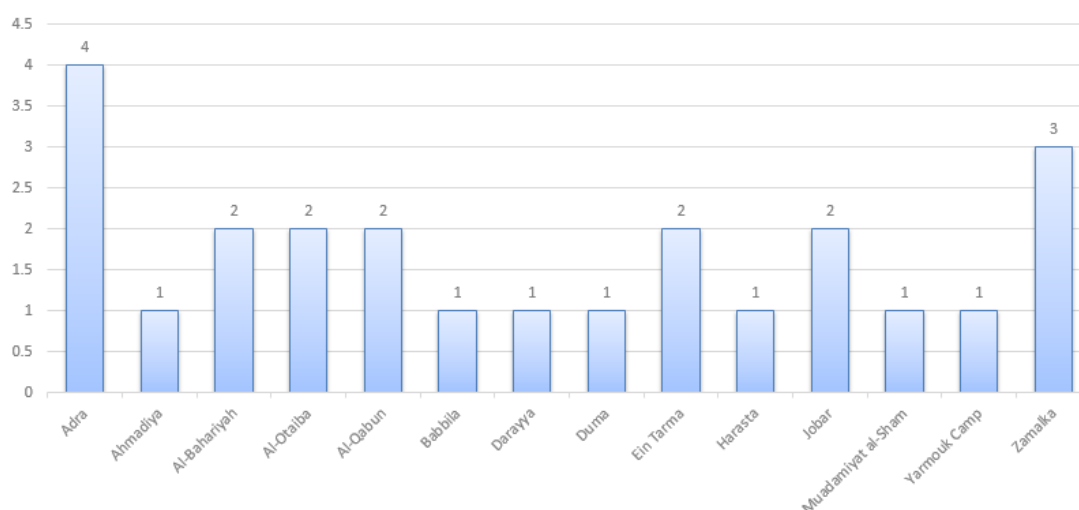
Toxic gas attacks were focused on civilian areas in addition to certain military contact points between the armed opposition and the regime.

Among the most important areas targeted by toxic gas were:

- Al-Otaiba
- Adra alammaliya
- Daraya
- Ain Tarma
- Joubar Neighborhood
- Harasta
- Al-Bahariya
- Al-Ahmadiya
- Zamalka
- Qaboun Neighborhood.
- Babbila
- Yarmouk camp
- Douma
- Moadamiyat al-Sham.

Numbers and locations of toxic gas (Sarin) attacks:

The number of toxic gas attacks in Damascus and its countryside reach 24 cases distributed on 14 areas, while other areas were indirectly affected as result of the spread of toxic gases.



"A Chart illustrating the percentage of targeted areas in the period between 19 March 2013 and 21 August 2013"

2. Victims of toxic gas (Sarin) attacks.

The number of victims of toxic gas attacks has reach more than (1460) death cases including 142 children and 136 women, while 14867 people were injured including children and women.

3. Associated symptoms

- a. Body Convulsion
- b. Excessive shortness in breath.
- c. Tachycardia
- d. Excessive vomiting
- e. Dizziness and overbalance
- f. Pinhole pupil.
- g. Foamy mouth.
- h. Paleness in face and body with blue skin.

4. Photo Evidence

A testimony of one of the doctors who supervised the cases with an explanation to the gas used.

<http://youtu.be/ePBuzfzDt80>

A testimony by one the injured.

<http://youtu.be/sgL8Belzsv4>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXrgqUnlvhQ>

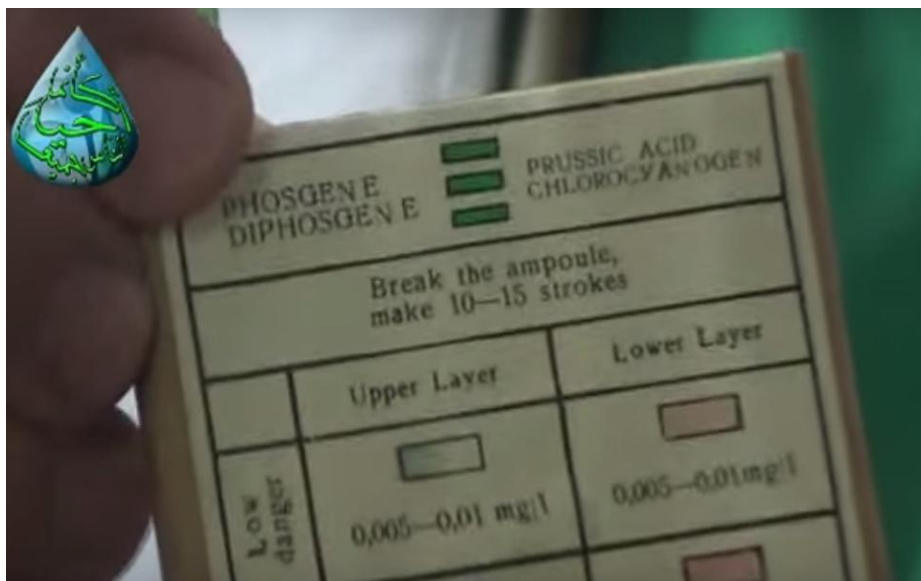
One of the injured:

<http://youtu.be/MKZ4QOKqtZ>

Coverage on great massacre in east Ghouta by field activists

http://youtu.be/yp_Ju6742Z0

Photos showing some of the weapons used:



Second:

Toxic Gases in Damascus and Damascus Countryside

Chlorine Gas



<From a health center in Damascus, a picture shows two of the injured by the inhalation of toxic gases>

5. Cases where toxic gas (chlorine) was used

The use of toxic gas (chlorine) began early in 2014. It was first used against the city of Daraya on 13 Jan, 2014. It caused the suffocation of 14 fighters of the armed opposition as they were targeted by hand grenades containing the toxic gases. Till the date of issuing this report, the number of attacks by toxic gas by the governmental military forces has reached 94 cases of different types in different areas.

Types of weapons used

The weapons used as carriers to the toxic gas varied from one area to another for several reasons. The most important reasons being the geographic nature and the sensitivity of the targeted location. We managed to detect several types of military and classic weapons which are:

1. Hand grenades.
2. Mortars
3. Landmines.
4. RPG rockets.
5. Artillery shells
6. Tank shells
7. Surface-to-surface missile (mid-range)
8. Fighter jets missiles
9. Locally made bombs.
10. Barrel bombs
11. AGS grenades.

Areas targeted by toxic gas (chlorine)

The use of toxic gas was concentrated on most contact areas because the Syrian government's military forces use toxic gases in two cases, attack and defense.

The most famous incidents of toxic gas use were in the following areas:

1. Joubar.
2. Arbin.
3. Harasta
4. Daraya.
5. Htaitet al-Jarash.
6. Adra al-Omaliya.
7. Al-Doukhaniya.
8. Maghr al-Meer.
9. Ein Tarma.
10. Tal Ferzat- Nashabiya.
11. Muadamiyat al-sham.



12. Douma mountins.
13. Bassiyma.
14. Housh al-dawahra.
15. Almarj.
16. Hamouriyah.
17. Saqba.
18. Zamalka.
19. Al-bilaliyah.
20. Douma.
21. Mazari' Douma.

Numbers and Locations of Toxic Gas (chlorine) Attacks

The number of toxic gas attacks in Damascus Countryside has reached 94 cases distributed on 21 areas.

Table 1: Targeted areas with the details of the use of toxic gases

Area	Date	Weapon used	Victims	Injuries
Daraya	13-Jan-2014	Hand grenades	-	14 fighters
Joubar	09-Mar-2014	Hand grenades	-	5 fighters
Daraya	17-May-2014	Barrel bomb	-	-
Daraya	18-May-2014	Barrel bomb	-	-
Joubar	20-Aug-2014	Hand grenades	3 fighters	7 fighters
Arbeen	22-Aug-2014	Hand grenades	3 fighters	43 fighters
Maghr al-Meer	01-Sep-2014	Barrel bomb	-	-
Al-Doukhaniya	08-Sep-2014	Mortar Shells	-	5 fighters
Al-Doukhaniya	10-Sep-2014	Mortar Shells	-	3 fighters
Al-Doukhaniya	12-Sep-2014	RPG rocket	-	5 fighters
Joubar	13-Sep-2014	Hand grenade	-	10 fighters
Al-Doukhaniya	14-Sep-2014	Mortar shells	-	-
Hateetat al-Jarash	14-Sep-2014	Tank shell	-	9 fighters
Al-Doukhaniya	15-Sep-2014	Mortar shells	-	5 fighters
Al-Doukhaniya	16-Sep-2014	Mortar shells	-	One fighter
Al-Doukhaniya	18-Sep-2014	Mortar shells	-	3 fighters
Al-Doukhaniya	20-Sep-2014	RPG rocket	-	2 fighters
Al-Doukhaniya	22-Sep-2014	Mortar shell	-	6 fighters
Adra al-Omaliya	24-Sep-2014	Surface-to-surface missile	7 captives	15 including 12 fighters and 3 captives
Joubar	15-Oct-2014	Hand grenades	-	4 fighters
Joubar	15-Oct-2014	Hand grenades	-	7 fighters
Joubar	16-Oct-2014	Hand grenades	-	3 fighters
Harasta	20-Oct-2014	Land mines	2 fighters	11 paramedics
Arbeen	03-Nov-2014	Mortar shell	-	-
Joubar	04-Nov-2014	Hand grenades	-	4 fighters
Joubar	04-Nov-2014	Hand grenades	-	5 fighters
Joubar	12-Nov-2014	Hand grenades	-	6 fighters

Joubar	13-Nov-2014	Air-to-surface missile	-	20 fighters
Joubar	16-Nov-2014	Air-to-surface missile	-	-
Daraya	02-Dec-2014	Hand grenades	-	-
Joubar	12-Dec-2014	Hand grenades	-	20 fighters
Joubar	15-Dec-2014	Hand grenades	-	-
Harasta	24-Dec-2014	Land mines	2 fighters	15 fighters
Joubar	27-Dec-2014	Hand grenades	-	7 fighters
Joubar	29-Dec-2014	Hand grenades	-	9 fighters
Joubar	01-Mar-2015	Hand grenades	-	6 fighters
Daraya	25-Mar-2015	Hand grenades	-	3 fighters
Joubar	02-May-2015	Hand grenades	-	8 fighters
Joubar	13-Jun-2015	Hand grenades	-	8 fighters
Harasta	21-Jul-2015	Land mines	2 fighters	5 fighters
Joubar	27-Jul-2015	Air-to-surface missile	-	7 fighters
Ain Tarma	27-Jul-2015	Air-to-surface missile	-	13 civilians including: 4 children and 5 women
Joubar	30-Jul-2015	Hand grenades	One fighter	15 fighters
Joubar	06-Aug-2015	Hand grenades	One fighter	3 fighters
Daraya	09-Aug-2015	Hand grenades	-	3 fighters
Arbeen	11-Aug-2015	Hand grenades	One fighter	5 fighters
Daraya	13-Aug-2015	Hand grenades	-	7 fighters
Arbeen	17-Aug-2015	Hand grenades	-	20 fighters
Harasta	25-Sep-2015	Hand grenades	-	6 fighters
Joubar	26-Oct-2015	Hand grenades	-	5 fighters
Douma Mount	03-Nov-2015	Hand grenades	-	7 fighters
Harasta	16-Nov-2015	Land mines	2 fighters	2 fighters
Moadamiyat al-Sham	22-Dec-2015	Surface-to-surface missile	5 fighters	30 including: 20 fighters and 10 civilians
Joubar	27-Dec-2015	Hand grenades	-	8 fighters
Moadamiyat al-Sham	31-Dec-2015	Barrel bomb	-	97 civilians including 17 fighters
Arbeen	28-Feb-2016	Hand grenades	-	2 fighters
Tal Farzat	29-Feb-2016	AGS grenade	-	-
Harasta	03-Apr-2016	Land mines	2 fighters	15 fighters
Joubar	23-May-2016	Hand grenades	-	-
Joubar	29-May-2016	Hand grenades	4 fighters	5 fighters and one paramedic
Bassiymah	5 January 2017	Artillery shells	-	-
Almarj	30 January 2017	Air-to-surface missile	-	11 civilian
Arbin	7 February 2017	Mortar shelling	-	-
Arbin	9 February 2017	Hand grenades	one fighter	two fighters

Arbin	10 February 2017	Hand grenades	-	three fighters
Housh al-dawahra	21 February 2017	surface-to-surface missile	-	10 fighters
Harasta	26 February 2017	Air-to-surface missile	-	The general number is 21 infected, 6 children, 5 women, 9 men and 1 paramedic
Al-Qaboun neighborhood	29 March 2017	Artillery shells	one civilians	35 civilians
Al-Qaboun neighborhood	7 April 2017	Artillery shells	-	20 civilians
Arbin	22 April 2017	bombs	-	5 fighters
Joubar	22 May 2017	Artillery shells	-	10 fighters
Ain-Terma	1 June 2017	Artillery shells	-	35 fighters
Zamalka	2 June 2017	Artillery shells	-	7 fighters
Zamalka	2 June 2017	Artillery shells	-	3 fighters
Zamalka	2 June 2017	Artillery shells	-	3 fighters
Ain-tarma	6 June 2017	Artillery shells	-	28 fighters
Ain- tarma	14 June 2017	Artillery shells	-	15 fighters
Ain-tarma	20 June 2017	Artillery shells	-	8 fighters
Ain-tarma	16 August 2017	Artillery shells	-	7 fighters
Harasta	18 November 2017	Artillery shells	-	37 fighters
Mazari' Douma	22 December 2017	Artillery shells	-	-
Al-bilaliyah	30 December 2017	Artillery shells	-	-
Al-bilaliyah	30 December 2017	Artillery shells	-	-
Mazari' Douma	13 January 2018	Artillery shells	-	17 civilians
Harasta	21 January 2018	Rockets	-	9 civilians
Douma	22 January 2018	Rockets	-	21 civilians, among them 6 children and 6 women
Douma	1 February 2018	Rockets	-	-
Arbin	4 February 2018	rockets	-	7 fighters
Hamouriyah	5 March 2018	exploding barrels	-	30 civilians
Saqba	7 March 2018	exploding barrels	-	124 civilians
Arbin	12 March 2018	exploding barrels	-	20 civilians
Hamouriyah	14 March 2018	exploding	-	35 civilians

		barrels		
Douma	7 April 2018	exploding barrels	one civilian	About 400 civilians
Douma	7 April 2018	exploding barrels	Unknown yet (55 civilians) at least	Unknown yet, about 850 civilians

Note:

All targeted areas were under the control of armed opposition at the time of these attacks, before the displacement which Eastern Ghouta has witnessed recently since March 2018 until this moment, and were frontlines of battles between the Syrian governmental forces and the armed opposition, except Ain Tarma in which unarmed civilians resides and Maghr al-Meer in Mount Hermon, an civilian area, in which no significant injuries were reported because the barrel bombs hit outside the populated area in the village.

6. Victims of the toxic gas (chlorine) attacks

The number of victims of toxic gas attacks has reached 111 killed and around 2448 others infected people, including 20 paramedics and 2320 civilians, including 16 documented children and 16 documented women.

Among the victims were 7 captives from Adra al-Omaliya, where two missiles loaded with chlorine gas hit the area causing their death and the injury of another (22) captives and guards.

7. Associated symptoms⁴

1. Excessive sweating.
2. Shortness of breath.
3. Blurred vision.
4. Nausea.
5. Severe headache
6. Convulsion⁵.

Moreover, a new unidentified type of toxic gas was reportedly used in Joubar neighborhood on 6 August 2015. With the following symptoms:

1. Fainting.
2. Excessive vomiting.
3. Furor
4. Acroanesthesia and numbness in limbs.
5. Aconuresis.

In Daraya, another type of toxic gas was used launched with hand grenades on 9 August 2015. It had bad smell like rotten onions and caused rhabdomyolysis.

⁴ A video that shows that symptoms of toxic gas inhalation <http://youtu.be/MIABNIJgNjk>

⁵ A video that show a convulsions case by an injured. <http://youtu.be/jc4DGGySRCc>

Additionally, the Syrian regime used toxic gases on the outskirts of Arbeen targeting a military location of the armed opposition on 11 August 2015. This attack smelled like cooking gas and its syndromes were different from those of Chlorine gas. These included:

1. Excessive furor.
2. Aconuresis
3. Miosis.
4. Scarlet-blue color of the face.
5. Mouth discharges.

So far the used gas is still unidentified.



<An image that illustrates corectasis>

A medical report issued by the Medical Office in Eastern Ghouta following the attack on Joubar neighborhood on 9 March 2014

By diagnosing the injuries we received – a relatively little number of civilians and militants – we realized that some cases were unconscious with no trace of wound or bleeding. This drove us to take caution during the treatment process.

The clinical checks confirmed that they were poisoned by inhaling toxic gases. The injured were being delivered to the medical point unconscious and in a full coma. After reviving those using antibiotics and inhalants, mouth discharges appeared constituting of sputum combined by light whitey foam, which is the toxic material that entered their lungs during the exposure and came out after the antibiotics injection.

The general health situation is unconsciousness at the beginning, then moving gradually into a shortness of breath, Acroanesthesia and numbness in limbs, lack of sense during revival, bradycardia and a little paleness in whole body.

Two cases had yellow eyes and pupil contraction.

This showed that the reason of injury was inhaling toxic gas.

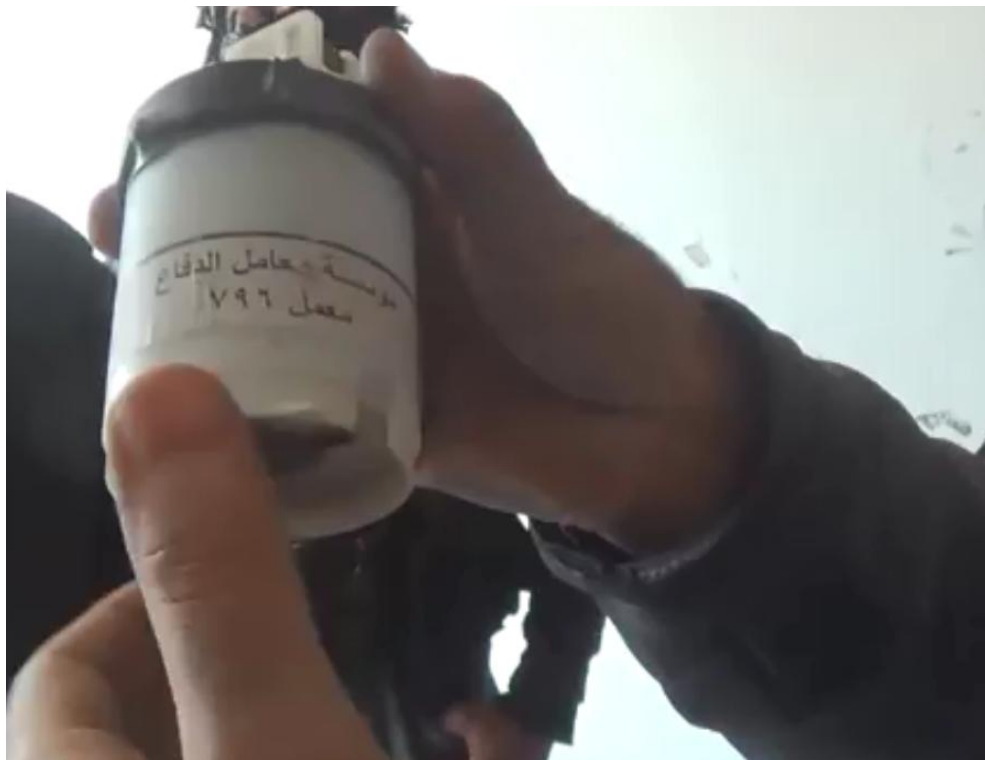
8. Photo evidence

Photos showing some types of the used weapons.

A photo of a locally made bomb that contains chlorine used by the Syrian regime to shell the locations of the armed opposition on the frontlines of Joubar. [2]



A photo of a locally made bomb used in the military attacks. It was dropped on one of the armed opposition gathering places in Jobar. The photo shows the number of bomb and manufacturing place, namely the defense factories that affiliates to the Syrian Ministry of Defense.



**A video showing the hand-filled chlorine bombs:**

Video filmed by a media activist in Joubar

http://youtu.be/2rEGKm_h_Ao

The UN Security Council resolution condemning the use of Chlorine

Following the massacre committed by the regime in eastern Ghouta and Muadamiyat Al Sham on 21 August 2013, in which it used chemical weapons on unarmed civilians, the UN Security Council issued the Resolution 2118 of 27 September 2013 which bans the use of chemical weapons in Syria by the Syrian regime. The regime afterwards moved to using toxic gases, chlorine in particular, which it currently uses to target Syrian opposition in most areas of Syria.

On 6 March 2015, the members of the Security Council voted on a US draft resolution condemning the use of Chlorine gas on Syria and threatening to take measures under Chapter VII of the UN Charter in case the sides of the conflict in Syria don't respect the UN decisions. 14 members, including Russia voted in favor of the resolution while Venezuela abstained.

After the issuance of the UN resolution, 58 attacks using chlorine were detected in Damascus and its countryside. In 5 cases, the type of gas used wasn't confirmed due to the lack of specialized laboratories to analyze the gas. The number of victims reached 19 fighters from armed opposition and 332 infected, as well as 82 civilian victim and 1748 civilian infected, including 9 paramedics.

Recommendations

As the civilian are victimized by toxic gases more and more, along with ending the mandate of joint investigation mechanism in November 2017 by a Russian veto, and the widespread of impunity policy, we call on United Nations to:

- Regarding the use of toxic gases in Syria as a Systematic policy, taking in consideration its frequency and spread as pointed out in the report.
- Relying on a special outside-security-council investigation mechanism, for it has been proved by experience that this body is incapable of implementing their decisions, last of which is number 2401 which was declared a month before the last massacre date.
- Support and take the needed measures to do the required investigations to convict the criminals of the massacre, and to consider the Syrian government refusal to cooperate as an evidence of conviction against them, confirmed also by the previous evidences, experience and the timeline of the conflict.
- Ensuring the importance of accountability, for it is the only gate to access the stability again in the Syrian society.



Appendices

Appendix A: The killings from Armed Opposition

Table2: Number of armed fighters killed with toxic gases

Name	Place of origin	Date	Place of incident
Amir Nazir al-Malla	Zamalka	20-Aug-2014	Joubar
Unknown	Joubar	20-Aug-2014	Joubar
Unknown	Joubar	20-Aug-2014	Joubar
Abdul Razzak Koukeh	Arbeen	22-Aug-2014	Arbeen
Fayez al-Naddaf	Arbeen	22-Aug-2014	Arbeen
Muhannad Younes Hammoud	Arbeen	22-Aug-2014	Arbeen
Muhammad Omar Omair	Harasta	20-Oct-2014	Harasta
Anas al-Kutaini	Harasta	20-Oct-2014	Harasta
Ahmad Darwish	Harasta	24-Oct-2014	Harasta
Mahmoud al-Masri	Harasta	24-Oct-2014	Harasta
Muhammad al-Tillawi	Douma	21-Jul-2015	Harasta
Abdo al-Takla	Misraba	21-Jul-2015	Harasta
Abu Lutfi	Joubar	30-Jul-2015	Joubar
Abdul Hadi Fatina	Joubar	06-Aug-2015	Joubar
Bahaa Abul Leil	Arbeen	11-Aug-2015	Arbeen
Kasem al-Shaghri	Douma	16-Nov-2015	Harasta
Said al-Hantoush	Beit Sawa	16-Nov-2015	Harasta
Ahmad Arnous	Moadamiyat al-Sham	22-Oct-2015	Moadamiyat al-Sham
Basel al-Hamshari	Moadamiyat al-Sham	22-Oct-2015	Moadamiyat al-Sham
Samer Natouf	Moadamiyat al-Sham	22-Oct-2015	Moadamiyat al-Sham
Abdo Rajab	Moadamiyat al-Sham	22-Oct-2015	Moadamiyat al-Sham
Muhammad Jouma	Moadamiyat al-Sham	22-Oct-2015	Moadamiyat al-Sham
Abu Assem al-Shami	Harasta	03-Apr-2016	Harasta
Mahmoud al-Kheshen	Harasta	03-Apr-2016	Harasta
Ayman al-Samman	Joubar	29-Jun-2016	Joubar
Unknown	Joubar	29-Jun-2016	Joubar
Unknown	Joubar	29-Jun-2016	Joubar
Unknown	Joubar	29-Jun-2016	Joubar
Yahia Khalil Al-masri	Arbin	9 February 2017	Arbin

Appendix B: The killings from Captives

Table 3: Captives who were killed with toxic gases

Name	Place of origin
Tawfik Mahmoud Hassan	Latakia
Abdullah Muhammad al-Sinnari	Adra al-Balad
Muhammad Jasem al-Hussein	Mukhaiyam al-Wafideen
Luay Talal Muhamad	Adra al-Omaliya – Palestinian
Imad Eddin Badr Haidar	Hama – al-Salamiya
Kinan Imad Eddin Haidar	Hama – al-Salamiya
Ali Younes Akeel	Iraq

Sarin and Chlorine

The Internationally Banned Toxic Gases as a Confrontation Weapon in the hands of the Syrian regime

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