



The Syrian Regime Uses Toxic Gases Again and Violates UNSC Resolutions 2118, 2209, and 2235 “Russia’s Inadequate Assurance”

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II. Introduction:

After the chemical attack on Al Ghouta on 21 August 2013, Russia assured that the Syrian regime will hand over its chemical weapons and will cease its use to it. According to those statements, the US pulled back its efforts from disciplining the regime since it crossed the “red line” that were drawn by President Obama. On 27 September 2013, UNSC issued a resolution that stated that “in case of not abiding to the provisions of resolution 2118, measures will be imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.” However, all our evidence indicate that the Syrian regime have violated UNSC resolutions 2118, 2209 and 2235. Russia did not commit to its assurance before the United States in deterring the Syrian regime from using toxic gases. On the other hand, the US was impotent from performing any action. Therefore, we cannot trust a Russian “guarantee or assurance” to any political solution of a cease-fire in Syria if it had failed miserably in managing the use of toxic gases.

Through its daily documentation since 2011, SNHR documented the use of chemical gases and issued 23 previous reports about the use of toxic gases before UNSC resolution 2118 was issued and after. All of that toxic gas attacks were perpetrated by the Syrian regime. ISIL started to use toxic gases on 21 August 2015 for the first time when it attacked Maree’ City in Aleppo.

After ISIL was established on 9 April 2013, we noticed that the Syrian regime’s use of toxic gases was focused on regions that were under the control of armed opposition as 97% of the attacks were concentrated on armed opposition regions while 3% of the attacks were perpetrated on ISIL controlled regions.





Since we were not able to visit and collect samples from regions shelled with toxic gases, we relied on survivors and eyewitnesses testimonies, Civil Defence members and doctors who treated the injured people. Also, we examined videos and images sent to use by our local activists. We also explained the aim behind conducting these interviews and received the eyewitnesses' approval for the information they provided us with. Also, we analyzed all the videos and images we received to check its credibility and kept different copies of it. SNHR assures that these records are the bare minimum of what we were able to document regarding the obstacles and challenges we face in our investigation and gathering information process, and communicating with eyewitnesses.

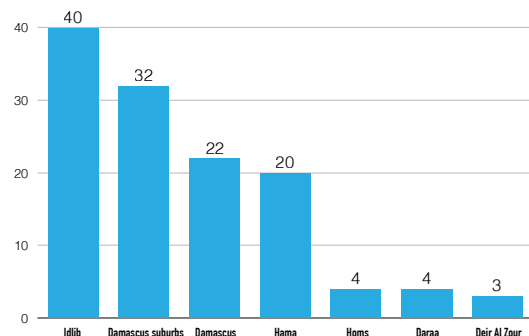
II- Executive Summary:

In this report we present the latest 8 toxic gas attacks by government forces since 1 August 2015 and up till 31 December 2015. In addition to those new eight incidents, the total number of violations for resolution 2118 issued on 27 September 2013 is 135 breaches, and 66 breaches for resolution 2209 issued on 6 March 2015, detailed as follows:

- **Government forces violated resolution 2118 one hundred and thirty three times, amongst which 64 breaches were documented for resolution 2209.**

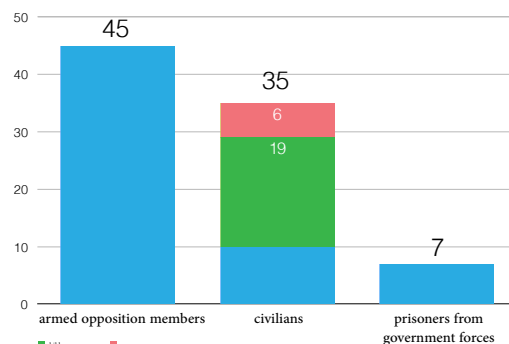
Distribution of these attacks according to the Syrian governorates:

- Idlib: 40 incidents were recorded
- Damascus suburbs: 32 incidents were recorded
- Hama: 20 incidents were recorded
- Damascus: 22 incidents were recorded
- Aleppo: 8 incidents were recorded
- Homs: 4 incidents were recorded
- Daraa: 4 incidents were recorded
- Deir Al Zour: 3 incidents were recorded



- **ISIL violated resolutions 2118 and 2209 two times**

- These attacks killed 87 individuals, detailed as follows:
 - 35 civilians including 19 children and 6 women
 - 45 armed opposition members
 - 7 prisoners from government forces
- Additionally, not less than 1867 individuals were injured and affected.





We included the military victims since the use of chemical or toxic substances is internationally prohibited under all circumstances including times of war and clashes.

III- Details of the New Attacks:

We will display 8 chemical attacks perpetrated by the Syria government forces since 1 August 2015 and up till 31 December 2015:

1. Daraya City in Damascus suburbs: 9 August 2015

Government forces targeted the northern region of Daraya city with several missiles that were loaded with a gas suspected to be poisonous. As a result 8 individuals from armed opposition members suffered from gas poisoning.

2. Daraya City in Damascus suburbs: 13 August 2015

Government forces targeted the northern region of Daraya city with several missiles that were loaded with a gas suspected to be poisonous. As a result 5 individuals from armed opposition members suffered from gas poisoning.

3. Erbeen City in Damascus suburbs: 11 August 2015

Government forces targeted one of the armed opposition trenches with two bombs that were loaded with a poisonous gas which killed an armed opposition member and injured 6 others.

Oubada Abdul Rahman, one of the local media activists in Erbeen city gave SNHR his testimony:

“At almost 11 a.m. government forces dropped two bombs that were loaded with poisonous gases on one of the armed opposition trenches. One of the armed opposition fighters told me that the gas’s odor was liked the smell of the gas that is used at houses. Five individuals who were affected by the gas attack arrived to the hospital. One of the doctors told me that an armed opposition fighter, Abo Bahaa, did not respond to the CPR and his face was blue and died eventually. Another injured individual arrived to the hospital agitated with severe involuntary urination, secretions from the mouth and narrowed pupils. In addition, four other cases arrived to the hospital but their injury was relatively mild. All of the affected individuals were given Oxygen and Hydrocortisone. The doctor told me that the gas is most probably from the organic phosphorous group.”





Images of injured people



A [video](#) that depicts aiding injured people in one of Erbeen makeshift hospitals due to the poisonous gas attack

4. Al Rastan City in Homs: 29 August 2015

Government forces bombed an armed opposition trench using a landmine that was loaded with a noxious gas. After the explosion, 5 armed opposition members were killed and not less than 36 others were injured.

Dr. Yehya Al Rastnawi, head of the makeshift hospital in Al Rastan city gave SNHR his testimony:





“The number of injured individuals reached 35 which ranged between severe and mild. Also 5 others were killed; all of them were from the Free Syrian Army members who were in the tunnel. Civil defense teams were able to pull only two bodies due to the gas that was spread. Five suffocation cases from the civil defense team were recorded while they were trying to pull injured and deceased individuals.

Most of the symptoms were narrowed pupils, dyspnea, suffocation, hallucinations and shivering. It is worth noting that even though civil defense members wore protective suits, they were affected as well and their suits were torn. We treated the injured people by washing them with water then with hydrocortisone, Atropine and Oxygen. Most of the affected individuals recovered after few days and some them needed extra time to fully recover from the gas attack.”

SNHR interviewed Mr. Abu Wael, one of the residents in Al Rastan city who gave us his testimony:

“We heard that the regime had targeted Jub Al Amlas front next to the engineering battalion that belonged to the government forces with toxic gases without knowing where it came from. That was about 10 a.m. Later we learned that government forces had planted a landmine in a tunnel that was dug by the Free Syrian Army in an attempt to reach the engineering battalion. The landmine exploded in the face of two members from the FSA and the emitted gases killed 5 of them. Also 22 others were affected. When the civil defense arrived, they also suffocated even though they wore protective masks. Injured people were rushed to the makeshift hospital in Al Rastan city and were treated there. Civil defense members could only pull two bodies that belonged to the FSA while they could not pull the other three bodies.”

SNHR also communicated with Mr. Mohamad Ali Ayoub, one of the commanders of one of the armed opposition groups:

“Regime forces reached the tunnel and planted a landmine inside it. The landmine was loaded with toxic gases and explosives then it detonated it which spread the gas in the tunnel. Five of the rebel members were killed, who were close to the explosion source and others were injured.”





5. Harasta City in Damascus suburbs: 25 September 2015

Government forces targeted one of the tunnels that were used by armed opposition members from the southern-eastern side in the city with two bombs that were loaded with suspected poisonous gases. As a result 8 individuals from armed opposition suffered from shortness of breath and suffocation.

An [image](#) of one of the injured individuals in Harasta city

6. Jobar Neighborhood in Damascus: 26 October 2015

Government forces shelled Krash in Jobar neighborhood with several bombs that contained suspected toxic gas which caused 4 suffocation cases.

SNHR interviewed Abu Omar, an armed opposition member who gave us his testimony:

“Regime forces were trying to storm the neighborhood from Krash front and clashes took place before it used bombs loaded with toxic gases concurrently with mortar and artillery shelling. Those gases affected 4 fighters. They had narrow and red pupils, shortness of breath. Those symptoms lasted for two days. We had no specified medication to treat gas poisoning so we treated them with what we had. It was hard to determine the number of the bombs due to the severity of the shelling.”

7. Talbisa City in Homs: 31 October 2015

Government artillery forces stationed in Al Mulouk checkpoint launched 3 missiles that were loaded with gases suspected to be toxic on the southern neighborhood in Talbisa city which killed 3 individuals and caused 32 suffocation and shortness of breath cases.

SNHR interviewed Firas Al Sayed a local media activist:

“At almost 11:00 a.m. government artillery and warplanes started to shell us and 3 missiles that were loaded with toxic gases fell on the southern neighborhood in the city. I went to the makeshift hospital and started to take pictures of injured people. The number was great. Not less than 40 individuals were affected from the attack. They suffered from shortness of breath, lack of oxygen, extreme agitation, and some of them were inactive and wanted to sleep. They did not suffer from any bruises and all the symptoms were related to the respiratory system. The doctors said that maybe unnerving substances had been used. Three individuals were killed that day. One of the affected individuals said that he had seen a lot of smoke coming out of the missiles after it fell.”





A [video](#) that depicts the crowded makeshift hospital that was shelled with suspected poisoned gas on Talbisa city in Homs on 31 October 2015

A [video](#) that depicts aiding one of the affected individuals due to the shelling

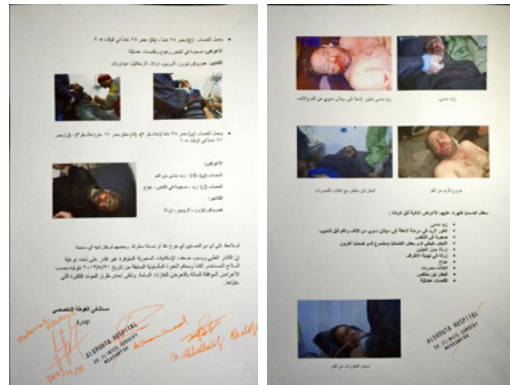
8. Mo'adameyat Al Sham in Damascus suburbs: 22 December 2015

Government forces that were stationed in Al Mazze Military Airport launched two rockets suspected to be loaded with toxic gases on the southern region of Mo'adameyat Al Sham which killed 5 individuals and caused 15 cases of suffocation and shortness of breath. SNHR interviewed Dani Qabbani, a local media activist from Mo'adameyat Al Sham who went to the hospital after the shelling and gave us his testimony:

“When I arrived to the hospital most of the injured people were hallucinating and some of them were screaming “I don’t wanna die!!” few minutes later some of them were bleeding from their noses or mouths and I did not see any scratches or wounds. All the symptoms they suffered were in their respiratory system.

I learned from one of the injured people who calmed down after the shelling. He said that it happened between 7: 30 and 8:00 p.m. He said that two rockets were launched from the Mazze airport and it were loaded with gases. Then the barrel bomb shelling started on the southern region which is a residential region. It was evacuated a period of time ago due to the continuous shelling.

One of the doctors told me that the day after the shelling; several individuals who suffered from the same symptoms but it were less severe. The doctor said that those symptoms were similar to the Ghouta Chemical Massacre back in August 2013. The specialized hospital in Al Ghouta issued a description about the symptoms which were shortness of breath, muscle contractions and mouth foaming.





IV. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Government forces violated the International Humanitarian Law by using an internationally forbidden weapon and this is considered as a war crime. Government forces also violated the Security Council resolutions concerning this matter, also the killing crimes amount to crimes against humanity according to charter 7 of Rome Statue, as it is since March 2011 a systematic and wide spread policy as well.

Using Chlorine gas is considered a breach to UNSC resolutions 2118 and 2209 and to the agreement that was signed by the Syrian government on 14 September 2013 which prohibits the use of toxic gases and its demolition.

- To International Independent Investigation Commission

The commission must start investigation in the incidents they can process at once, and take serious steps towards speeding the investigation of identifying the responsible of the use of this kind of weaponry, especially after the Syrian government signed an agreement on prohibiting chemical weapons.

- To the Security Council

The Security Council must shoulder its responsibilities in preserving the peace and security in Syria, as the violations committed by the Syrian government forms a grave threat to the peace and security of the world, and to stop playing the game of political interests on behalf of the Syrian people blood.

And the Syrian regime obvious neglect of Security Council resolution 2118 and later resolution 2209 is a political disgrace and a terrible offence to the Security Council.

- To Human Rights Committee:

The committee must shed more light on the Syrian regime violations of the Security Council resolutions 2118 and 2209 in order to form a higher pressure on the Security Council to take serious and dissuasive measures.

- To Friends of Syria countries:

Supply the areas suffering from the poisoned gas shelling with protective masks (as the Security Council is unable to stop these attacks); SNHR estimates the need of these areas with at least 18700 protective masks, plus equipment to remove the chemical pollution effects.

Condolence and Gratitude:

Our condolence to the victims' families, and we wish the injured a speedy recovery, and all the appreciation and gratitude to the victims' families, the injured, eyewitnesses, and local activist, whom their contribution have effectively enriched the report.



