

Syrian Coalition: Assad Regime & Allies' Onslaught on Eastern Ghouta is Aimed at Undermining Political Solution

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The Syrian Coalition emphasizes that the fierce attacks being carried out by regime forces and their allies on several areas in the Damascus suburbs as well as the brutal massacre which was committed by the Russian occupation forces on Monday, November 13 in the town of Atareb in rural Aleppo are part of the continued, systematic targeting of civilians. These attacks are clearly aimed at undermining all chances for a political solution by violating all agreements in place and insisting on carrying on with murder and crimes.

Credible reports indicated that dozens of civilians were killed and wounded in rocket shelling and airstrikes by the Assad regime using cluster bombs on towns and villages of besieged eastern Ghouta.

At least 11 civilians, including children, were killed and wounded in shelling by regime forces on the town of Beit Sawa in eastern Ghouta on Thursday, while two adults were killed in similar attacks on the town of Douma and Saqba. Over the past few days, shelling by regime forces have left of dozens of civilian casualties in the towns of Douma, Hammourya, Saqba, Kafarbatna, and Madyara, all of which are covered by the 'de- escalation zones' agreement.

According to initial reports, at least 37 civilians have been killed and more than 200 more wounded in various areas of eastern Ghouta over the past three days. The area has been hit by no fewer than 1,000 mortar shells, 35 cluster bombs, and 130 airstrikes.

Reports also indicated that the regime forces used the banned poisonous chlorine gas on Thursday, November 17 in attacks on the town of Harasta in eastern Ghouta. Assad regime's helicopters also dropped chlorine-filled barrel bombs on the town of Beit Jinn in western Rural Damascus in violation of UN Security Council resolutions 2209 and 2235. The shelling on Beit Jinn caused many cases of asphyxiation among residents of the area after the bombs released toxic chlorine and yellow smoke.

The Assad regime and its allies have been trying desperately to disrupt the UN-OPCW inquiry into the use of chemical weapons in Syria since the first day it was launched. They also sought to obstruct the investigation through diplomatic means in the UN Security Council as well as by committing more crimes on the ground. The latest report by the UN-OPCW investigation panel, whose mandate expires on Thursday, concluded that the Assad regime was responsible for the use of the banned sarin nerve agent in the attack on the town of Khan Sheikhoun.

Undermining all chances for political solution has always been the only and foremost goal of the Assad regime and its allies. It is imperative, therefore, that the international community and friends of the Syrian people publicly and explicitly condemn these atrocious attacks if they are to prove they are committed to a genuine political solution. They are also obliged to assume their responsibilities to exert real pressure on the Assad regime and its allies to force them to abide by the requirements of political solution in line with UN Security Council resolutions and the Geneva Communiqué of 2012.