

Statement on the latest attack in Douma, Syria

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Reports from Douma, under the siege and bombardment by regime forces and its allies, indicate that a high number of civilians were killed yesterday evening, including families who perished in the shelters they were hiding in. The evidence points towards yet another chemical attack by the regime.

Almost a year to the day of the horrific attacks in Khan Sheikhoun, it is a matter of grave concern that chemical weapons continue to be used, especially on civilians. The European Union condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons and calls for an immediate response by the international community.

In July 2017 and March 2018 the EU imposed additional restrictive measures on high level officials and scientists responsible for the development and the use of chemical weapons in Syria. It is highly regrettable that Russia vetoed the renewal of the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism in November 2017 and the EU calls upon the UN Security Council to rapidly re-establish this mechanism to identify perpetrators of chemical attacks. Accountability is crucial.

We call on the supporters of the regime, Russia and Iran, to use their influence to prevent any further attack and ensure the cessation of hostilities and de-escalation of violence as per UNSC Resolution 2401. The protection of civilians must remain an absolute priority.

The European Union will remain mobilised to fight against the use of chemical weapons and to make sure that those responsible are held accountable.

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