

The Federal Foreign Office on the situation in Syria

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A Federal Foreign Office Spokesperson issued the following statement today (7 February) on the situation in Syria:

We are greatly concerned by the continuation and intensification of the air strikes carried out by the regime and its supporters in the Syrian province of Idlib and eastern Ghouta in recent days. Although both regions are situated in so called de escalation zones, there is no sign of de escalation, or indeed any easing of the situation. On the contrary, civilians, women and children are dying on daily basis. Civilian facilities such as hospitals are also being attacked and severely damaged time and again.

Together with our partners, we are trying to help, where and how we can, to provide a minimum level of supplies, especially now in winter. It is vital, however, for the air raids on civilians to cease immediately. Humanitarian access must be guaranteed fully and unconditionally. The priority now is to prevent a further escalation. Ultimately, only a political solution will bring lasting peace to Syria within the framework of the political process conducted by the United Nations under Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. Russia, as a supporter of the regime and initiator of talks in Astana and Sochi, has a duty to ensure that Damascus ceases at long last to lay siege ruthlessly to its own people and enters into genuine negotiations with all due seriousness.

The Federal Government is also most concerned about the increasing number of reports of the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria. We condemn any use of chemical weapons in the strongest possible terms. Germany is assisting the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in its investigations into the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria, as well as the Independent Commission of Inquiry of the Human Rights Council established by the United Nations not least at Germany's initiative.

Despite the fact that the extension of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the OPCW and the United Nations failed in November 2017, we are continuing to work to identify and name those responsible for each use of chemical weapons. Germany expressly supports efforts such as the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.