

3 Months After Chemical Weapons Attacks, Syrian Coalitions Renews Calls for Accountability

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Press Statement
Syrian Coalition
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On August 21, 2013, the Assad regime launched a series of surface-to-surface missiles bearing lethal and debilitating chemicals that resulted in the deaths of over 1,400 civilians. Those attacks represented the deadliest use of chemical weapons in decades and constituted a terrifying escalation in the conflict in Syria, which has now led to the deaths of over 120,000 Syrians.

In the aftermath of the attacks, the UN Secretary-General characterized the use of the weapons as a war crime and stressed that “there must be accountability for the use of chemical weapons.” A report by the UN Mission to investigate the attacks established that Sarin gas had been used, and the evidence presented showed that the missiles had been fired from regime-controlled territory, clearly pointing to the regime’s responsibility for launching these attacks.

The need for bringing the perpetrators of this attack to justice was also underlined by the collective membership of the UN General Assembly, who on November 19, called for accountability for those responsible for these and other attacks.

Today, three months later, there have been no attempts by the United Nations or its member states to hold the perpetrators of these attacks accountable. The promised destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons, if it can indeed be completed and verified, removes one of many threats to the Syrian people, but action needs to be taken to rid the regime of its continuing impunity and to punish those responsible for inflicting unspeakable suffering on the Syrian people.

In a letter transmitted to the UN Secretary-General today, and shared with members of the UN Security Council, Dr. Najib Ghadbian, Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition to the UN, conveyed these messages, stressing that “it is imperative that the world never forget the Syrian regime’s war crimes” and called on the UN and its member states to increase their efforts to ensure that “the victims of eastern Ghouta are given justice.”

In also addressing the humanitarian situation in Syria, the Syrian Coalition deplored the regime’s policy of denying humanitarian access to civilians in urgent need of assistance and its ongoing siege of areas such as Moadamiya and Daraya. Dr. Ghadbian noted

“that these crimes have led to hundreds of thousands of civilians suffering from malnutrition and in many cases dying of starvation,” and called on the international community to condemn and stop the Syrian regime’s latest policy of using starvation as an active tactic of war against the civilian population.

We ask for Mercy for our martyrs, health for our wounded, and freedom for our detainees.

Long live Syria and its people, free and with honor.