



***The second largest chemical weapons attack on civilians in the modern era***

***( Documenting Chemical weapon massacre in Damascus countryside 21/8/2013 )***

Prepared by: Syrian Network for Human Rights.

Period Covered: 21/8/2013

On Wednesday 21/8/2013, at 2:45 am (Damascus time), government forces shelled by rocket launcher the cities of Zamalka and Ain Tarma, and buffer zone between Zamalka and Hiza town.

**First:** we recorded the fall of 4 missiles carrying poisonous chemical materials, in the city of Zamalka, and specifically on :

- 1- Almazraa area
- 2- The area behind Najeb oil station
- 3- The area of Zamalka female school for basic education

**Second:** missile fall on communication street area between Zamalka and Haza.

**Third:** Ain Tarma city, shelled at least by three missiles:

- 1- Ain Tarma tanks area
- 2- Altabal area of Ain Tarma
- 3- Alzainiah neighborhood

Also shelled Aloazameah city in Western Ghouta at 5:15 am by missile carried poisonous chemical materials .

SNHR's estimation and the accounts of victim's relatives and survivors, in addition to the number of victims that shows in the photos and videos indicate that number of victims exceed the 1600 victims, we still get new names every day to this moment for victims killed in this terrible day, we couldn't within those two days to statistic all the victims, because large number of victims killed together at the same time, no one survived to tell us who killed his family members.

SNHR could document the kill of 615 victims by name, photo, video and by taking the accounts from two sources do not know each other. Among the victims there are 589 civilians, that is mean 96% of the victims are civilians, including 132 children with the proportion of 22%, and 139 female with the proportion of 23%, that's mean 45% of victims are women and children , which is a blatant evidence of targeting residential areas.

Free Syrian Army only 26 fighters have been killed, that's mean 4% of the victims.

Although number of injuries have exceeded 9000 citizens transferred to a medical points, as we told by many doctors from different medical points and according to what SNHR's member documented in Damascus and countryside, or what we've got from photos and videos for injured citizens (via photographers and trusted activists dealing with them from long time ago and have good credibility), the network checked them ( please check the report details) :

The massive rise in victims' number confirms that government forces used mass destruction weapons and not just conventional weapons, and through the photos and videos taken by Syrian network for human rights' team members in Damascus and countryside and other photos and videos sent to us via e-mail by Photographers and activists communicate with the network, it is clear to us that the neighborhoods that were shelled are residential neighborhoods, there are some shops in these neighborhoods, as is the nature of cities and towns in Syria, and did not note the presence of any military or even chemical facility to be a source of leakage. There is also another cause of the high numbers of casualties, the siege imposed on Eastern and Western Ghouta by the Syrian government for more than 14 months and prevent the introduction of gasoline and fuel, where residents couldn't get access to medical points by cars or motorbikes, because they were out of gasoline, so they had to walk which led to the death of a large number of them due to delay the treatment. The siege has affected very heavily on the lack of medicines and equipment to treat the injured and causing the death of a large number of them also.

According to inquiries and investigations conducted by SNHR about the source of shelling missiles, it shows that it had been launched from areas under the control of Syrian regime, and the photos shows it is clear that these missiles have relatively small engine, that mean it had launched from near places, not as the photo documented by the network of using long-range ballistic missiles with big engines. Media activist Abo Omar filmed the video that shows launching missiles, and you can communicate with him via Skype account: "bees1981 "

He told us the following:

" "One of the places that I expect that it may be the place of launching short-range missiles, that shelled the Eastern Ghouta are Qaboon and specifically of" special units "between the Jobar, Qaboon and Barzah, it is an area where the regime shelled surface to surface missiles, mortars , rocket launchers and others in the day of chemical hit, I was in a high place in the Eastern Ghout.

this is the location coordinates , and there is a video shows launching missiles of limited push, but the fire from which it came out doesn't look like the located missiles made by Free Syrian Army

We know our missiles and the color of fire came from  
33.54703,36.333536

### **Some survivors' accounts:**

Date: 26/8/2013.

Place: Zamalka of Damascus countryside.

Clearly shows the effects of one of the chemical missile that fell on Almazraa neighborhood, and some dead bird that killed cause of shelling , in addition to eyewitnesses survived from the massacre confirms that they lifted entire families

killed in their houses , and aided hundreds of injured , as they warn that there might be many victims in houses that they were not able to enter yet"

Place: Zamalka of Damascus countryside.

Accounts for eyewitnesses survived from the massacre in Almazra neighborhood talked about moments of shelling and symptoms appeared on them and the injured, they also confirm the death of entire families from their relatives and neighbors "

Place: Arbin of Damascus countryside.

Description: female child suffered from big nervous shock and ideophrenia when she woke up from coma in the field hospital, the doctor explained her condition cause she was infected with poisonous gases.

Date: 21/8/2013

Place : medical point in Darea of Damascus countryside

Description : survivor in Moazameat AlSahm explain the affects he suffered from with the injuries when they shelled with poisonous gases, while they were praying in the mosque, among the symptoms ( vomiting, fainting, pain in eyes and throat ) many of them killed.

Date: 21/8/2013

Place : Moazameat Al-Sham of Damascus countryside

Description : Doctor in the field hospital explain the symptoms shows on victims shelled with poisonous gases, among the symptoms (shortness of breath, pinpoint pupil, blue face, oral foam, suffocation, vomiting, fainting) in addition to injury many of medical crew, and more than 500 injuries and dozens of victims.

#### Animals

Chemical weapons killed different types of animals, We have observed through photos took by SNHR's member in Damascus countryside and some by activities communicating with the network, that the apparent symptoms on the animals like foaming at the mouth and the outer shape of the body completely rigidity as appeared in photos, these and other are symptoms resulting from inhaling poisonous gases.

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#### **Legal conclusions:**

- 1- Report concluded through research, checking with experts, doctors, accounts of survivors and dozens of eyewitnesses that Government forces with no doubt committed crime in shelling residential neighborhoods with chemical weapons, this is the 29th time that Syrian Government use chemical weapons in five provinces, which indicate the systematic methodology and widespread of those attacks and to the amount to crimes against humanity
- 2- Government forces violated rules 74-76 of Customary IHL, and considered that committed war crime.