

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	802
Land:	Syrien
Kilde:	UN-news
Titel:	WHO demands 'unhindered access' to site of suspected chemical attack in Syria
Udgivet:	11. april 2018
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	12. april 2018



UN News (/en/)



[Advanced Search \(/en/advanced-search\)](#)

SUBSCRIBE (/EN/CONTENT/UN-NEWSLETTER-SUBSCRIBE)

AUDIO HUB (/EN/AUDIO-HUB)

WHO demands 'unhindered access' to site of suspected chemical attack in Syria



UNOCHA | Douma, Eastern Ghouta, Syria.

11 April 2018 | [Health \(/en/news/topic/health\)](#)



The United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday said that it has received reports that an estimated 500 patients at Syrian health facilities have exhibited signs and symptoms consistent with exposure to toxic chemicals, after the shelling of a Damascus suburb over the weekend.

"We should all be outraged at these horrific reports

(<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2018/chemical-attacks-syria/en/>) and images from Douma," Peter Salama, WHO Deputy Director-General for Emergency Preparedness and Response said, referring to reports from the agency's health cluster (<http://www.who.int/health-cluster/countries/syria/en/>) partners – a WHO-led team of 118 national and international nongovernmental organizations, UN agencies, national authorities and donors working inside Syria to provide emergency and trauma care, as well as basic health services.

According to those reports, patients at health facilities displayed signs of severe irritation of mucous membranes, respiratory failure and disruption to central nervous systems.

More than 70 people sheltering in basements have reportedly died, including 43 with symptoms consistent with exposure to highly toxic chemicals. Two health facilities were also reportedly affected by these attacks.

These detailed reports from WHO's partners come as the UN Security Council tried and failed on Tuesday to adopt two competing resolutions that would have established a mechanism to investigate the use of chemical weapons in Syria, as well as another resolution concerning a fact-finding mission in the war-torn country.

Despite the deadlock in the Security Council, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW (<https://www.opcw.org/>)) – the body which investigates allegations of such attacks – said yesterday that it would shortly send a team (<https://www.opcw.org/news/article/opcw-will-deploy-fact-finding-mission-to-douma-syria/>) to Syria to "establish the facts" surrounding the incident.

Secretary-General António Guterres (<https://www.un.org/sg/>) has also expressed his outrage (<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-04-10/statement-secretary-general-syria>) at reports that civilians in the enclave are being targeted by toxic agents, saying that any confirmed use of chemical weapons, by any party to the conflict, "is abhorrent and a clear violation of international law."

WHO meanwhile has demanded immediate unhindered access to the area to provide care to those affected, to assess the health impacts, and to deliver a comprehensive public health response.

The agency reminded the parties to the seven-year conflict of their obligation to refrain from attacking medical facilities and personnel, in line with Security Council resolution 2286 (<https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12347.doc.htm>), which was adopted unanimously in 2016 and which also demanded an end to impunity for those responsible for such attacks.

Emphasizing that any use of chemical weapons for harmful purposes is illegal under international law, WHO stressed that global norms against chemical weapons reflect a particular abhorrence to their disproportionate harm to the old, the most infirm, and the very young.

WHO is currently coordinating the health cluster response for people displaced from Eastern Ghouta and stands ready to step up assistance to the newly-accessible areas there once access is granted.

Since 2012 there have been sporadic reports of chemical events in Syria. WHO has no formal role in the forensic investigation of the use of chemical weapons. When an event is reported, WHO's role is to conduct epidemiological investigations and implement public health emergency response measures, as necessary.

SYRIA (/EN/TAGS/SYRIA)

RELATED STORIES



(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/02/1002131>)

UN releases \$9.1 million to fill 'critical healthcare gaps' in Yemen
(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/02/1002131>)

(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2002/06/36962-responding-dam-collapse-syria-un-dispatches-experts-help-relief-efforts>)

Responding to dam collapse in Syria, UN dispatches experts to help relief efforts
(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2002/06/36962-responding-dam-collapse-syria-un-dispatches-experts-help-relief-efforts>)

(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2003/04/64822-annan-concerned-statements-about-syria-not-further-destabilize-middle-east>)

Annan concerned that statements about Syria not further destabilize Middle East
(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2003/04/64822-annan-concerned-statements-about-syria-not-further-destabilize-middle-east>)

NEWS TRACKER: PAST STORIES ON THIS ISSUE



(/en/story/2018/04/1006901)

Guterres renews call for Security Council unity over Syria; UN agencies warn 'desperate' situation becoming worse for civilians (/en/story/2018/04/1006901)

10 April 2018

Humanitarian Aid (/en/news/topic/humanitarian-aid)

Reports of new alleged chemical weapons attack in Syria's Eastern Ghouta over the weekend have been condemned by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres (<https://www.un.org/sg/en>), who on Tuesday repeated his call for the Security Council to "find unity" on the issue and ensure accountability.