

11 April 2018 – WHO is deeply alarmed by reports of the suspected use of toxic chemicals in Douma city, East Ghouta. According to reports from Health Cluster partners, during the shelling of Douma on Saturday, an estimated 500 patients presented to health facilities exhibiting signs and symptoms consistent with exposure to toxic chemicals. In particular, there were signs of severe irritation of mucous membranes, respiratory failure and disruption to central nervous systems of those exposed.

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

WHO reminds parties to the conflict of their obligation to refrain from attacking medical facilities and personnel as per Security Council Resolution 2286 (2016). Any use of chemical weapons to cause harm is illegal under international law. Global norms against chemical weapons reflect a particular abhorrence to their disproportionate harm to the eldest, the most infirm, and the youngest among us.

[Read full statement](#)

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