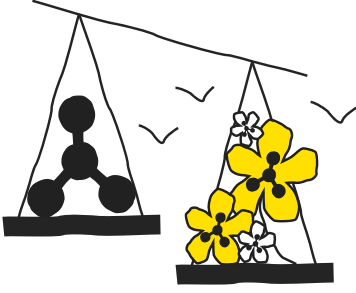




**Don't
Suffocate Truth**
لا تخنقوا الحقيقة

**Annual
Report
2021**





Don't Suffocate Truth

لا تخنقوا الحقيقة

["Don't Suffocate Truth"](#) is a campaign launched by Syrian witnesses, male and female survivors, to deliver justice to the victims of the chemical massacres committed by the Assad regime and its allies in Syria, and preserve their memory. We believe that preserving the truth in the face of tyrants is one aspect of resistance.

We are aware that the right to truth and the narrative of victims are critical to preventing future violations and ensuring justice in Syria. We also know perfectly well that Russia and the Syrian regime spare no effort in harnessing financial, human, and military resources, in order to spread propaganda that contributes to suffocating the victims once more, and use denial as a tool to erase the memory of the chemical-weapons massacres. We do believe that the voices of Syrian men and women, both inside and outside Syria, have not been, and will not be silenced. These voices continue to demand a just and democratic country that is not governed through intimidation, or with the use of internationally prohibited weapons. We believe that we are making significant efforts to prevent the use of chemical weapons, not just in Syria, but in any other country experiencing conflict around the world.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria

According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), of the 222 chemical weapons attacks that occurred in Syria, 217 were perpetrated by the Syrian regime, and five by ISIS. The attacks killed 1,510 people, and injured 11,080, according to the same source. Despite dozens of UN reports, hundreds of investigations, as well as many human rights and press reports that indicate their responsibility for the attacks, the Assad regime and its allies continue to spread doubts and lies, and deny the facts.

The methods used to suppress the truth

The Syrian regime and its Russian ally are attempting to conceal evidence and erase traces related to chemical weapons attacks. They are also attempting to tamper with the merits of the case, using a variety of means, including:

1. Tampering with evidence, directly or indirectly;
2. Obstructing the work of investigation committees;
3. Intimidating witnesses;
4. Using false testimonies;
5. Spreading false information.



Furthermore, they are employing a variety of tactics, ranging from outright denial to mitigating the consequences of chemical weapons massacres, [in four ways](#):

1. Categorical denial of chemical attacks;
2. Accusing the Syrian opposition of carrying out the attacks;
3. Questioning the accuracy of information related to the chemical attacks;
4. Questioning the sources of information.

Our activities

Building on the right to the truth, we saw as witnesses and survivors that one of the ways we can resist is by protecting our experiences from erasure, forgetfulness, or denial.

Within this vision, [the "Don't Suffocate Truth" campaign carried out several activities in 2021](#), all of which aimed to preserve the truth and commemorate the victims of chemical attacks in Syria, namely:

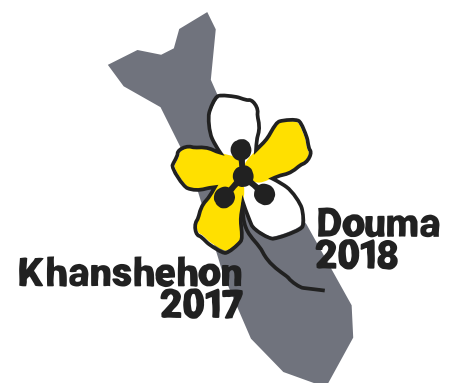
Commemoration activities in April, August, and October

Miscellaneous activities throughout the year



Commemoration activities in April

On 4/4/2017, the Syrian regime used chemical weapons against the town of [Khan Sheikhoun](#) in southern Idlib, killing 90 people. And on 7/4/2018, the regime targeted the town of [Douma](#) in Eastern Ghouta, resulting in a massacre that killed 40 people.



In memory of the victims of chemical weapons attacks, the “Don't Suffocate Truth” campaign held the following activities in April 2021:

A vigil for the right to truth

Vigils were held in front of Russian embassies. Participants carried banners with the word “Truth”, along with the names of the victims of the chemical attacks in Khan Sheikhoun and Douma.

These vigils were coordinated inside Syria, and the signs that read “Truth” were created by the Civil Defense Team. In addition, several vigils were held in a number European cities, including Berlin, Dublin (outside the Russian embassy), the Hague (outside the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) headquarters), as well as New York and Washington, outside the Russian Consulate.



Preserving the memory of the victims of chemical attacks

We published a reminder of the facts related to the chemical attacks on the towns of Douma and Khan Sheikhoun on our [website](#).

In August

On 21/8/2013, the Syrian regime targeted the towns of Zamalka and Ain Tarma in [Eastern Ghouta](#), as well as Muadamiyat al-Sham in Western Ghouta, with missiles loaded with sarin gas. According to [SNHR](#), these attacks killed over 1,500 people and injured 11,080 others.

21
August
2013

Syrians commemorate that traumatic memory every year as a pledge to never forget the victims, avoid the denial of facts, and seek truth and justice.

In memory of the victims of chemical weapons attacks, the "Don't Suffocate Truth" campaign held the following activities in August 2021:

Syrian Jasmine of Truth

The Jasmine of Truth is a symbol used by Syrian activists to commemorate the victims of the chemical attacks carried out by the Syrian regime since 2011.

The yellow flower represents the effort of Syrians to seek justice for the victims who were systematically murdered by the Syrian regime, which used chemical weapons more than 222 times against its own people. The yellow flower also symbolizes solidarity with the victims and survivors of chemical massacres everywhere.



The yellow jasmine flower comes with three petals and three anthers in the center, representing the atoms of chemical substances. This symbol was chosen in reference to the Damascene jasmine flower, but the color yellow was chosen to represent poisonous gasses. The flower was used for the first time as a symbol of the "Don't Suffocate Truth" campaign on 21/8/2020, the 7th anniversary of the [Ghouta chemical attack](#), which took place on 21/8/2013. Following that, it became a symbol of solidarity with the victims of chemical attacks and their families in Syria.

Since that day, Syrians have been distributing white [buttons](#) with the "Syrian Jasmine of Truth" printed on them in various countries around the world, in an attempt to spread the truth.

Art to resist forgetting

Since art can help resist forgetting and the distortion of facts, the “Don't Suffocate Truth” campaign encouraged its use to spread the truth among Syrians and the rest of the world. We approached a large number of visual artists, and a lot of them responded splendidly by creating a variety of [artworks](#) that honor the memory of the victims.



Public hearing of testimonies

Testimonies of chemical attack survivors were heard during a two-hour talk session via Clubhouse. The session was attended by more than 80 listeners, as well as ten participants – including activists, human rights defenders, and witnesses.

“Don't Suffocate Truth” on social media

On the anniversary of the Ghouta chemical attack in August, more than 2,200 of our followers adopted our campaign logo as a personal profile picture.



In October

The Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention decided that a [Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare](#) would be observed on 30 November each year. Our campaign shed light on the use of chemical weapons in Syria, in continuation of the global struggle against the use of chemical weapons in any conflict.

On the Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare in 2021, our campaign carried out the following activities:



Making a [video](#) on the use of chemical weapons in Syria, which provides an overview of the number of casualties, the number of strikes, and the sites and dates of attacks.

Coordinating a public hearing of testimonies. On 30/11/2021, the “Don't Suffocate Truth” team held an hour-and-a-half session via Clubhouse, with 48 participants, including survivors, Syrian activists, and human rights defenders. The purpose of the session was to express solidarity with the victims of chemical attacks in Syria and their families, expose the truth, and criminalize the use of chemical weapons in any conflict. It also aimed to broadcast the testimonies of a number of survivors, as well as some paramedics who were present during the chemical attacks.

Activities throughout the year:

- Sessions to exchange ideas with survivors.
 - Awareness-raising sessions for Syrian leaders.
 - Producing content to spread knowledge and raise awareness.
 - Capacity building sessions for survivors and campaign volunteers.
 - Posting on social media platforms.
-

Sessions to exchange ideas with survivors

Believing in the right of survivors to have their stories heard and be involved in the planning of any campaigns, or the production of any content related to their cases, we held a number of virtual sessions, which were attended by more than 48 survivors. The aim was to discuss international resolutions, the most important ways to prevent the denial of facts, and justice-related efforts regarding [the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons](#). If you would like to attend these sessions, you can contact us via email: **campaign.manager@donotsuffocatetruth.com**

Awareness-raising sessions for Syrian leaders

With the voluntary assistance of Dr. Muhammad Katoub, one of the witnesses to the Eastern Ghouta massacre, we held a series of sessions aimed at raising the capacity of Syrian civil society leaders and Syrian activists, to better defend the truth about the use of chemical weapons. We hope these sessions have provided enough support to counter denial attempts made by the Syrian regime and its allies in international forums. These sessions were attended by more than 70 people. If you would like to attend these sessions, you can fill out this questionnaire: [Link](#)

Awareness-raising reports and documents:

These reports and documents were created to shed more light on the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime and its allies, as well as their attempts to mislead and deny facts. They aim to disseminate facts about the chemical weapons attacks carried out by the Syrian regime, as well as help victims, activists, and public figures find supportive materials, files, and reports that will help them spread awareness and deliver messages regarding the facts and figures related to the case.

These reports and documents included:

An introduction to the three major chemical attacks (Douma, Khan Sheikhoun and Ghouta);

Reports of the International Commissions of Inquiry on the attacks, several infographics detailing the work of the four main international commissions regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and a guideline to the working mechanism of the Commissions of Inquiry;

Papers on the denial of facts and the role it plays in distorting the truth;

A report containing the profiles of survivors, as well as some of the victims who were killed due to chemical attacks;

A report on the right to the truth, which explains the meaning of the term, in accordance with International Humanitarian Law, International Criminal Law, and International Human Rights Law;

A file on the top military commanders, generals, and officers who were involved in the use of chemical weapons in Syria.



Producing content to spread knowledge and raise awareness

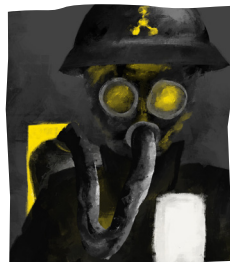
This campaign aims to document facts and debunk the allegations of the Syrian regime, by simplifying information and making it available to the public, using plain language and visual designs that are easy to print and distribute in universities, as well as in protests around the world.

[Quotes and testimonials .](#)

[Designs.](#)

[Infographic.](#)

Awareness-raising reports and documents.



Videos:

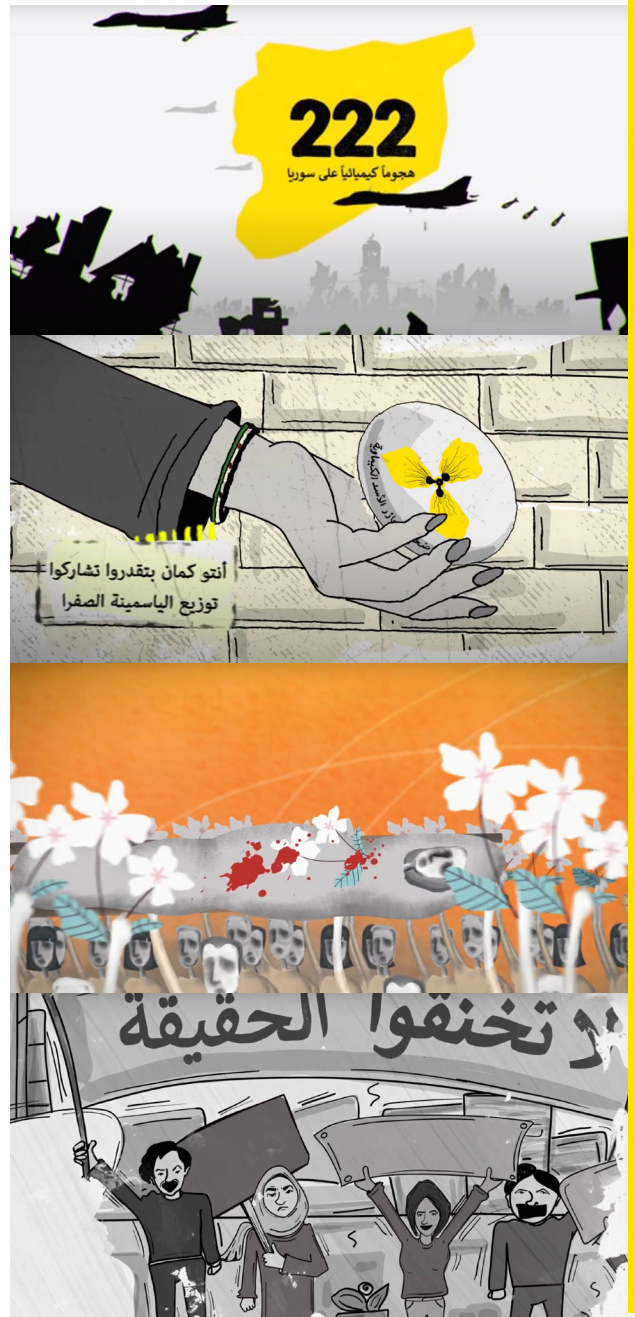
Four awareness-raising videos were created, with durations ranging from one to three minutes. They were met with a lot of engagement from the campaign audience.

[The first video](#) provides an overview of the most important information regarding the use of chemical weapons, such as the number of attacks, locations, and dates;

[The second video](#) explains and encourages the sharing of the "Syrian Jasmine of Truth" on the anniversary of each year;

[The third video](#) aims to spread hope and motivate people to keep fighting, despite all attempts to obliterate the truth;

[The fourth video](#) explains to the campaign audience the methods of volunteering and possible participation with our campaign.



Capacity building sessions for survivors and campaign volunteers

a) CV-writing course:

We discovered that the survivors needed assistance in preparing dynamic CVs and motivation letters. They did not have the opportunity to build their own capacities and develop their own skills, in order to obtain jobs that would allow them to start afresh, in the new societies they found themselves in due to forced displacement. Twenty survivors, both men and women, were trained and mentored to ensure they could write their own CVs and go to job interviews.

b) Project management training:

Campaign volunteers took part in an online training on Project Management in NGOs (PMD pro 1), in order to further improve their skills in project management and development standards, as well as increasing capacities in designing and managing projects in the relief and development sector. In addition, the course assisted employees in understanding the campaign's organizational structures and improving their managerial performance.

c) Training on social media management:

Campaign volunteers received online training to help them better manage the campaign's platforms, in order to increase reach and interaction with the audience.

Posting on social media platforms



"Don't Suffocate Truth" campaign
([Facebook](#))

1,666

followers



"Don't Suffocate Truth" campaign
([Instagram](#))

616

followers



Ghouta
@ActForGhouta
([Facebook](#))

19,033

followers



Ghouta
@ActForGhouta
([Twitter](#))

1,395

followers



Hashtag

#Donotsuffocatetruth

webpage

www.donotsuffocatetruth.com

Many thanks to all the volunteers who contributed to planning, participating, and implementing the activities of the "Don't Suffocate Truth" campaign.



Would you like to help?

Ten things to support the truth

- 1- Organize an event to hand out "the Syrian Truth Jasmine" in public spaces in your area on August 21 of each year, in commemoration of the victims of the regime's chemical weapons massacre in Eastern Ghouta, in order to raise awareness and improve the public's knowledge of all details of the chemical massacres committed by the Syrian regime against civilians.
- 2- Follow the campaign's website to show solidarity with the victims who survived the massacre, and support them in seeking justice. Follow our platforms on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Spread the hashtag #donotsuffocatetruth on social media and ask your friends to share it, in order to help our voices reach the public.
- 3- Organize to facilitate an interactive session at your university to counter the denial of chemical weapon crimes in Syria, in order to confront the propaganda led by the Syrian regime and its ally, Russia.
- 4- [Volunteer with us](#). Let us all stand up to the regime's lies and Russian propaganda, using the capabilities and skills we have.
- 5- Produced an artwork about the chemical weapon massacres in Syria based on stories of survivors, and witnesses, to show the survivors and families of victims that Syrians still carry this painful and bitter
- 6- Write, draw, make music, or draw graffiti on a wall to honor the memory of the victims and survivors.
- 7- Participate in organizing an art exhibition for the pieces produced on the chemical massacres in Syria. Art is one of the most important ways to resist forgetting, and keep the truth alive in the conscience of Syrians and people around the world.
- 8- Educate yourself about the cause, and about the right of victims' to justice and recognition, by participating in the awareness sessions provided by the Don't Suffocate Truth campaign.
- 9- Organize a sit-down for the truth in front of Russian embassies in April, in commemoration of the Douma and Khan Sheikhoun massacres.
- 10- Connect with journalists in your area and present them with reports and testimonies of survivors. Be creative, think of other ways to help support the truth, and share it with us on social media.

Our partners:

Without the support of a large number of civil society organizations, the "Don't Suffocate Truth" campaign would not have been able to spread and reach its objectives.

[Dawlaty](#)

[Aljumhuriya](#)

[Syria Civil Defense](#)

[The Syrian campaign](#)

[Action for Syria](#)

[Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression](#)

[Syrian solidarity campaign](#)

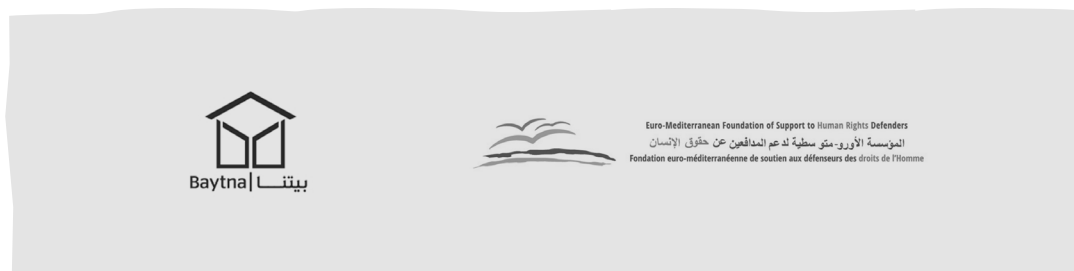
[Syrian British Council](#)



Our donors:

[EuroMed Rights](#)

[Baytna](#)





Don't Suffocate Truth

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The “[Don't Suffocate Truth](#)” campaign is part of the activities of the Syrian civil society organization Let's Work for Syria, which commenced in late 2017, and was registered in Turkey in February 2022. The organization advocates for the cessation of human rights violations in Syria, particularly siege and forced displacement. It also aims to shed light on the inhumane conditions and violations of human rights suffered by besieged Syrians in the Eastern Ghouta. Even after the population of Ghouta was forcibly displaced, the organization continued its work by conveying the voices of the forcibly displaced, as well as the challenges they face in countries of asylum and places of internal displacement.

✉ campaign.manager@donotsuffocatetruth.com

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