

East Ghouta Talking Points for Meetings/Conversations with Policy Makers

The protracted conflict in Syria has led to the largest humanitarian crisis since World War II. Over 400,000 people have been killed and the country's infrastructure decimated.

The situation in East Ghouta has precipitously declined, with its residents facing constant aerial attacks and a stifling siege preventing the entry of goods and medical equipment.

- Currently, over 350,000 people are besieged, including more than 95,000 children. Since 2012, civilians have faced daily aerial attacks and shelling.
- More than 13,000 children in East Ghouta are in dire need of medical care. SAMS Doctors have witnessed acute malnutrition cases amongst children, but they do not have access to supplies or micronutrients to treat these cases.
- For expecting mothers as well, the situation has had serious health repercussions. Aerial bombardment and malnutrition have led to increased cases of premature births. Each month, East Ghouta sees close to 1,200 births, and this number is on the rise.
- Due to the incapacitated health infrastructure, contagious and preventable diseases such as measles and tuberculosis have appeared and spread rapidly.
- In East Ghouta, there are currently 39 hemodialysis kidney patients, and 120 patients experiencing kidney failure. The last convoy to East Ghouta on May 4 did not include any dialysis supplies. Because of the shortage of supplies, the dialysis sessions were drastically reduced to serve more patients.
- The last humanitarian aid convoy to enter East Ghouta was in May 2017. Six trucks arrived in East Ghouta - half of each was empty. Critically needed supplies, tuberculosis and kidney failure medication, were not included. Surgical supplies were removed.

This is a critical moment for the U.S. policy towards Syria and its civilians. We press Members of Congress to take action on the following:

1. Prioritize immediate civilian protection.

The U.S. must take substantive action to end the targeting of medical facilities and personnel and the indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

2. Prioritize the immediate entry of a humanitarian convoy and urgent medical evacuations.

The United States must call for an end to the siege in East Ghouta and all besieged communities across Syria, as well as the immediate entry of aid convoy with most needed supplies based on an impartial needs assessment, and a guarantee that government forces will not extract needed supplies. Convoys should include international monitors to assess and document the delivery of aid in order to ensure that the supplies are reaching the assigned areas.

The United States must also prioritize the evacuation of medical cases for most critical patients.

3. Make a floor speech about the need for U.S. leadership to resolve the Syrian humanitarian crisis.

We call on all Members of Congress to make a floor speech about the humanitarian crisis in Syria, particularly in East Ghouta, and the urgent need for U.S. leadership in prioritizing immediate civilian protection, a lifting of the siege, the entry of humanitarian supplies, and a renewed pursuit for a sustainable political solution to the crisis.