Syria: 250 civilians dead in 48 hours in Damascus suburb

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<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/242215>

At least 250 civilians have been killed in the past 48 hours [in Syria's Eastern Ghouta](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/242149), the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Tuesday, including more than 100 in the past 24 hours, CNN reported.

At least 20 children were among those killed by Syrian regime shelling and airstrikes on the besieged Damascus suburb, which rights activists and residents described as being under "constant bombardment."

The death toll from Monday is the largest in Eastern Ghouta since an alleged chemical attack killed hundreds in the area in 2015, Rami Abdel Rahman of the London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights told CNN. That attack sparked an international outcry and nearly prompted military intervention by the Obama administration.

Doctors told the network that medics were working around the clock treating hundreds of injured people. Several medical facilities in Eastern Ghouta were reported to have been struck on Monday.

Medical supplies were already in short supply due to a years-long siege of the area that began in 2012. Now, Syrian regime forces are accelerating their offensive against the suburb, one of the last rebel-controlled areas in the country.

Eastern Ghouta is meant to be one of [the so-called "de-escalation zones"](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/236105) agreed to in a deal struck by Russia, Turkey and Iran last year. In theory, such zones are meant to be areas where civilians can live without being targeted by any party in Syria's war.

Responding to the latest attacks on the area, the United States said Tuesday it was "deeply concerned".

State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert blamed the Assad regime's "siege and starve tactics" for adding to the humanitarian disaster in the Damascus district, and endorsed the United Nations' call for a monthlong halt to violence.

"The United States is deeply concerned by the escalating violence in the Damascus suburb of Eastern Ghouta. The escalation is exacerbating the already grave human suffering of nearly 400,000 people,” she told reporters, according to AFP.

"The cessation of violence must begin now, and those needing emergency assistance should be allowed to evacuate immediately," added Nauert.