



AI Index: IOR 40/7986/2018
2 March 2018

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ORAL STATEMENT

URGENT DEBATE ON EASTERN GHOUTA

UN Human Rights Council
Thirty-seventh session
26 February – 23 March 2018

Mr. President,

Amnesty International has evidence of unlawful attacks on civilians and civilian objects in Eastern Ghouta, including the use of internationally banned cluster munitions, by the Syrian government with the backing of Russia. In the past 72 hours alone, these attacks have killed at least 50 people. Despite a resolution by the United Nations Security Council, no humanitarian aid convoys have entered Eastern Ghouta. Residents of the area have been suffering from the cruel siege, compounded by the attacks, for the past six years. All parties involved must grant safe passage to civilians wanting to flee the area and allow unfettered access for humanitarian organizations, so that they are able to deliver lifesaving aid to the hundreds of thousands of people in need in Eastern Ghouta. The Syrian government has been committing war crimes with total impunity, and will continue to do so as long as it is not held accountable.

The international community must act now to end the carnage. The catastrophic humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate if parties to the conflict do not abide by international humanitarian law and are not held in check when they fail to do so.

Thank you, Mr. President.