



Rethink Rebuild Society

A voice of the British Syrian community

Email to Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela, Spokesperson for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management & International Cooperation and Development - European Commission - 21 December 2017

Dear Carlos,

I am writing on behalf of Rethink Rebuild Society, a UK-based Syrian advocacy organisation, to express our deep disappointment with the failure of the European Commission's [statement](#) on the 18th of December 2017 to explicitly point to the forces of the Syrian regime as the besiegers of Eastern Ghouta and thus the main party responsible for the ongoing suffering of people there.

It is questionable how the plead of sustained and unhindered access for aid delivery and medical evacuations could take effect without identifying the Syrian regime as the besieging party and thus from whom access must be given from. A depiction of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Eastern Ghouta and an urge for the protection of civilians coming from the European Commission is indeed important, necessary and thanked for. However, failure to identify the committer and causer of these people's suffering will not succeed in changing or relieving the situation.

While all conflict parties indeed do bear responsibility for inflicting suffering on populations in Syria, it must not be neglected that, in the specific context of Eastern Ghouta, it is the Syrian regime that has besieged Eastern Ghouta for more than four years now. It is this regime that has deprived civilians of food, denied patients evacuation for medical care, shattered youth's future, and terrorised and killed people with its devastating airstrikes and shelling. And on the grander scale of the conflict, it is the Syrian regime that has disproportionately killed more civilians than any other conflict party, that owns the airspace to indiscriminately strike civilian spaces, and that has previously pursued and currently is pursuing a strategy of starve-and-surrender to forcibly displace civilians of their homes and reassert its control.

We acknowledge the European Union's [recognition](#) of the Syrian people's legitimate aspirations, which encouraged Syrians to continue demanding their rights of freedom, dignity, justice and democracy. We thus call on you to maintain your recognition and condemnation of the regime's undisputed role in inflicting suffering on civilians and persistently denying the Syrian people's rights, especially considering that this aforementioned statement does mention 'all conflict parties' and engages with the political dimension to resolve the conflict.

I hope you take this expressed concern into consideration. Thank you.

Best regards,



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