

Commentary on UN Convoy Entries Into Eastern Ghouta

19 March 2018

The Violations Documentation Center (VDC) can confirm that on March 5 and March 9, 2018, intensified attacks took place in Douma while UN convoys and implementing partners were present on the ground. VDC staff was also present when the convoy arrived in Douma and met with ICRC officials, as well as documented testimonies with individuals accompanying the convoy on both dates.

The VDC can confirm that on March 5th, helicopter strikes were aimed towards the convoy from above the Eastern side of Douma. On March 5, 2018, personnel accompanying the aid convoy sent to Eastern Ghouta reported that: "...at approximately 17:30, the outskirts of Douma were bombed by warplanes. Bullets were hitting close to our location in the centre of the city. After international officials inside the convoy contacted the Russian army, we realized that we had only one hour to unload the full load and return to Damascus. At 19:40, we got a call. We were told that it was the Russian army and that we were asked to leave immediately even though we had not finished unloading nine of the 46 trucks in the convoy. They all immediately returned to Damascus after being only partially un-loaded.'

On March 9, the VDC can confirm that rocket strikes were aimed at Douma from Al-Shayfouniya and Dahiyat Al-Assad, both which was under the control of the Syrian government forces. Personnel accompanying the convoy that entered on March 9th reported to the VDC that strikes took place precisely as the convoy arrived, forcing UN implementing partners to seek shelter in basements and appeal to the Syrian and Russian governments to allow them to continue their mission. According to one member of the personnel, Reem (pseudonym), who was present during the convoys entries into Douma on both dates, stated that "on March 5th, there was



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a UN, Red Crescent, and Red Cross team, and on March 9th, there was a small team comprised of Red Cross and Red Crescent members. On March 9th, despite the Russian government's assurances that the team was safe, the convoy was hit by strikes during its visit. The group had to spend several hours in shelters with Eastern Ghouta residents due to the rocket shelling.'

Please find [here](#) also our statement on 6 March



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