**Syria: MEPs condemn suspected use of illegal chemical weapons**

As the conflict in Syria enters its eighth year, MEPs debated the situation in the country on 17 April. Read on to learn more about Parliament’s response to the Syrian crisis.

Seven years of fighting in Syria have taken an enormous toll on the country’s population and caused one of the worst humanitarian crises the world has faced since World War II. Opening Parliament’s plenary session on 16 April, President Antonio Tajani **strongly condemned** the suspected use of illegal chemical weapons in a recent attack by the Syrian regime: “Parliament must make it loud and clear that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and represents a red line that cannot be crossed with impunity.”

The leaders of Parliament’s political groups also condemned **the use of chemical weapons.** Most expressed support for the targeted strikes carried out by France, the United States and the UK on chemical facilities in Syria, while some criticised the three countries for operating without an international mandate.

Addressing MEPs in a debate on 17 April, EU High Representative Federica Mogherini said: “There is no military solution to the war.” She called on the EU to use all its political capital to push the Syrian parties back to the negotiating table.

In a **resolution** adopted by Parliament on 15 March, MEPs condemned the spiralling violence in Syria. They also accused the Assad regime and its allies Iran and Russia of “heinous crimes” and called for “renewed and intensive global cooperation to achieve a peaceful and sustainable solution to the conflict”.

**EU response to Syria crisis**
More than **13 million people** in Syria are now in need of humanitarian assistance while 5.6 million **have fled the country**. One in three schools in Syria have been damaged or destroyed and 35% of Syrian households rely on an unsafe water supply.

The EU is the largest donor of humanitarian aid in response to the Syria crisis. Since the outbreak of the conflict in 2011, more than €10.6 billion in aid has been provided by the EU and its member states. The Union also provides substantial support to **neighbouring countries** that host a significant number of refugees, including Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. On 24-25 April, the EU and United Nations will co-chair a **funding conference for Syria** in Brussels.

Parliament continues to call for an end to the violence in Syria on the basis of **UN Security Council Resolution 2254**.

**Find out more**
- Parliament’s response to the Syrian conflict
- Parliament’s response to the refugee crisis
- Syria: Assad regime, Russia and Iran are responsible for heinous crimes (15 March 2018)
- EU strategy for Syria
Douma, the site of a suspected chemical weapons attack, near Damascus, Syria © Hassan Ammar/AP Photos/European Union-EP