

East Ghouta Op-Ed Template June 2017

Begin with a lead that grabs the reader's attention. Share a personal narrative, a story from the field, or a compelling quote.

Lead into a brief summary of the current situation. Feel free to use language from our Save East Ghouta campaign page.

- The situation in East Ghouta is extremely dire. Currently, over 350,000 people are besieged, including more than 95,000 children. Since 2012, civilians have faced frequent aerial attacks and shelling.
- Since the start of the conflict, basic necessities have been severely restricted in East Ghouta. By the end of 2012, electricity and water supplies were cut. The area has been under complete siege since 2013, leading to severe shortage of medical supplies and basic supplies.
- Currently, more than 13,000 children in East Ghouta are in urgent need of medical care. SAMS-supported physicians have witnessed acute malnutrition cases amongst children, but they do not have access to supplies or micronutrients to treat these cases.
- For expecting mothers as well, the situation has had serious health repercussions. Mental and physical trauma, as well as lack of availability of care and nutrition, experienced by women living in besieged areas can lead to premature births. In East Ghouta, the siege, aerial bombardment and malnutrition have led to increased cases of premature births. Each month, East Ghouta sees close to 1,200 births, and this number is on the rise.
- Due to the incapacitated health infrastructure, contagious and preventable diseases such as measles and tuberculosis have appeared and spread rapidly.
- In East Ghouta, SAMS supports a nursery clinic that continues to receive cases on a daily basis. Functioning incubators are essential to keep infants alive. At the facility, there is a severe shortage of fuel to run incubators.
- The last humanitarian aid convoy to enter East Ghouta was in May 2017. Six trucks arrived in East Ghouta - half of each was empty. Critically needed supplies, tuberculosis and kidney failure medication, were not included. Surgical supplies were removed.

Include a policy ask: Follow up with specific steps to be taken next, for example: "I call on policymakers and the international community to create and enforce a humanitarian solution for the people of East Ghouta. An immediate entry of aid convoy is needed, as well as medical evacuations and a cessation of attacks against civilians."

Follow up with specific steps to be taken next. Refer to your Member of Congress/ Senators by name. For example: "I ask Senator X to raise awareness of the critical situation in East Ghouta through a floor speech. I call on Rep. Y to work with Members of Congress and the Administration to create and enforce a humanitarian solution for the people of East Ghouta."

Make sure to limit your Letter to the Editor to 500-600 words.