

Russia Announces Start to 'Humanitarian Pause' in Syria's Ghouta

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Bassam Khabieh / Reuters

The Russian government has announced the start of a “humanitarian pause” for the rebel-held enclave of eastern Ghouta near the Syrian capital.

Russian-backed Syrian forces have been accused of indiscriminate shelling leading to the deaths of hundreds of civilians in their assault on Ghouta. The UN Security Council [passed](#) a resolution this weekend demanding a month-long truce in Syria to allow humanitarian access to [besieged](#) areas and areas under deadly [bombardment](#).

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On Monday, Russian President Vladimir Putin [ordered](#) the implementation of daily “humanitarian pauses” in the fighting around eastern Ghouta, the state-run TASS news agency [reported](#).

A five-hour ceasefire in the city began on Tuesday at 9 a.m. local time and is set to close at 2 p.m., the Reuters news agency [reported](#).

The Syrian government military and its Russian allies have reportedly set up humanitarian corridors for the evacuation of civilians from eastern Ghouta to Damascus, [according](#) to TASS.

In comments made on Monday, the Kremlin's spokesperson denied Russia's complicity in the deaths of civilians and [accused](#) "local terrorists," including Jabhat al-Nusra, a terrorist organization banned in Russia, of using human shields in the city.

Eastern Ghouta has been one of the last strongholds for anti-government rebels in Syria's nearly eight-year war that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

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