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More than 113,000 Civilians Evacuated from Eastern Ghouta, Russia Says

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Bassam Khabieh / Reuters

Over 113,000 people have left the besieged Syrian district of Eastern Ghouta in almost a month since the start of a Russia-backed humanitarian operation, according to a monitoring center affiliated with Russia's Defence Ministry.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's main ally in the conflict, ordered daily five-hour ceasefires and the creation of a "humanitarian corridor" to allow civilians to leave Eastern Ghouta starting from Feb. 28. In their assault on the rebel-held area, pro-government troops have been accused of indiscriminate shelling leading to the deaths of hundreds of civilians.

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The Russian Reconciliation Center said that a total of 113,715 people had been evacuated from

Ghouta since the start of the Moscow-backed humanitarian operation, Interfax reported on Monday.

The center said it was facilitating the return of evacuated civilians back to areas recaptured from rebels, including the suburbs of Saqba and Kafr Batna, while providing "humanitarian and medical assistance."

Government forces have taken back up to 90 percent of eastern Ghouta after one of the fiercest offensives in the seven-year civil war.

Eastern Ghouta's rebels now only hold the town of Douma, under the control of the Jaish al-Islam rebel faction, and another pocket that includes Ein Terma, Arbin and Zamalka, under the control of Failaq al-Rahman.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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