

Statement on the military attack on Syria
by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France

16 April 2018

Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)

On the assumption that on 7 April 2018 chemical weapons were used upon innocent civilians in the Eastern Ghouta district of Syria, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France on 14 April 2018 conducted a military attack on the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. We, Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), have undertaken humanitarian aid in such places as Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Palestine to aid local peoples suffering from conflicts. Having witnessed the serious harm inflicted upon innocent citizens by the military actions of countries such as the United States and Russia, as well as by the government of Syria and other military bodies, we have made statements emphasizing that military reciprocation only hinders peace and resolution.

The present military intervention by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, regardless of the specified plans and targets, violates international law. This is because it does not abide by preceding diplomatic efforts to avoid interventions that may potentially harm innocent civilians, and it ignored the standard process of careful deliberation at the United Nations Security Council. It also lacks the justification of military action by the right to self-defense, which, for example, the United States insisted upon in the cases of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We therefore appeal to the international community and the Japanese government as follows.

1. The chance for official and neutral organizations to investigate the use of chemical weapons should not be forfeited by the present military intervention. No clear evidence is yet shown that the government of Syria used chemical weapons. We request an investigative team to be dispatched through the mechanisms of the UN and of organizations working to prohibit the use of chemical weapons, and we urge the international community to assertively call upon the Syrian government to accept the investigation.
2. We request the Japanese government to not stand by its decision to “support” the military attack (statement by the Prime Minister, 14 April 2018), and instead, starting with a neutral investigation into the use of chemical weapons, play an active role in the international community to pursue solutions to the present crisis that avoid military intervention.

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