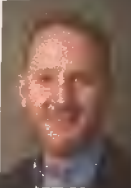


# Professor breaks down effects of Syrian chemical attack

Sandy Marshall, assistant professor of geography, offers insight on the Syrian civil war

Austin Kroegeer  
Elon News Network | @elonnewsnetwork

This April, evidence of chemical attacks on citizens by the Assad regime in Syria was uncovered. This took place in the city of Douma where nearly 70 people had died because of the gas.



Sandy Marshall

President Donald Trump responded by launching several missiles on locations in Syria last week. Sandy Marshall, assistant professor of geography, who holds a

Master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies, explained the background of this ongoing issue and where it might lead next.

**Q: What is the context of the current war in Syria? What is the role of the Assad regime?**

**A:** At the start, the war began as a nonviolent political uprising against the oppressive Assad regime, which is an autocratic family dynasty. The current party took power in the 1940s while Bashar Al-Assad gained control in the 2000s. He was believed to be a reformer as he was trained in ophthalmology in the United Kingdom, but this changed as he began to



Syrians are evacuated on March 25, 2018, from Zamalka in Syria's eastern Al-Ghouta province outside Damascus.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

crack down on political dissidence to show him and his family were going to maintain control.

After the events of the Arab Spring, starting in Tunisia but then spreading to Egypt and Libya and elsewhere, there was great hope among the Syrian people that they'd be able to also change their circumstances. This led to the uprising started by a group of teenage boys that wrote a graffiti, which said, "You're next, Doctor," the Doctor being Assad as he would be the next to fall among the leaders of Egypt and Tunisia.

Assad captured the boys and tortured them for days on end, including pulling their nails out. This caused massive outcry across the country as many nonviolent peaceful

protests began, which were met with force.

Since the Arms Struggle began, many proxies have become involved, such as Russia, Iran and the United States. Russia and Iran are both looking to exert more influence upon the area while the U.S. is looking to back up its allies in the Persian Gulf. What began as peaceful protests turned into a civil war and now has further escalated into a proxy war.

**Q: There has been an ongoing issue of where Syrian refugees find safety. Where have they gone to seek asylum?**

**A:** This year, about only a dozen Syrian refugees have been admitted to

the United States as the current administration has basically shut down the Syrian resettlement program. With the way this has been going, little seems like it will change for the U.S. to allow more refugees in. At the height of the refugee flows in 2015, about a million or so asylum seekers from Syria were looking for refuge in Europe. Since then, there's been extra efforts by Europeans to strengthen their borders to prevent that flow.

The countries that are facing the bulk of this crisis are Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. Turkey has several million refugees while Jordan has a million and Lebanon about 600,000. These are small and not economically wealthy countries that are being forced to shoulder the burden, whereas other countries that are

signed up to the refugee convention should be doing much more.

**Q: How might the conflict escalate and what the consequences might be?**

**A:** The civil war and proxy war in Syria are already dangerous enough, but another issue could begin. There is a potential for the United States and Russian forces to interact and even open fire which would have devastating consequences.

Russia-U.S. relations are at an all-time low and some say are even worse than the end of the Cold War, which is why this recent military strike against chemical weapons facilities in Syria was actually restrained.

It is important to say that these strikes were not sanctioned by the U.N., so they are technically illegal under international law. Thus, they were very restrained and ineffective. The missiles basically hit some empty military facilities, and that was calculated because the U.S. military didn't want to risk suddenly hitting Russian forces.

It would be in Russia's interest to avoid the conflict with the U.S. and to settle the conflict diplomatically. Russia helped sign up Syria to the chemical weapons ban, which it violated, so Russia should take responsibility for that.

There are a couple of issues Russia, Syria and the United States can begin to talk about before they get to the big question of what comes after Bashar Al-Assad. There are avenues for diplomatic engagement, and it is vital now to begin them because as bad as the situation is, it could get a lot worse.

## Elonthon raises over \$452K for Duke Children's Hospital

ELONTHON | from cover

had raised \$13,884 just by calling and texting their friends and family or posting on social media during that one-hour period.

Free thinks Elonthon brings together the campus community.

"I think it's a great way to get everyone involved, no matter what, whether you're in a sorority, fraternity, or on a sports team, it just brings everyone together," she said.

Elonthon's president, Sydney Epstein, was unavailable to comment about the event. Every committee member asked to comment declined, and referred ENN to Epstein.

**Who's dancing?**

On Elonthon's website, all 52 teams and their members are listed. An ENN analysis found that 65 percent of participants were registered with a Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) organization.

The actual percentage of students who are both Elonthon participants and members of FSL organizations is higher because some committee members are also affiliated students. According to the FSL website, 42 percent of Elon's campus are affiliated members of the FSL community.

Elonthon event planning committee and executive members made up 18 percent of the registered dancers, and the other 18 percent were dancers from other organizations or were not part of a team.

**Where is the money coming from?**

There is a mandatory fundraising minimum of \$250 for committee members and \$100 minimum for dancers who are not on a committee.

According to Elonthon's website, the 16 executive board members raised more than \$100,000.

Although the committee members only made up 18 percent of the participants, they fundraised almost half of the total money raised on their personal pages.

Teams registered with FSL raised 33 percent of the money, and teams from other organizations raised 3 percent of the total.

The highest individual fundraiser was Sophie Healy, an executive board member who raised \$51,038.

See the ENN breakdown of the fundraising by individual teams at [elonnewsnetwork.com](http://elonnewsnetwork.com).

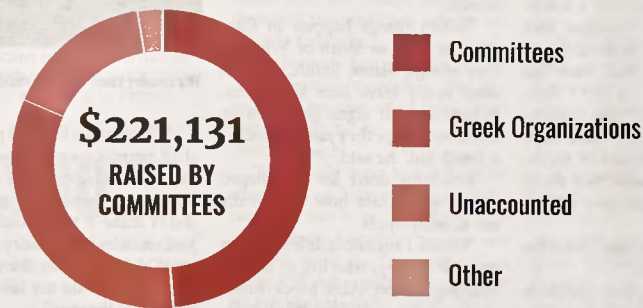
**Where's the money going?**

According to Epstein, every cent of the \$452,965.18 raised is donated to Duke Children's Hospital through the nonprofit Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

To put that number into perspective, the most recent data for Alamance Regional Hospital showed it took in \$176,035 in donations for the entire year in 2015. That's a third of what Elonthon raised for Duke in a few months.

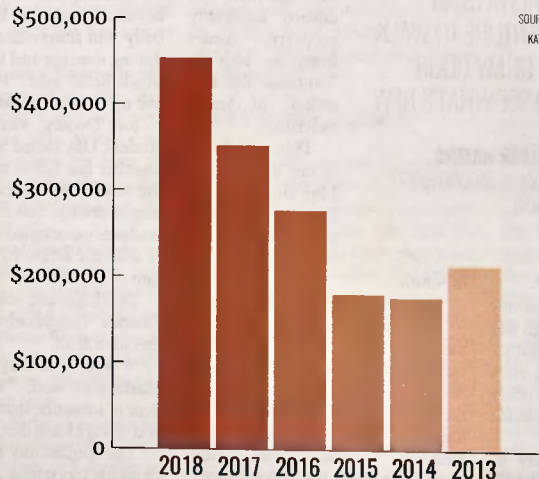
Epstein said all the operational costs of the event are covered by a \$25 registration fee that each dancer pays and a \$10,000 grant from Love's Food Shops. Committee members also work to get food and supplies donated.

### ELONTHON FUNDRAISING



SOURCE: ELONTHON.COM  
KATE DRURY | Designer

### FUNDRAISING THROUGH THE YEARS



SOURCE: ELONTHON.COM  
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