

# *Syrian army controls 60 percent of Eastern Ghouta*

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Damascus, March 12 (RHC-Xinhua) -- The Syrian government forces now control 60 percent of the rebel-held areas in Eastern Ghouta countryside of the capital Damascus after 13 days of battles, a monitor group reported on Monday.

This comes as intense battles have been raging since midnight between the rebels and the government forces mainly near the city of Harasta and the Arbeen area in Eastern Ghouta, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

It added that the Syrian forces with Russia's backing managed to completely isolate Harasta in the western part of Eastern Ghouta.

The government forces also isolated the key rebel bastion in Douma district, where the Islam Army, the major rebel group in Eastern Ghouta, is positioned.

Eastern Ghouta, a 105-square-km agricultural region consisting of several towns and farmlands, poses the last threat to the capital due to its proximity to government-controlled neighborhoods east of Damascus and ongoing mortar attacks that target residential areas in the capital, pushing people over the edge.

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