

Accusations of Chemical Weapons Use by the Syrian Army Nullified by Fact-Checking

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Global Research, May 26, 2019

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Syrian government forces allegedly committed yet another chemical attack, local opposition affiliated media reported last Sunday.

Despite the seriousness of the accusations the reports did not provide any details. Nothing was certain except for the location of the incident – the village of Kabani that is perched on a commanding height on the border between Lattakia and Hama, two northwestern Syrian province. After a while the media claimed there were casualties – four people, including an information activist – who exhibited symptoms of exposure to a chemical agent and were delivered to a field hospital in the opposition-controlled Idlib province.

The accusations against the Syrian army were not backed by documentary evidence. No pictures or videos depicting the incident or the victims could be found online. The reports also did not clarify what the victims were doing in Kabani, that had been long abandoned by the residents due to heavy clashes between the Syrian troops and the opposition factions.

Despite the evident lack of details only a couple of days later the Western states blamed the Syrian government for the use of chemical weapons. The US State Department [claimed](#) it “detected signs” that Damascus may be renewing its use of chemical weapons. This stance was shared by Britain’s Theresa May who [promised](#) to respond “appropriately” if the allegations were confirmed. In turn, the French Foreign Ministry [published](#) a statement calling for “punishment” for those who carry out chemical attacks.

On a side note, US Special Envoy for Syria James F. Jeffrey acknowledged that the US has no evidence of the Syrian army using chemical weapons. The Pentagon has also distanced itself from the State Department’s strong statement, cautiously [stating](#) that the military were “reviewing the situation.”

Pentagon’s cautiousness, as it turned out, was justified. Two days after the alleged attack, the Syrian Observatory For Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor, [declared](#) the reports about the use of chemical weapons fake.

According to the monitor that gathers information from a large net of ground sources in Syria, the reports of chemical weapons being used were originally spread by members of the Turkistan Islamic Party, a radical armed group allied with Al Qaeda’s affiliates in Syria or Hayat Tahrir Al Sham (HTS). The Syrian Observatory revealed that four fighters of the group who were hiding in a trench or a cave came under intense shelling by the Syrian troops and suffocated due to a cloud of dust caused by the incoming shells. One of the fighters, who

had asthma, suffered more than the others. All four were evacuated to a field hospital and filmed, with the video sent to the Turkish authorities and the organizations supported by the US and other Western states, the monitor reported.

The Observatory's report casts serious doubt on the credibility of the media that accused the Syrian troops of using chemical weapons. Even a brief analysis allows to spot the exact moment when the information begins to undergo an intentional alteration.

Reports of the chemical attack can be traced back to Ebaa News, a media outlet created by HTS. Last Sunday morning Ebaa News [reported](#) that the Syrian army shelled the group's position in Kabani with chlorine. A couple of hours later the agency [added](#) that three chlorine-filled rockets were fired, stressing - this detail is highly important - that there were no injuries.

These reports were picked up by local pro-opposition media, who bear responsibility for altering the the information by failing to [mention](#) that Kabani is held by HTS that is a designated terror group in the US and UK. They also [introduced](#) the "four victims", who were allegedly evacuated to a hospital in Darkush or, according to other sources, Jisr Al Shughur.

The opposition media also [cited](#) a certain Chemical Violations Documentation Center Of Syria, whose experts allegedly confirmed that a chemical attack indeed took place and resulted in casualties. However, neither the Center's [website](#) nor its official Facebook page mentioned the attack. Moreover, the Center's website is currently offline.

With the details listed above it is possible to state without a doubt that the Syrian army did not use chemical weapons in the area of Kabani on May, 19th. What is even more important, the trace left by the information spread about the attack points in the direction of a planned provocation involving mass media and governments of Western states.

This time, however, the masterminds were caught in their own web of lies. Until now, the Syrian Observatory For Human Rights has never spoken in support of the Syrian government. It did not took much for this to finally happen - the sheer incompetence of those behind the provocation proved to be enough.

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