

Analysis of Evidence Contradicts Allegations on Syrian Gas Attacks

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Part I

For three years now, it's been alleged and that Syrian government forces have systematically used helicopters to drop chlorine gas on civilians in rebel-held areas of the country. 

Amid repeated efforts to impose new sanctions on Syria over the widely accepted charges, another reminder was dropped on March 25: a direct chlorine attack on an underground hospital in Hama province was said to kill at least two, including a surgeon, **Dr. Ali Darwish** (photo at right). [1]

But a critical analysis of the evidence contradicts these allegations in myriad ways. Ongoing open-source research by myself and the community at A Closer Look On Syria has followed from the start. I've re-packaged the growing body of findings repeatedly for the OPCW, select diplomats, and the public. [2] Here is another attempt to provide a long but readable overview of that, in two parts. Some general problems and observations wrapping around two cases examined in detail, each of which has a family of six dying, suffices to raise the main points.

Together, the findings illustrate that, despite all the declarations of certainty, the Syrian government is almost certainly *not* dropping chlorine on its people. Instead, as outlandish as it may sound, it's quite likely that Islamist opposition forces in Syria are behind all of these events. Surprisingly specific and hard-to-deny visual clues suggest **rebels are murdering the victims themselves using different methods, and lodging false claims as cover, and to shift the blame.**

The evidence behind that is not secret, and plain enough for anyone to see. But, so far, the people in charge just haven't looked closely enough, and no one in the media has pushed the issue. And so the true chlorine story, at least as we see it, remains unspoken and invisible to the masses, so far.

Some General Problems

Chlorine gas can harm and even kill because it forms corrosive acids on contact with water, causing severe damaging the soft tissues like eyes and lungs. Yet it has many legitimate purposes, is easily synthesized, and remains quite common. It could easily be obtained by

opposition forces. In fact, by credible reports, they've used it against government forces and civilians, in little-noted attacks from late 2012 onward. [3]

✘ At left is a photo said to show a firefighter called in for rescue work after a chlorine attack in the government-held part of Aleppo's Old City, on August 2, 2016. It's said this civil defense worker was one of 13 people who died in the attack, blamed on Harakat Nouredin al-Zenki. [4]

Note the victim's swollen eyes pouring tears, blood coming from his mouth or nose, skin redness, and mild blue tint to the skin (this is called cyanosis, and is caused by low blood oxygen). This is a fairly severe case, but some form of these signs should appear with chlorine victims, and so they matter in the case studies below. And it should be noted that Dr. Darwish, as shown above, doesn't seem to display these signs. [5]

While that Aleppo attack reportedly used surface-fired rockets, the opposition clearly couldn't be behind anything dropped from an aircraft, as alleged in the Hama hospital bombing, or the other widely-condemned cases blamed on government forces.

But it must be noted that three years on, as far as I've seen, there remains no clear visual proof any of these attacks really did involve helicopters. Some videos are clearly edited, or show scenes staged with colored smoke. In other cases, real chlorine is being released, but it may well be done by militants on the ground, to make the government look bad.

Allegedly, these chlorine bombs are almost always aimed at civilians and not rebel fighters, which is strategically illogical. On the other hand, these allegations do serve and have been used for regime-change demands; they violate the chemical weapons convention Damascus is now signatory to, and cross the "red line" set by U.S. president **Obama**. This leaves little reason for Damascus to launch such attacks, and of course goes towards motive for the opposition to fake them on the government's behalf.

2015's deadly chlorine attacks were mostly in Idlib province, after it was almost completely overrun by Islamist militants, supported by Turkey and led by Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra. At least 13 attacks over exactly two months (March 16 to May 16) allegedly killed a total of 10 civilians, 6 of those in a dramatic first attack we'll consider below. [6]

The OPCW has accepted the strange allegation that the "barrel bombs" used in these attacks held precursor chemicals rigged to mix upon impact and generate fresh chlorine right there. [7] But the violence of impact after such a long fall would almost surely scatter everything, disrupt the mixing, and produce very little gas, in return for a lot of strange engineering work.

✘

A leaked illustration of the OPCW's working theory for the 2015 chlorine barrel bombs [8]

This allegation seems aimed at explaining the unusual remnants rebels showed, and the initially mysterious pools of purple-red fluid at some attack sites. The fluid might actually be from on-site mixing of bulk volumes of the chemicals, probably poured by hand from large jugs (clearly not from a passing helicopter if so). These are produced, for example, by Tekkim chemicals of Turkey. This brand was used by Jihadists with a "Destructive Wind chemical brigade" to synthesize chlorine, apparently, for an infamous December, 2012 video. With this, the host killed two rabbits in a plexiglass cage, promising the same fate to

Syria's Alawites. [9]

Finally, it's worth noting how opposition reports consistently claim that chlorine victims in Syria lose consciousness, faint, or become paralyzed almost instantly, then never move again, and breath too much to survive before they're rescued.

This running claim raises the very low expected death toll, and has been passed on with little question. But it has no basis in science. In reality, victims should stay awake and move away from the gas, and should usually survive. It's troubling the way victims reportedly lay still in their homes, waiting for the "White Helmets" to come save them. No one else has noted it yet, but it suggests these aren't real events they're reporting, but rather poorly-researched cover stories. [10]

These aren't all the problems I could list, but perhaps the most important ones to set the stage. Now we turn to a particular case to see if this outside-the-box thinking can explain the specifics of one of these alleged attacks.

Sarmin, 2015, and a Family of Six Killed

While others among the alleged chlorine attack of 2015 raise question, the first-and-worst among them, on the evening of March 16, is important for three reasons: it's the most highly promoted incident, with emotionally-charged images of babies dying - it has more evidence available than usual - that evidence is especially riddled with problems, and seams of what may be the true story. A book could be written about this incident.

It was on the eastern edge of Sarmin, Idlib province, that a family of six, and no one else, reportedly died in the year's debut chlorine event. A grandmother, father, mother, and three young children aged about 1-3, their family name was given as al-Taleb. We can't be sure that's actually true, but for simplicity let's call them Taleb and skip the scare quotes. The bizarre and perhaps murderous "life-saving procedures" used on the Taleb children has recently been analyzed and exposed as a fraud by Swedish Doctors for Human Rights here at The Indicter (see: [White Helmets Video, Macabre Manipulation of Dead Children and Staged Chemical Weapons Attack to Justify a "No-Fly Zone" in Syria](#)) A Closer Look On Syria's research can expand on many other questions surrounding this case. [11]

Below is a scene from the damaged basement apartment where it's claimed the Talebs met their fate. UN investigators accepted the claim that one of those unlikely barrel bombs happened to fall right through a narrow slot for a ventilation shaft, no more than 1.5 meters wide, "improbable as it sounds." [12] Thus it hit their kitchen wall full force without exploding, knocking down the wall and somehow filling the whole apartment with gallons of red-purple fluid, and thus chlorine gas.



Twisted remnants of outer barrel, cylinder from something else, the Taleb kitchen, Coordinating Sarmin video

It's not clear how the fluid would spread so widely, why the wrong kind of gas cylinder is also seen atop the rubble, or why the home and twisted barrel casing (but not that extra canister) seem damaged by an explosion. [13] So far, it seems no one, even the OPCW's investigators, has made full sense of this scene.

At least two strong clues entered below suggest the Taleb family didn't really live here anyway.

Black Flags and White Helmets

By the logo, that site video was filmed by "Coordinating Sarmin," local activists affiliated with Al-Qaeda's Syria franchise Jabhat al-Nusra (see the black flag atop "Sarmin" in gold, shared by JaN). [14] Other aftermath videos are filmed by the newly-minted "White Helmets," or "Syrian Civil Defense," Idlib branch. In fact, this incident seems to be the first prominent appearance of the White Helmets anywhere, their debut performance of sorts.

The White Helmets and Coordinating Sarmin each filmed one of the two emergency room videos of the children dying. This apparent team effort is also suggested by the new custom blankets used in the Sarmin field hospital: the "civil defense" logo done up in the gold-and-black colors of their jihadist partners. A further discussion about the associations of symbols/flags in the 'rebel' formations in Syria (from al-Qaeda to White Helmets) in **Prof Marcello Ferrada de Noli's** article "[White Helmets Movie: Updated Evidence From Swedish Doctors Confirm Fake 'Lifesaving' and Malpractices on Children](#)".



Left: Grandma Ayosh and blanket [15]. Right: Same with Sarah atop [16]

Chlorine Did Not Kill Those Babies

As recently noted in The Indicter, dubious "life-saving efforts" failed to save the children. [17] Speculations has been raised elsewhere on whether such procedures may even have killed them. For instance, a crucial injection for the infant, **Mohamed**, is apparently withheld and swapped for possibly fatal syringe rampage through the boy's chest.

Further, Mohamed was seen earlier in the triage area, being given respiratory support. But later in the "emergency room," he was given no useful assistance as he was left on his back, suffocating on his own fluids. [18] It almost seems the medical workers here wanted these children to die, so they could catch it on video, blame "**Assad**," and demand protection.



Left: Mohamed Taleb with oxygen mask in triage [19] - right: suffocating in the "emergency room" [20]

While medical malpractice may have finally killed at least the boy, it's important to consider the poisoning that preceded that and likely killed both girls. The back-story is supposed to make this quite clear, but we must note the children's clinical signs suggest they were never in that gas-filled apartment. Mohamed as shown, and his older sisters Aysha and Sara, between them **show no sign of being exposed to chlorine gas.**

The Taleb children were said to soak in it for some 30 minutes, so they should have skin irritation and red, damaged eyes, should probably be conscious, with strained breathing and violent coughing. But they look roughly the opposite of how they should (compare Mohamed above to the firefighter shown at the start). They're limp and totally unresponsive, with white, rheumy, vacant eyes, and abnormally pale skin. They don't cough at all, and barely even breathe. In fact they appear dead, but at least the infant Mohamed is alive and breathing, so he's comatose.

All this suggests **the children may have suffered an overdose with a CNS depressant drug (opiates, barbiturates, etc.)**. [21] That would clearly be done by people on the ground, and not by a passing helicopter. It was apparently done outside the Sarmin field hospital, but perhaps drawing from its supplies anyway. [22] But whatever really killed them, we can see it was almost certainly not the chlorine gas alleged, and we're left with a false claim covering for a mystery. These crucial details need to be reconsidered by credible experts.

There are More Different Stories Than There Should Be

Serious story discrepancies have emerged as well, suggesting poor coordination between fictitious accounts. The OPCW was told the parents escaped the gas-filled apartment along with Mohamed, and found help for the others passed out inside (with some confusion about the boy's age). [23] Everyone else was told the Talebs were all found paralyzed but alive at the scene. [24]

The director of the Sarmin field hospital the children died in is **Dr. Mohamed Tennari** (alt: Tirani, "T."), who's also the local director of the interventionist Syrian-American Medical Society. As "Dr T, the director of Sarmin hospital," he gave an early account to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) which supported his facility, perhaps even with the drugs used to kill the Taleb children. Therein, he claimed that the family (grandmother, parents, and three children) was unknown. He saw them "arriving at the hospital from a neighbouring village," barely able to speak before they died. [25]

But everyone else says they lived at a known spot in Sarmin, and the given spot does match the video record. [26] Later, Dr. Tennari agreed and added that the father, his "friend" Waref al-Taleb, "ran an electronics repair shop in town," [27] and even had "recently helped to fix my phone." [28] Later he told Al-Jazeera Waref "was friendly, quiet, [a] good person," who "had a nice family. He loved his family." Tennari says his last visit to the repair shop in Sarmin was actually to fix an internet router, a month or two before the attack. "Taleb did not charge him for the fix," Al-Jazeera reported, as a gesture between "the two Syrian friends." [29]

Did he just forget about all that at first, as he imagined they were strangers from another town? Or was the first story closer to the truth?

Finally, the extensive video record shows Dr. Tennari was not present in the "emergency room" during the five filmed minutes when the children die. This might help explain why his later false description of heading the efforts there to save them was full of illogical claims. [30]



Dr. Tennari vs. 6 of the 7 staff seen in either ER video, none of which is him [31]

We'll come back to the severely unreliable Dr. Tennari at the end of part 2. For now just note he may be illustrative of all such sources phoning in these chlorine attacks to their interventionist sponsors.

Part II

The Case For an Aleppo Chlorine Campaign

The 2016 series of helicopter chlorine attack reports were mostly in rebel-held eastern Aleppo. These started in mid-August but accelerated in November and December, as government forces re-conquered the entirety of Syria's largest city. The complex 2015 style of bomb was replaced with smaller yellow gas cylinders like those used in the first attacks in 2014, shown distorted at most scenes.

As lamented by Human Rights Watch, at least eight confirmed attacks preceded the government re-conquest of each district, killing a confirmed nine civilians (with 16 reported), and no rebel fighters. **Ole Solvang**, their deputy director for "emergencies division" is quoted saying the attacks "were coordinated with the overall military strategy for retaking Aleppo, not the work of a few rogue elements." [32] But apparently it didn't involve gassing the rebels in charge. He later told Al-Jazeera how chlorine makes basement shelters unsafe for civilians or, as the reporter **Dorian Geiger** puts it,

"Solvang suspects the regime strategically used chlorine to force a mass exodus of the city." [33]

As my assessment of HRW's report explains, there is still no proof helicopters were involved. The alleged goal of mass panic remains unclear, in both utility and in reality. There's also no clear connection between these alleged attacks and the coming re-conquest by the army forces on the ground. In fact, their interactive map shows the interval between gas and boots, and it seems loose and varied, more like someone predicting government moves and usually guessing early. [34]

At least one faked scene is included, highlighted by HRW as shown below: "green smoke" rises from a blast after a bomb or missile lands. But chlorine is a heavier than-air gas and simply wouldn't rise the way the video shows it doing. Chlorine is also a more pale, yellowish shade of green than this apparent special effects smoke. [35]



Seemingly genuine chlorine is seen creeping along the ground in at least one other case, on December 8. [36]. How many of these incidents involved real gas is unclear, but in context, it's most likely rebels released both the genuine and fake kinds themselves, as evidence for their accusations.

Another Family of Six Killed

The fatalities reported with these late-2016 Aleppo attacks were unusually anonymous. Of 16 reported to HRW, two men were fully named, a family name only was given for six others killed early on November 20, and eight were totally unnamed: a 55-year-old woman and seven other unspecified people. [37] HRW left those seven as unverified, but chances are they really did die, and details are just being withheld. Those identities might be hidden for a reason.

The family of six was named - to a Reuters reporter and to no one else - as al-Baytounji. [38] Most sources don't name them, but agree they were killed in a midnight attack in the northeastern Sakhour district: a father, a mother (not shown) and four children (two boys and two girls, aged about 2-11, by visual guess).



A CNN report mistakes the girl in red for the mother, but translates a local's explanation from video:

"We were sleeping when a barrel bomb fell near our home," a man explains on the video. "We went down and discovered it was chlorine gas. The victims weren't activists or anything ... but they were suffocating so much, they turned blue. It was a man, four kids, and his wife. The oldest boy was 10 years old. Why did this happen? May God curse you, Bashar (al-Assad)."

Another man shows coins to the videographer from the Aleppo Media Center, which appear tarnished. The man says he took the coins from the pockets of the dead. "The gas caused them to change color," he says.[40]

Were the Baytounji Family Abducted Christians?

An internet search with the proper Arabic spelling of that family name (بيتونجي) found exactly one other instance anywhere in the world and in time (there must be more, but this is all I could find): in 1933, **Mr. Ibrahim Hajjar al-Baytounji** of Aleppo was asked for a "share" (donation) to build a new roof for St. George's church, in the city's Assyrian district. [41]

Thus he was presumably part of the Christian community, in Aleppo, and other Baytonjis in Aleppo might be Christians as well, even close to a century later. This may prove to be a false name or a confused lead, but it seems to deserve a more informed look to verify if these people match with any missing families, Christian or otherwise.

The witness told CNN they "went down" and found the family, suggesting they were living or sheltering in a basement apartment, like the Taleb family was. That makes some basic sense considering chlorine's tendency to sink. Precedent says it's a dubious claim, perhaps lodged for just that reason.

The video suggests after being awakened by the gas tank crashing through the roof, the victims had somehow gotten their clothes on (with change in the pockets, as claimed above). But they didn't get their shoes on, before they illogically passed out somewhere short of the exit. These clues and some possible signs of bondage and abuse suggest **they may have been held as hostages**. (These don't get pajamas to sleep in, and don't even have to die when and where it's reported) [42]

If the Baytounji family were hostages, who died shortly before the re-conquest of the Sakhour district, then it's most likely they were executed by the fighters holding them. These would be liquidating all property they couldn't take with them, besides killing witnesses to their crimes, before they surrendered and took the offered "green bus" to Idlib.

Just how they may have exterminated this family it is worth some attention, and that winds up raising the possibility of bondage closer to a certainty.

Chlorine Didn't Kill This Family

Like the Taleb children, the Baytounji children - and their father, if not their unseen mother - suffered a questionable death that does not seem to be caused by chlorine. They weren't

shot or stabbed that we see, so it might seem “chemical” and thus acceptable. But the details matter.

They may have cyanosis, as reported, but this has many causes. They don’t seem to have eye damage, and their clothes don’t seem bleached. This probably isn’t chlorine, but it’s also quite different from what we saw in Sarmin, perhaps involving heat and smoke. The two older children especially (on the right above) have faces that seem baked, with dry, orange-tinted skin pulled tight, and a white, powdery residue around their mouths and eyes. [43] So far, what happened to them is a horrible mystery.

But the heavy dark rings around their eyes may tell a clearer story. All but one of the five seen victims seem to have this, but the father shows it most vividly (cropped view below). This is most likely periorbital ecchymosis, or “raccoon eyes,” Usually following a skull fracture that tears the inner lining, blood between the skull and the cranium pools through the eye sockets into the soft tissue there, swelling the area all around the eyes (“peri-orbital”), before it’s re-absorbed. What we see doesn’t appear swollen like in the early stages, but more like a splotchy, healing bruise, especially with the children. **Most likely they were each hit in the back of the head, at least two days prior to the alleged chlorine attack.** [44]



Rings around the eyes of the father, suggesting skull fracture [45]

In four of five seen victims, this can’t be any kind of accident; the family must have been violently attacked by people with weapons. Like an opiate overdose, this cannot come from any passing helicopter. It would have to be done by locals, who quite likely held the Baytounji family as prisoners. If this finding can be verified by forensic professionals and the alternatives be ruled out, we would have an even clearer case than with the Talebs – solid proof that Aleppo’s fading Islamists abducted and murdered this family and then simply lied about it.

A Big Picture Some Can’t Grasp

Hostages Down the Line?

This disturbing evidence of captivity with raises questions and underlines earlier observations. These five members of the Baytounji family are the only alleged chlorine victims from the late-2016 Aleppo campaign that rebels have provided visuals for. We can’t judge the other ten alleged deaths directly by this precedent. But we can’t yet judge them by anything else either, and the precedent is bad for the broader opposition narrative of 16 killed by Syria’s helicopter chlorine bombs. They might have all been yanked out of their dungeons at the right time to be gassed by whatever was handy.

In Sarmin, 2015, the way the Taleb children were perhaps overdosed on cue suggests they too may have been hostages, though signs of abuse are absent. An unusual number of people apparently related to the grandmother (with the rare name Qaaq) died in the area over the following weeks, suggesting family targeting for unknown reasons was involved. [46]

In the 2014 attacks in Hama and Idlib provinces, the attacks spared locals as well as fighters; the 16 reported fatalities were nearly all civilians listed as displaced from other

towns, primarily women and children. [47] This strange coincidence could mean the victims were gender-segregated hostages.

And it's worth noting all of these cases were within a few kilometers of the Alawite village of Ma'an, which was overrun by Jihadists shortly before the first chlorine report. Dozens were executed on February 9, and some 80 civilians were reportedly abducted - mostly women and children. [48] The chlorine reports started on April 11, and while none of the named towns are Ma'an, these records would be falsified to obscure that if it were true.



Map showing where IDPs were listed as from vs. killed in the 2014 incidents (Ma'an circled) [49]

So it may have been that way the whole time these attacks were being phoned in; ready-held hostages were just killed at the right time, without guns or blades so it could appear vaguely "chemical." Much evidence says the earlier alleged sarin attacks of 2013 followed a similar basic method, with the infamous Ghouta attack of August 21 playing out on several hundred prisoners of Islamist groups in the Damascus area. [50]

In fact similar signs emerge with most categories of alleged regime crimes from 2011 forward, from "regime" snipers to "Shabiha" massacres to "barrel bombs," claiming a solid majority of the civilians killed in the conflict. [51] All these suspicions could be wrong, or the truth might be mixed. But enough good reasons remain to hold this bleak possibility open as worth considering in each case. So far, it seems official investigations have never considered it for any cases.

Circular Reasoning in Official Investigations

The official investigations so far, like that of the UN and OPCW, are deeply flawed and may be incapable of reaching the truth of the matter, blinded as they are by an obvious institutional bias against the Syrian government. Consider February 2 report of the UN headquarters Commission of Inquiry (CoI), with the central error among many plainly on display:

Point 52 notes "allegations of improvised chlorine bombs dropped from helicopters." No reason is given to believe or disbelieve the allegations. They decide attacks did happen, note there's no evidence implicating Russian forces, and leap straight to this: "Given that the incidents reported were all the result of air-delivered bombs," (an unsupported premise) "it is concluded that these attacks were carried out by Syrian air forces." [52] In other words, because they chose to believe the opposition claims, they blamed the government. And while they don't explain why they made that choice, it almost seems it was simply because they wanted to blame the government.

In case they need another reason, the CoI also notes "the use of chlorine by Syrian forces follows a pattern observed in 2014 and 2015." [53] But analysis suggests these were based on the same kind of faith-based reasoning; it was said the killer gas came from a helicopter, and that was accepted without proof. [54] Now with this easy "finding" following on the others, it should be easier yet for them to repeat themselves again and pin the blame for another year's worth of alleged drops in some 2018 report. Clearly, a process like this runs serious risk of becoming meaningless.

Power, Jerking “Tears” for “Justice,” Behind Closed Doors

Having reviewed, in part 1, the devastating evidence from Sarmin in 2015, let’s now reconsider a scene at United Nations using the video of that apparent terrorist crime. Prof Marcello Ferrada de Noli, chairman of Swedish Doctors for Human Rights (SWEDHR), describes this briefing as “theatre of the macabre.” [55] Not to make light of the gruesome reality captured in those videos, but it’s also theater of the absurd.

Human Rights Watch had just called for action by the UNSC over the unfounded chlorine claims on April 13, 2015. [56] In a supposed coincidence, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., **Samantha Power**, called an unannounced closed-door session on April 16, to raise the chlorine charges again on the one-month anniversary of the killing of the Taleb family.

As AP reporter **Matt Lee** explained, the briefing was held “behind closed doors of the UN Censorship Alliance,” using the special “Arria formula” rules. There was no UN TV coverage, and it was “not be listed in the UN Journal or even on the blue electronic signs outside,” which advertised a meeting about “nutrition.” Lee pointed out that shady information operations have been sneaked into the UN using these rules before, suggesting this one was similar. [57]

For this presentation, ambassador Power had **Dr. Mohamed Tennari** tell his story again and show the same video footage so thoroughly analyzed recently. Afterwards, ambassador power talked to reporters gathered outside, saying this meeting moved everyone to tears, and underscored how the “long arm of justice” was “taking more time than any of us would wish right now.” In the BBC video she can be seen striking a firm pose, with eyes that are just toughening after the tears, as she channels the gravity of the demands of justice. [57]



Theatrics and presentation matter in achieving such an emotional reaction, but the only real evidence involved was that video. And as we now know, **that video excludes the presenter and proves him unreliable, proves chlorine didn’t kill those babies, and suggests secret murder by the Islamists Dr. Tennari insists on covering for.** This was the basis for ambassador Power’s triumphant blow to the “regime.” I alerted her to our early findings right away on Twitter, but apparently she didn’t notice, and maintained this pose. [58] It’s quite likely she already knew it was a fraud and just didn’t care.

Whatever was supposed to be so different about the Trump administration, it doesn’t seem to apply in this area. New ambassador to the U.N. **Nikki Haley** seems to feel that “to be concerned about chemical weapons use,” one must push further sanctions Syria, as she complained about a blocked resolution to that effect on February 28. [59]

True to form, HRW had just urged Russia not to block the resolution, calling on their slanted findings. [58] But Russia did block it, along with China and Bolivia. As the deputy Russian Ambassador to the UN explained,

“the problem” was a politicized process, with findings based on “dubious information submitted by the armed opposition, international NGOs sympathetic to it, the media and so-called ‘Friends of Syria.’” [60]

That seems to be a correct assessment; so far, the trusted authorities have consistently

failed to even begin the process of an honest investigation. Instead, it seems they have spent all their energy reverse-engineering politically expedient reasons to keep on punishing the enemy nation and, hence, the people of Syria.

But that's still an incomplete picture. The dubious or untrue stories Syria is to be "held to account" over seem to conceal genuine crimes, the authors of which remain free and unindicted by the U.S.-led "world community." In fact they would have been rewarded for their use of banned chemicals and banned methods, as the crimes are being systematically blamed on the shared enemy in Damascus, maintaining the moral basis of supporting the armed insurgency. And the supposed watchdogs at the UN and OPCW, naturally, seem hard-wired to not receive this big picture and acknowledge the immense crimes they may have been party to all this time. Until something in this picture changes, we're locked on course for more of the same.

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Notes and References

[1] <http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-chlorine-allegations-march-25.html>

[2] submission to OPCW, Aug. 24, 2015, via follow-up article a year later:

<http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2016/08/terrible-flaws-in-opcws-syria-chlorine.html>

letter to diplomats March 3, 2017 (PDF, 14 pages)

<http://ciwclibya.org/reports/achallengetochlorineclaims.html>

[3] ACLOS: Dec 22, and Dec Seizures post (Daraya, December 22, 2012, 7 soldiers reported killed by apparent chlorine attack (ACLOS

http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Alleged_Chemical_Attack,_December_22,_2012),

coincidentally not long after Jabhat al-Nusra took over Syria's only chlorine plant across the country on Dec. 6.

[4] http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Alleged_Chemical_Attack,_August_2,_2016#Fatalities

[5] see 1

[6] all CW incidents table: http://ciwclibya.org/images/Red_Flags_Across_the_Red_Line_final_3-3-17.pdf

[7] the precursors are potassium permanganate and hydrochloric acid -

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/738 page 80 - this claim was quite likely lodged by British CW expert Hamish De Bretton-Gordon, whose role in the Syria CW saga is explored here:

http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Talk:British_involvement_in_Syria#British_MI6_operation

[8] <http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/File:OPCW-20151029-Barrel-bomb-graph.jpg> - <http://www.the-trench.org/idlib-chlorine-attacks-2015/>

[9] http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Tekkim_Chemical_Test_Video#The_Poison_Used

[10] <http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2017/02/does-chlorine-make-you-pass-out.html>

[11] http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Alleged_Chemical_Attack,_March_16,_2015 (most material still on talk page)

[12] Un Col: "A ballistic expert analysis supports the statement of the witnesses, improbable as it sounds, that the device impacted through the ventilation shaft," after falling from a helicopter. After rolling of a ramp right to the shaft, it might make perfect sense, but the "witnesses" didn't claim that. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/738

[13] http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Talk:Alleged_Chemical_Attack,_March_16,_2015#Attack_Site_Video and

http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Talk:Alleged_Chemical_Attack,_March_16,_2015#Taleb_Home

[14] <http://21stcenturywire.com/2017/03/20/white-helmets-are-dead-children-being-used-as-props-for-propaganda-videos/> and note تنسيقية سرمين = tansiqiat saramin = Coordinating Sarmin (youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SarmeenFree>)

[15] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N84aC1z0bjw> By the Syrian Civil Defense in Idlib Governorate

[16] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6c6A1Qnbbw> By Mohamed Fadel

[17] <http://theindicter.com/white-helmets-movie-updated-evidence-from-swedish-doctors-confirm-fake-lifesa-ving-and-malpractices-on-children/>

[18] http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Talk:Alleged_Chemical_Attack,_March_16,_2015#Clinic_Video_Analysis

[19] AJE, 23 March, 2017

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/03/chlorine-gas-weapon-syria-civil-war-170314110043637.html>

[20] see 16

[21] http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Talk:Alleged_Chemical_Attack,_March_16,_2015#Correlating_Symptoms - <http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2015/04/what-killed-talebs.html>

[22] http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Talk:Alleged_Chemical_Attack,_March_16,_2015#Victims_Before

[23] The OPCW reported in one spot how the parents and the youngest child escaped the house and got help for the others, before they all died from their varying exposure.

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/738 page 84) Elsewhere, the parents “and the *oldest (male)* child managed to escape to the open air” (emphasis mine) while “the interviewees confirmed that the grandmother and the two daughters,” who remained trapped for over 30 minutes, “were dead on arrival at the hospital.” (

http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2015_908.pdf)

[24] for example, Amnesty International:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/03/syria-war-crime-chlorine-gas-attack/>

[25] <http://www.msf.org.uk/article/syria-chlorine-attack-on-idlib-village>

[26] <http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2016/09/syria-chlorine-part-6a-site-correlation.html>

[27]

https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/17/world/middleeast/un-security-council-sees-video-evidence-of-a-chemical-attack-in-syria.html?_r=0

[28] <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20150617/103638/HHRG-114-FA00-Wstate-TennariM-20150617.pdf>

[29] see 19

[30] <http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2015/06/syria-chlorine-allegations-where-was-dr.html> – (he says chlorine fumes coming off the stripped and washed children made his eyes burn and made a nurse faint – but chlorine is not known to cause secondary exposure, nor, as noted, to cause fainting even in primary exposure)

[31] Ibid.

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[32] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/13/syria-coordinated-chemical-attacks-aleppo>

[33]

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/03/chlorine-gas-weapon-syria-civil-war-170314110043637.html>

[34] <http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2017/02/assessing-hrws-latest-chlorine-report.html>

[35] Ibid.

[36] *ibid.*

[37] see 32

[38] <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN13F0HS>

[39] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYykubHIDJU>

[40] <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/20/middleeast/syria-aleppo-airstrikes/index.html>

[41] Essay (Arabic): <http://www.qenshrin.com/details.php?id=32742#.WKhRbX-rH-s> - St. George's Church on Wikimapia, near but not in present Assyrian district:

<http://wikimapia.org/#lang=en&lat=36.213526&lon=37.154531&z=18&m=b> - Further analysis

suggests the word Baytounji is used only in and around Syria (meaning concrete mason), so as a name it will be at least as local.

http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Talk:Alleged_Chemical_Attacks_in_Aleppo,_November_and_December,_2016#Family_Name

[42] <http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2017/02/syria-chlorine-allegations-baytounji.html>

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] <https://syrianarchive.org/database/37666/>

[46] http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Talk:Alleged_Chemical_Attack,_March_16,_2015#Qaaq

[47] <http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2015/07/syria-chlorine-allegations-2014-attacks.html>

[48] http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Maan_Massacre,_2014 -
<http://www.syrianews.cc/happened-maan-two-massacres/>

[49] see 47

[50] <http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2015/05/syria-ghouta-massacres-visual-evidence.html>

[51] No single citation covers this pattern, but see for some good examples of fairly undeniable cases of a reported regime crime seemingly carried out on gender-segregated captives: The 2012 Khalidiya Massacre in Homs, and the 2016 Hayan missile massacre near Aleppo -

http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Khalidiya_Massacre -

http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Hayan_missile_massacre,_August_12,_2016

[52] A/HRC/34/64, of 2 February, 2017, point 52.

https://admin.govexec.com/media/un_aleppo_march1.pdf

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] <http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.com/2016/08/terrible-flaws-in-opcws-syria-chlorine.html>

[55]

<http://theindicter.com/swedish-doctors-for-human-rights-white-helmets-video-macabre-manipulation-of-dead-children-and-staged-chemical-weapons-attack-to-justify-a-no-fly-zone-in-syria/>

[56] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/13/syria-chemicals-used-idlib-attacks>

[57] <http://www.innerecitypress.com/syria1misturaunca041615.html>

[58]

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32346790>http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/17/world/middle-east/un-security-council-sees-video-evidence-of-a-chemical-attack-in-syria.html?_r=0

[59] <https://twitter.com/CL4Syr/status/589004961628889088>

[60] <https://usun.state.gov/remarks/7691>

[61] Russia: Don't Veto Sanctions for Syria Chemical Attacks. Human Rights Watch, February 27, 2017
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/27/russia-dont-veto-sanctions-syria-chemical-attacks>

[62] <https://www.rt.com/news/378930-russia-china-un-veto-syria/>

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