

Did The Rebels Use Chemical Weapons: The UN Report and the Evidence

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

The long-awaited UN report on the usage of chemical weapons in Syria has been released.

While the White House[1] and the New York Times[2] have already taken the report and argued that it helps their argument that Assad used chemical weapons, it may be more prudent to look at what the UN report states and how the possibility remains that the Syrian rebels could have used chemical weapons.

In the report, the UN stated the following: "Information about the delivery systems used was essential for the investigation. Indeed, several surface to surface rockets capable of delivering significant chemical payloads were identified and recorded at the investigated sites." [3]

The main questions that need to be asked are:

1. Did the Syrian rebels have sarin gas?
2. Did the Syrian rebels have access to surface to surface missiles before August 21, 2013?

In regards to the sarin gas, the Syrian rebels did in fact have sarin gas before the day of the incident. Just this past May, it was reported that according to the UN "Testimony from victims strongly suggests it was the rebels, not the Syrian government, that used Sarin nerve gas." [4]

In regards to the surface to surface missiles, in August that "the Free Syrian Army - as well as the Al-Qaeda affiliated al-Nusra Front and other groups - have also been using increasingly potent captured artillery. This has included Grad surface-to-surface rockets analysts say were vital to the Islamist-led push into Latakia." [5] (emphasis added)

This is further expounded upon in a report by the Middle East Media Research Institute released in July which stated that "antiaircraft, antitank, and surface-to-surface weapons are in the hands of both the Free Syrian Army (FSA), which is considered relatively moderate, and the local and global Islamist forces." [6] (emphasis added)

This evidence reveals that it is possible for the rebels to have launched the chemical weapons attack.

We need to keep in mind that the US and its allies have yet to present any evidence whatsoever that the Assad government used chemical weapons. We also need to remember that "the report left the key question of who launched the attack unanswered." [7]

Notes

[1] Steve Holland, "White House says U.N. report on Syria's chemical weapons bolsters U.S. argument," Reuters, September 16, 2013
(<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/16/us-syria-crisis-usa-obama-idUSBRE98F0ZG20130916>)

[2] C.J. Chivers and Rick Gladstone, "Forensic Details in U.N. Report Point to Assad's Use of Gas," New York Times, September 16, 2013
(https://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/17/world/europe/syria-united-nations.html?_r=0)

[3] Professor Ake Sellstrom, United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic: Report on the Alleged Use of Chemical Weapons in the Ghouta Area of Damascus on 21 August 2013,
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Secretary_General_Report_of_CW_Investigation.pdf (September 16, 2013)

[4] Shaun Waterman, "Syrian rebels used Sarin nerve gas, not Assad's regime: U.N. official," Washington Times, May 6, 2013
(<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/may/6/syrian-rebels-used-sarin-nerve-gas-not-assads-regi/>)

[5] Peter Apps, "Syria government, rebels ramp up conventional weapons use," Reuters, August 23, 2013
(<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/23/us-syria-weapons-conventional-idUSBRE97M0FH20130823>)

[6] Middle East Media Research Institute, Syrian Rebels Developing Rocket, Missile Capabilities To Combat Aircraft, Tanks, And Ground Targets, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/7299.htm> (July 22, 2013)

[7] Fox News, UN Secretary General calls evidence of chemical attack in Syria 'indisputable,' <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/09/16/un-chemical-weapons-inspection-team-turns-over-report-on-syria-to-secretary/> (September 16, 2013)

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