

Evidence that Douma ‘Chemical Attack’ Was Staged: OPCW’s Unpublished Engineers’ Report

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The alleged chemical attack on Douma in April 2018 was the pretext for airstrikes on Syria by France, UK and US. The final report on the alleged attack published by the OPCW left unexplained why its Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) had made no engineering assessments during its visit to Douma in April 2018, when experts could have inspected the sites with cylinders in position, rather than six months later when inspection was no longer possible and assessments had to rely on images and measurements obtained by others. A [Briefing Note by the Working Group on Syria Propaganda & Media](#) highlighted this as an obvious anomaly.

OPCW staff members have communicated with the Working Group.

We have learned that an investigation was undertaken by an engineering sub-team of the FFM, beginning with on-site inspections in April-May 2018, followed by a detailed engineering analysis including collaboration on computer modelling studies with two European universities. **The report of this investigation was excluded from the published Final Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission**, which referred only to assessments sought from unidentified “engineering experts” commissioned in October 2018 and obtained in December 2018.

[A copy of a 15-page Executive Summary of the report entitled “Engineering Assessment of two cylinders observed at the Douma incident” is posted here.](#) (Anyone who wishes to post their own link to the document is kindly requested to download the document and link from their own server, so as not to overload the Working Group’s.)

The Working Group has provided a commentary on the document: see ‘[Assessment by the engineering sub-team of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission investigating the alleged chemical attack in Douma in April 2018](#)’, by **Paul McKeigue, David Miller and Piers Robinson**.

Some of the commentary’s key points:

- As the Working Group has repeatedly emphasised, evidence can be evaluated only by comparison of competing hypotheses. A key weakness of the published FFM Final Report was that no competing hypotheses were considered. The FFM’s unpublished Engineering Assessment does not make this error: competing hypotheses are clearly set out in advance.
- The conclusion of the Engineering Assessment is unequivocal: the “alternative hypothesis” that the cylinders were placed in position is “**the only plausible**”

explanation for observations at the scene”.

- **These findings establish beyond reasonable doubt that the alleged chemical attack in Douma on 7 April 2018 was staged.**
- This raises the question of where and how did the victims seen in the images recorded at location 2 die?
- The conclusion appears inescapable that **the staging of the Douma incident entailed mass murder of at least 35 civilians to provide the bodies at Location 2.**

Furthermore, we note that the Douma incident was the first alleged chemical attack in Syria where OPCW investigators were able to carry out an unimpeded on-site inspection. Since previous OPCW Fact-Finding Missions did not include on-site inspections, the finding that the Douma incident was staged may cast doubt on the findings of those earlier FFMs.

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