

Journalist who exposed how Rebels were behind August 21st Syria Chemical Weapons Attack faces Intimidation

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Global Research, September 23, 2013
infowar.com

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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Associated Press reporter Dale Gavlak has been threatened over her involvement in a story which exposed how Syrian rebels were responsible for the August 21st chemical weapons attack after being handed the weapons by Saudi intelligence agents.

On August 29th, Mint Press News [published an article](#) co-authored by Gavlak which detailed how FSA militants in Ghouta admitted to reporter Yahya Ababneh that they were behind the August 21st chemical weapons incident, which the United States blamed on President Bashar Al-Assad, having mishandled chemical weapons provided to them by Saudi Arabia.

Although Gavlak did not collaborate on the story in her capacity as an AP correspondent, according to Mint Press News executive director Mnar Muhawesh, within 48 hours Gavlak received threats to “end her career” if she didn’t disassociate herself from the article.

The threats came from a third party who was most likely acting on behalf of Saudi Intelligence chief Prince Bandar bin Sultan, according to Gavlak. Bandar is named in the article as having ordered the transfer of chemical weapons to Syrian rebels in Ghouta.



Image: Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan

Gavlak has now been “indefinitely suspended” by the Associated Press with no public explanation from the news agency. It appears that the Saudi threats to “end her career” worked.

Gavlak also “confirmed with several colleagues and Jordanian government officials that the Saudis have been supplying rebels with chemical weapons,” according to Muhawesh.

Note that Gavlak was not threatened with a defamation lawsuit on the basis that her story was inaccurate, she was told that her career would be finished. The story’s entire credibility rests on Gavlak being an accredited AP journalist who has also worked for NPR and the BBC, which is why the people behind the threats were so insistent that Gavlak distance herself from the report.

The original Mint Press News article was published just two days before the United States was widely expected to launch cruise missile attacks on Syria, until the White House backed out at the last minute and President Obama announced he would seek congressional

authorization.

“On August 30th, Dale asked MintPress to remove her name completely from the byline because she stated that her career and reputation was at risk. She continued to say that these third parties were demanding her to disassociate herself from the article or these parties would end her career,” writes Muhawesh, adding that despite the threats, he decided to keep her name attached to the report.

Gavlak’s colleague Yahya Ababneh, who personally interviewed the rebels in Ghouta, was also threatened.

“Yahya has recently notified me that the Saudi embassy contacted him and threatened to end his career if he did a follow up story on who carried out the most recent chemical weapons attack and demanded that he stop doing media interviews in regards to the subject,” writes Muhawesh.

Dale Gavlak, Yahya Ababneh, and Mint Press News should be applauded for their ethical stance in upholding journalistic integrity by refusing to back down in the face of apparent threats from the habitually corrupt Saudi government.

In revealing the threats, Gavlak and Ababneh have not only thrown a fresh spotlight on the thuggish behavior of governments like Saudi Arabia who are arming Al-Qaeda led rebels in Syria, but have also bolstered the credibility of their original story, which could very well have helped prevent an attack on Syria.

The fact that Saudi Arabia is so desperate for Gavlak to distance herself from the story that it has resorted to underhanded threats, instead of openly denying the veracity of the report, suggests that the original article is indeed accurate and that Saudi Arabia is arming the Syrian rebels with chemical weapons.

It also strongly indicates that the entire basis for US aggression towards Syria, currently playing out in the form of demands for Syria to relinquish its chemical weapons arsenal, is based on the completely fraudulent pretext that Assad ordered the August 21st chemical weapons attack, a premise that has already been discredited by [German intelligence](#) findings.

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