

New WikiLeaks Bombshell: 20 Inspectors Dissent from Syria Chemical Attack Narrative. Leaked Documents and Emails of OPCW

By [Zero Hedge](#)

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

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#),

[US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Late Saturday WikiLeaks [released more documents](#) which contradict the US narrative on Assad's use of chemical weapons, specifically related to the April 7, 2018 Douma incident, which resulted in **a major US and allied tomahawk missile and air strike campaign on dozens of targets in Damascus.**

The [leaked documents](#), including internal emails of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) — which investigated the Douma site — **reveal mass dissent within the UN-authorized chemical weapons watchdog organization's ranks** over conclusions previously reached by the international body which pointed to Syrian government culpability. It's part of a growing avalanche of dissent memos and documents casting the West's push for war in Syria in doubt (which had resulted in two major US and allied attacks on Syria).

This newly released batch, WikiLeaks reports, includes a memo stating 20 inspectors feel that the officially released version of the OPCW's report on Douma **"did not reflect the views of the team members that deployed to [Syria]"**. This comes amid widespread allegations US officials brought immense pressure to bear on the organization.

RELEASE: Third batch of documents showing doctoring of facts in released version of OPCW chemical weapons report on Syria. Including a memo stating 20 inspectors feel released version "did not reflect the views of the team members that deployed to [Syria]" <https://t.co/ndK4sRikNk>

— WikiLeaks (@wikileaks) [December 15, 2019](#)

The Daily Mail's Peter Hitchens, who saw the leaked documents just prior to WikiLeaks going public with them [had this to say](#):

Sources stress that the scientists involved are 'non-political, utterly uninterested in any strategic implications of what they reveal'.

They just 'feel that the OPCW has a duty to be true to its own science, and not to be influenced by political considerations as they fear it has been'.

An internal memo seen by The Mail on Sunday suggests that as many 20

OPCW staff have expressed private doubts about **the suppression of information or the manipulation of evidence.**

This suppression of information included key evidence which undermined claims Syrian military helicopters dropped a gas cylinder from the air, which had long been the linchpin in Washington's accusation that "Assad gassed his own people" at Douma.

Like waking up from a long nightmare that almost led to WWII:
"The Mail on Sunday can reveal that a senior official at the [@OPCW](#) demanded the 'removal of all traces' of a document which undermined claims that gas cylinders had been dropped from the air.." <https://t.co/MvMwX1xrEr>

— Ian Wilkie (@Wilkmaster) [December 14, 2019](#)

The leaks also suggest the OPCW possessed scientifically credible evidence showing the victims of the alleged attack had symptoms *not consistent* with chemical gas exposure (prior OPCW statements pointed to chlorine use), casting further doubt on that aspect of the investigation.

OPCW memo raising concerns: <pic.twitter.com/UHFJbm0iDQ>

— Koen (@KoenSwinkels) [December 15, 2019](#)

But perhaps the most important leak in the new trove of emails centers on a raging debate among scientists over whether to include in their report the phrase "chlorine containing compounds were detected" and how to qualify it — given it was found only in such trace amounts as to be consistent with common household levels of chlorine-related items.

That final report claimed there were 'reasonable grounds' that chlorine gas was used in Douma, but **an OPCW whistleblower says only tiny quantities of chlorine were detected in forms possible to find in any household.** — [Daily Mail](#)

OPCW inspector tries to argue to FFM team leader Sami Barrek that the low levels of chlorinated organic chemicals need to be reported to avoid misrepresentation and confusion. Barrek says he'll unilaterally overrule the inspectors and omit the information. <https://t.co/nPZtMbakAF>
<pic.twitter.com/norATrlc7l>

— Caitlin Johnstone 🍷 (@caitoz) [December 15, 2019](#)

This crucial document (among others), which **expresses concern that the media would wrongly assume a "chlorine attack" based on [common household trace levels](#)** is found in the following memo:



From: [redacted]
Sent: 05 July 2018 12:37
To: Sami Barrek;
Subject: RE: Report Summary

Hi Sami,

I'm hoping it's worth still trying to reach a compromise within the team. I am still worried that a stock-standard phrase such as "chlorine-containing compounds were detected" (or similar) present the danger of it being misrepresented as a damning conclusion.

All we have now is the concentration at ppb that provides the needed context. However, if reporting that ppb statement is seen to be tending towards the danger of being misrepresented by the other side of readers, is there a neutral version? For example, "the team is conducting further work and sample analysis to assess the significance of trace levels of chlorine-containing compounds" or similar.

you may disagree with this approach, so please let us know your views. But I'd like to see if we can compromise. Sami I know you've got the worst job of being stuck in the middle so it's further headache for you, so please be patient. As we saw the other day, there are pressures and expectations from all sides. It's a political wordsmithing situation, not purely technical.

Cheers,

From: Sami Barrek
Sent: 05 July 2018 12:04
To: [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org
Subject: RE: Report summary

I considered inputs from all team members; I have the support of most team members. I would like to remind you that I can take unilateral decisions, nonetheless I try to take into account inputs from everyone when possible.

And here's another example:



Working Together for a World Free of Chemical Weapons

From: [redacted]
Sent: 05 July 2018 13:37
To: Sami Barrek <sami.barrek@opcw.org>; [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org
Subject: RE: Report Summary

Maybe you're right. What about then removing "trace". Or some other wording may work?

For me the main worry is the free-standing sentence chlorine-containing compounds were detected. Implicit within that statement are:

- 1. the investigation is (currently) all about chlorine
2. chlorine was searched for
3. chlorine was found (political/media readers will not discriminate between chlorine and chlorine-containing compounds)
4. therefore, because they were found (the "were detected") that's a conclusion.

It's because the stakes are so high that we have a responsibility to guard against misrepresentation, by both sides.

Hope this helps.

Regards,

-----Original Message-----
From: Sami Barrek
Sent: 05 July 2018 13:14
To: [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org; [redacted]@opcw.org

Another stunning OPCW admission heretofore unreleased to the public:

6.8 The possibility of exhuming bodies from mass graves to collect biomedical samples and examine cadavers possibly exposed to toxic chemicals from the alleged attack on 7 April was considered by the TS. The intention to do so was communicated to the SAR through Note Verbale (NV/ODG/214827/18) and preliminary preparations were undertaken by the TS for this eventuality.

6.9 When the analytical results of the first round of environmental and biological samples were received and no nerve agents or their degradation products were identified in either environmental or biological samples, the plans for exhumations were halted as the risk of not finding substantive evidence of the alleged attack was now considered high and proceeding with the exhumations presented a risk to benefit ration that was no longer acceptable.

Hitchens continues commenting on the trove of [leaked documents as follows](#):

Alleged casualties shown in videos of the attack were foaming at the mouth in a way that might be expected of victims of sarin, but not by victims of chlorine. Yet all the reports agree that no traces of sarin were found at Douma.

These doubts were confirmed by expert toxicologists consulted by the OPCW investigation team on a visit to Germany in June 2018.

They concluded ‘there was no correlation between symptoms and chlorine exposure’.

In a key passage it adds ‘the team considered two possible explanations for the incongruity.

‘A) The victims were exposed to another highly toxic chemical agent that gave rise to the symptoms observed and has so far gone undetected.

‘B) **The fatalities resulted from a non-chemical-related incident.**’ In other words, either the victims died from an unknown, undetected gas for which no evidence exists or there never was a chemical attack.

These severe doubts which were expressed internally among scientists, analysts, and technicians were never made public by the OPCW, hence the new leaks, apparently facilitated by frustrated staff who want to make the case to the world about the significant doubts.

* * *

14 December, 2019

Today WikiLeaks releases more documents showing internal disagreement within the OPCW about how facts were misrepresented in a redacted version of a report on an alleged chemical attack in Douma, Syria in April 2018.

Amongst these is a memorandum written in protest by one of the scientists sent on a fact finding mission (FFM) to investigate the attack. It is dated 14 March 2019 and is addressed to Fernando Arias, Director General of the organisation. This was exactly two weeks after the organisation published its final report on the Douma investigation.

WikiLeaks is also releasing the original preliminary report for the first time along with the redacted version (that was released by the OPCW) for comparison. Additionally, we are publishing a detailed comparison of the original interim report with the redacted interim report and the final report along with relevant comments from a member of the original fact finding mission. These documents should help clarify the series of changes that the report went through, which skewed the facts and introduced bias according to statements made by the members of the FFM.

The aforementioned memo states that around 20 inspectors have expressed concerns over the final FFM report, which they feel “did not reflect the views of the team members that deployed to Douma”. Only one member of the fact finding team that went to Douma, a paramedic, is said to have contributed to the final version of the report. Apart from that one person, an entirely new team was gathered to assemble the final report, referred to as the “FFM core team”...

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[Read the full WikiLeaks press release](#)

[See the new batch of leaked documents](#)

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