

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Confirms: Rebels Used Chemical Weapons - not Assad

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The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has confirmed the traces of the sarin gas used in Syria are not linked with the Syrian government's former stockpile of chemical weapons. The report corroborates the Syrian government's assertions that the faction responsible for the chemical attack, as well as 11 other instances of chemical weapons use, was the Syrian opposition.

The report also substantiates last month's claims from Ahmed al-Gaddafi al-Qahsi, cousin of Muammar Gaddafi, who said that the chemical weapons used in the incident had been stolen from Libya and later smuggled into Syria via Turkey by militants.

The announcement follows an investigation carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) at the request of the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and the Syrian government. "In one instance, analysis of some blood samples indicates that individuals were at some point exposed to sarin or a sarin-like substance" said Ahmet Uzumcu, the head of the OPCW. He later added that the sarin gas examined bore different characteristics to the one formerly owned by the Syrian government.

When the devastating sarin gas incident left some 1400 civilians dead in East Ghouta in 2013, the United States, European Union and Arab League were quick to accuse Bashar al-Assad and the Syrian military of utilizing its chemical weapons to combat Islamist rebels in the Syrian capital.

Subsequently, the Syrian government agreed with Russia and the US administration to have its stockpile safely demolished in Norway. Less than a month ago, it was announced that the entirety of the chemical stockpile had been safely disposed of. Prior to the 2013 attack, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported that the Syrian Army had seized chemical gas equipment from a militant field hospital in the western port city of Latakia. It cited a field commander stating that the nature of the equipment suggested militants had been planning to carry out chemical or biological attacks and blame the government.

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