

The UN Syria Mission Confirms that Rebels Were in Possession of Chemical Weapons

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The UN has published its final report on the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

While the UN Mission has skirted the central issue as to “who is behind the attacks”, its findings, nonetheless, suggest that the Al Qaeda affiliated opposition rebels rather than government forces were involved in the use of chemical weapons against civilians and government forces.

The findings show that in at least 3 attacks, civilians as well as soldiers were targeted, which is a strong indication that the rebels (supported covertly by the US, NATO, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey and Qatar) were in possession of chemical weapons and that these chemical weapons were used against both Syrian government forces as well as civilians.

The report states clearly:

“The United Nations Mission collected credible information that corroborates the allegations that chemical weapons were used in Khan Al Asal on 19 March 2013 against soldiers and civilians... (p.19).

The above assessment was in response to a formal request by the Syrian government concerning Khan Al Asal:

In a letter dated 19 March 2013, the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations informed the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council of its allegation that, at 0730 hours on 19 March, armed terrorist groups had fired a rocket from the Kfar De'il area towards Khan Al Asal in the Aleppo governorate. According to the letter, the rocket had travelled approximately 5 kilometers and fell 300 meters away from a Syrian Arab Republic army position. Following its impact, a thick cloud of smoke had left unconscious anyone who had inhaled it. The incident reportedly resulted in the deaths of 25 people and injured more than 110 civilians and soldiers who were taken to hospitals in Aleppo.

With regard to Jobar on 24 August, the Syrian government reported to the Secretary-General that at 1100 hours on 24 August 2013,

“as a group of soldiers had approached a building near the river in Jobar, they had heard a muffled sound and then had smelled a foul and strange odour, whereupon they had experienced severe shortness of breath and blurred

vision. Four of them had been immediately taken to Martyr Yusuf Al Azmah Military Hospital to receive emergency care. The Government further reported that in its search of the buildings immediately surrounding the above-mentioned site, it had discovered some materials, equipment and canisters, examination of which had confirmed that they had contained Sarin. Analysis had confirmed that one of the soil samples taken from that site had also been reported by the Syrian Government laboratory to be contaminated with Sarin.

The UN Mission corroborated that rebels had used chemical weapons against government soldiers at Jobar.

The United Nations Mission collected evidence consistent with the probable use of chemical weapons in Jobar on 24 August 2013 on a relatively small scale against soldiers...

Approximately 10 meters away from some soldiers, an improvised explosive device reportedly detonated with a low noise, releasing a very badly smelling gas. A group of 10 soldiers was evacuated in armoured personal vehicles to the field medical point with breathing difficulties and with, not further specified, strange symptoms. One alleged victim mentioned blurred vision. Four soldiers were severely affected. (p.19)

In a letter dated 28 August 2013 to the UN Secretary General, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reported that

“at 1900 hours on 25 August 2013, cylindrical canisters had been fired using a weapon that resembled a catapult at some soldiers in the Ashrafiah Sahnaya area in Damascus Rif. One of the canisters had exploded, emitting a sound of medium loudness. A black, foul-smelling smoke had then appeared, causing the soldiers blurred vision and severe shortness of breath. Five of them had been immediately taken to Martyr Yusuf Al Azmah Hospital to receive emergency care.

In relation to Ashrafiah Sahnaya

The United Nations Mission collected evidence that suggests that chemical weapons were used in Ashrafiah Sahnaya on 25 August 2013 on a small scale against soldiers...” (p.20)

The Concluding section of the Report summarizes these findings (emphasis added):

The United Nations Mission concludes that chemical weapons have been used in the ongoing conflict between the parties in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Ghouta, 21 August 2013

The United Nations Mission collected clear and convincing evidence that chemical weapons were used also against civilians, including children, on a relatively large scale in the Ghouta area of Damascus on 21 August 2013.

[with regard to East Ghouta, the UN Mission fails to acknowledge that the rebels were behind this attack, nor does it present corroborating evidence to

the effect that the government was not behind these attacks]

This conclusion was based on the following:

Impacted and exploded surface-to-surface rockets, capable to carry a chemical payload, were found to contain Sarin;

Close to the rocket impact sites, in the area where patients were affected, the environment was found to be contaminated by Sarin;

The epidemiology of over fifty interviews given by survivors and health care workers provided ample corroboration of the medical and scientific results;

A number of patients/survivors were clearly diagnosed as intoxicated by an organophosphorous compound;

Blood and urine samples from the same patients were found positive for Sarin and Sarin signatures.

Khan Al Asal, 19 March 2013

The United Nations Mission collected credible information that corroborates the allegations that chemical weapons were used in Khan Al Asal on 19 March 2013 against soldiers and civilians. However, the release of chemical weapons at the alleged site could not be independently verified in the absence of primary information on delivery systems and of environmental and biomedical samples collected and analysed under the chain of custody.

This assessment is based on the following:

The epidemiology, based on witness statements of medical staff and military personnel participating in the rescue operation and on the documentation from the local health sector provided by the Syrian Arab Republic, corroborates the occurrence of a rapidly onsetting mass intoxication by an organophosphorous compound in the morning of the 19 March 2013.

There are no other suggestions as to the cause of the intoxication;

Interviews with secondary exposed survivors confirm symptoms of an organophosphorous intoxication;

None of the parties in the Syrian Arab Republic denied the use of chemical weapons in Khan Al Asal. The evaluation of the information provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic as well as by the Governments of France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States indicated that chemical weapons were used in Khan Al Asal.

Jobar, 24 August 2013

The United Nations Mission collected evidence consistent with the probable use of chemical weapons in Jobar on 24 August 2013 on a relatively small scale against soldiers.

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Jobar, 24 August 2013

The United Nations Mission collected evidence consistent with the probable use of chemical weapons in Jobar on 24 August 2013 on a relatively small scale against soldiers.

However, in the absence of primary information on the delivery system(s) and environmental samples collected and analysed under the chain of custody, the United Nations Mission could not establish the link between the victims, the alleged event and the alleged site.

This assessment is based on the following:

Interviews with survivors and clinicians and medical records confirm symptoms of organophosphorous intoxication;

Blood samples recovered by the Syrian Government on 24 August 2013 and authenticated by the United Nations Mission using DNA techniques tested positive for signatures of Sarin.

One of the four blood samples collected from the same patients by the United Nations Mission on 28 September 2013 tested positive for Sarin.

Saraqeb, 29 April 2013

The United Nations Mission collected evidence that suggests that chemical weapons were used in Saraqeb on 24 August 2013 on a small scale, also against civilians. However, in the absence of primary information on the delivery system(s) and environmental samples collected and analysed under the chain of custody, the United Nations Mission could not establish the link between the alleged event, the alleged site and the deceased woman.

This assessment is based on the following:

Interviews with treating clinicians corroborating symptoms of organophosphorous intoxication;

Supporting witness statements and medical records substantiating the transfer of a patient from the Shifa Hospital in Saraqeb to a hospital in Turkey;

Samples of several organs from the deceased victim recovered during an autopsy performed in the presence of members of the United Nations Mission tested positive for signatures of Sarin.

Ashrafiah Sahnaya, 25 August 2013

The United Nations Mission collected evidence that suggests that chemical weapons were used in Ashrafiah Sahnaya on 25 August 2013 on a small scale against soldiers. However, in the absence of primary information on the delivery system(s) and environmental samples collected and analysed under the chain of custody, and the fact that the samples collected by the United Nations Mission one week and one month after the alleged incident tested negative, the United Nations Mission could not establish the link between the alleged event, the alleged site and the survivors.

This assessment is based on the following:

Interviews with survivors and clinicians and medical records confirm symptoms of organophosphorous intoxication;

Blood samples recovered by the Syrian Government on 24 August 2013, authenticated by the United Nations Mission using DNA techniques, tested positive for signatures of Sarin.
Bahhariyeh, 22 August 2013

In the absence of any positive blood samples, the United Nations Mission cannot corroborate the allegation that chemical weapons were used in Bahhariyeh on 22 August 2013.

This assessment is based on the following:

Blood samples collected by the Syrian Government, on 22 August, tested negative for any known signatures of chemical weapons;

Blood samples collected by the United Nations Mission, on 25 September, tested negative for any known signatures of chemical weapons.
Sheik Maqsood, 13 April 2013

In the absence of further information relevant to the incident, the United Nations Mission cannot corroborate the allegation that chemical weapons were used in Sheik Maqsood on 13 April 2013.

The United Nations Mission remains deeply concerned that chemical weapons were used in the ongoing conflict between the parties in the Syrian Arab Republic, which has added yet another dimension to the continued suffering of the Syrian people.

The UN report tends to avoid confirming the results of its investigation to the effect that the rebels were in possession of chemical weapons. This documented fact is not formally acknowledged in the report.

Read the full report here: [United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic](#).

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