

Statement

The OPCW Disproves the Syrian Regime's Allegations About Two Incidents Following Investigation

The OPCW Must Not Waste Further Resources on Any Allegations by the Syrian Regime Which Lacks Any Credibility and is Involved in Crimes Against Humanity



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The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyzes in Syria.

On Wednesday, June 28, 2023, [the Fact-Finding Mission \(FFM\)](#) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) released its report on two incidents which were reported by the Syrian regime's government to the OPCW's Technical Secretariat on October 26, 2017. In its submission to the OPCW, the Syrian regime alleged that regime army personnel stationed in Kharbit Massasneh village in Hama suburbs were targeted using mortar shells loaded with a toxic gas on July 7 and August 4 of 2017.

In this latest report, the FFM, whose mandate includes responsibility for determining whether or not toxic chemicals have been used as a weapon of war in Syria but not assigning culpability in any alleged attacks involving the use of chemical weapons, outlined the findings of their investigations which went on from October 2017, up until the report's release. The report concluded that the analysis of the information acquired, in line with the FFM's mandate, "did not provide reasonable grounds for the FFM to determine that toxic chemicals were used as a weapon in the reported incidents that occurred in Kharbit Massasneh, in Hama Governorate in the Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017."

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) believes that the findings of this report prove, yet again, that the Syrian regime has no shred of credibility, and has already lied dozens of times about the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Working closely with its allies Russia and Iran, the regime is conducting a systematic misinformation campaign to distort the already-established facts about its use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Meanwhile, the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) has conclusively proved the Syrian regime's responsibility for five attacks. On April 8, 2020, the team released its first report confirming that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons in three different incidents in al-Latamena city. On April 12, 2021, the IIT released its second report confirming that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons in its attack on Saraqeb city on February 4, 2018. The third report by the IIT, published on January 27, 2023, concluded that the Syrian regime was responsible for the Douma chemical attack carried out on April 7, 2018. The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) issued statements following the release of the [first](#), [second](#), and [third](#) reports.

In January 2020, SNHR [signed a Principles of Cooperation Agreement with the OPCW's IIT](#) that allowed for sharing data in order to contribute to the team's current and future investigations. SNHR's data is a primary source in all of the IIT's reports, with the group possessing an extensive database on the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The Syrian regime [ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention \(CWC\) in September 2013](#), following threats of use of excessive military force against the regime for its use of chemical weapons in Damascus suburbs governorate on August 21, 2013. As a Member State of the CWC, the Syrian regime is prohibited from using, producing, or stockpiling chemical weapons, and was obliged to destroy its chemical weapons stockpile. Instead, however, the regime used chemical weapons on 184 occasions following its ratification of the CWC as SNHR's database confirms, including the attack on Douma city on April 7, 2018.

SNHR fully supports the OPCW's mandate and work, including its FFM and IIT teams. We reiterate that such investigations are a fundamental part of the process of holding those involved in the use of weapons of mass destruction in Syria to account in order to prosecute them, ensure that they have no impunity, and expose their lies and crimes, holding the states of the world responsible for enforcing their appropriate and rightful punishment according to [Article VIII of the CWC](#). We call on the OPCW to not waste any further resources on any allegations made by the Syrian regime which has lost all credibility and has been involved in multiple crimes against humanity, including the widespread use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people.



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