

Press Releases: Release of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission Report on Investigation Into Chemical Weapons Use in Douma, Syria, on 7 April 2018

Press Statement
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Washington, DC
March 7, 2019

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) released its final report on March 1, 2019, regarding its investigation into chemical weapons use in Douma, Syria, on April 7, 2018. The report concluded that there were reasonable grounds that chlorine was used as a chemical weapon in the attack. The FFM found that the weaponized chlorine was not manufactured at the sites, as alleged by the regime, and that it is possible that the chlorine was released by cylinders that had been dropped from the air, as indicated by their condition and surroundings.

The conclusions in the FFM report support what the United States determined in our assessment of the attack last April – that the regime is responsible for this heinous chemical weapons attack that killed and injured civilians. The Assad regime's use of chlorine as a chemical weapon is a violation of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, to which it is a party, as well as UNSCR 2118.

The United States commends the FFM for its independent and impartial work undertaken in difficult and dangerous circumstances. We also welcome the full implementation of OPCW's mandate to identify perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks in Syria. The victims of this barbaric attack and their families deserve justice and this is an important step in holding those responsible to account.

Further, the United States rejects the efforts of the Assad regime and its supporters – Russia chief among them – to sow disinformation about alleged chemical weapons attacks. We remain deeply concerned about such disinformation. As noted in our own assessment in April 2018, after the CW attack in Douma, the regime falsely accused opposition groups of perpetrating

the chemical weapons attack in Douma; and regime and Russia forces delayed inspectors from entering Douma in an expedited manner with appropriate access consistent with their mandate.

Unfortunately, this is just the latest case where chemical weapons use in Syria has been confirmed by the FFM, an impartial outside investigator. Once again, the United States calls upon the Assad regime to fully cooperate with the OPCW, verifiably destroy its remaining chemical weapons program and completely disclose its activities related to chemical weapons. These are all obligations Syria accepted when it became party to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013, but has failed to honor.

The United States continues to condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances. Those who resort to the use of chemical weapons must be held to account. We call on all responsible nations to help us bring an end to the use of chemical weapons.

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