

Assad Regime Uses Toxic Gas in Arbeen, Rural Damascus

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Press Statement

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We condemn the Assad regime's use of toxic gas in the town of Arbeen, rural Damascus. Earlier today, the medical center in the town received 10 civilians suffering from symptoms of toxic gas exposure, including asphyxiation, violent convulsions, and throwing up. Upon examination of samples, doctors treating victims in the town said it is highly likely that the substance used was chlorine as the symptoms exhibited by the wounded resemble those shown by victims of chlorine gas attacks in Harasta and Mleha last month.

The head of the Joint Mission to Syria of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Sigrid Kaag, revealed yesterday during a briefing to the UN Security Council that there were "discrepancies" in the original declaration of the Assad regime's stockpile, which is being investigated now by the OPCW team in Damascus, according to Reuters.

Similarly, the regime offered earlier to seal off twelve chemical weapons facilities rather than destroy them, which is absolutely unacceptable. This, along with the recent revelations that Assad is maneuvering to keep some of his chemical stockpiles, might prove catastrophic not only for the Syrian people but also for the entire region unless there is immediate and firm action.