Joint Statement on OPCW Report Finding Syrian Regime Responsible for Chemical Weapons Attack in Douma, Syria on April 7, 2018

2023-01-28

The following is a statement from Antony Blinken, Secretary of State, United States of America, James Cleverly, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, United Kingdom, Catherine Colonna, Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, France, and Annalena Baerbock, Federal Foreign Minister, Germany:

Today, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (

OPCW

) released a report that found the Assad regime responsible for the deadly chemical weapons attack on Douma on April 7, 2018. The report refutes the Russian claim that it was an opposition attack.

The report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that, around 19:30 local time on April 7, 2018 at least one Mi-8/17 helicopter of the Syrian Arab Air Force, departing from Dumayr airbase and operating under the control of the Tiger Forces, dropped two yellow cylinders which hit two residential buildings in a central area of the city releasing chlorine killing 43 named individuals and affecting dozens more.

This report marks the ninth instance of chemical weapons use independently attributed to the Assad regime by

UN

and

OPCW

mechanisms.

Our governments condemn in the strongest terms the Syrian regime’s repeated use of these horrific weapons and remain steadfast in our demands that the Assad regime immediately comply with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and relevant

UN

Security Council resolutions. Syria must fully declare and destroy its chemical weapons program and allow the deployment of

OPCW

staff to its country to verify it has done so.

The report also points out that the IIT received credible information, corroborated through multiple sources, that Russian forces were co-located at Dumayr airbase alongside the Tiger Forces. The IIT also obtained information that, at the time of the attack, the airspace over Douma was exclusively controlled by the Syrian Arab Air Force and the Russian Aerospace Defence Forces.

We call on the Russian Federation to stop shielding Syria from accountability for its use of chemical weapons. No amount of disinformation from the Kremlin can hide its hand in abetting the Assad regime. In the aftermath of Syria’s chemical attack on April 7, 2018, Russian military police helped the Syrian regime obstruct

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access to the site of the attack and attempted to sanitize the site. Russian and Syrian troops also staged photographs later disseminated online in an attempt to support its fabricated narratives of this incident.

We commend the independent, unbiased, and expert work of the

OPCW

staff, condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances. We also reaffirm our commitment to hold accountable the perpetrators of all chemical weapons attacks in Syria and beyond.

Overview "Newsroom"

Source : https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/2576820-2576820