

OPCW report into February 2018 Syria chemical weapons attack: Foreign Secretary statement

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News story

The OPCW released its second report on 12 April 2021, investigating and identifying those responsible for chemical weapons use in Syria in February 2018.

From:

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP

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On 12 April 2021, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) released its second report investigating and identifying those responsible for chemical weapons use in Syria. The report concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that the Syrian Arab Air Force carried out a chlorine attack on eastern Saraqib on 4 February 2018. This is yet another example of the Assad regime breaching its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.



The first report from the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team, published on 8 April 2020, found reasonable grounds to believe that in three separate chemical weapons attacks in Ltamenah in March 2017, units from the Syrian Arab Air Force were responsible for using sarin on two occasions, and chlorine on the third.

These two reports complement a large amount of evidence produced by UN-mandated investigations: the OPCW-UN Joint investigative Mechanism previously found the Assad regime to have used chemical weapons against the Syrian people on four other occasions; and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic has found that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons on no fewer than 32 occasions.

Syria has failed to comply with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118, which “decides that the Syrian Arab Republic shall not use, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons”.

The UK urges all states parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, members of the UN Security Council, and other bodies to respond decisively and hold those responsible to account. There can be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The Assad regime has repeatedly used chemical weapons against the Syrian people, showing a callous disregard for human life.

This latest report demonstrates the importance of holding the Assad regime to account at the OPCW for its abhorrent use of chemical weapons. It is an international crime, and can never be justified or allowed to go unchallenged.

Notes to editors:

- The Conference of States Parties (CSP) is the principal plenary body of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), composed of representatives of all 193 states parties
- Normally meeting annually in The Hague, the CSP oversees the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which prohibits the development, possession and use of chemical weapons.
- The first part of the 25th CSP took place between 30 November and 1 December 2020. The second part will be held between 20 and 22 April 2021. France has tabled a decision responding to the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons.

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