

Federal Foreign Office statement on the most recent OPCW report

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02.03.2019 - Press release 

A Federal Foreign Office Spokesperson issued the following statement today (2 March) on the recent report by the Fact-Finding Mission of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons:

Following a thorough investigation, the independent international experts from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have concluded that toxic chemicals were once again deployed as weapons in the massive bombardment of Duma on 7 April 2018. A commission of inquiry set up by the UN (United Nations) Human Rights Council also reached this conclusion.

This incident, in which dozens of women, men and children were killed and hundreds more injured in a cruel and barbaric manner, is unfortunately not an isolated case, but one of a long series of confirmed uses of these internationally prohibited weapons in Syria.

In the coming week we will also appeal once again in the United Nations Security Council for the immediate cessation of all use of chemical weapons, including in Syria. The Assad regime must finally disclose its complete programme of chemical weapons and destroy them under international supervision.

For the Federal Government, it is clear that the use of chemical weapons must lead to consequences for those responsible if such despicable attacks are not to be repeated. For this reason, Germany has worked to ensure that the independent experts of the OPCW are in a position to identify those behind the deployment of these barbaric weapons in Syria. We will continue our efforts in this regard also in the Security Council. This sends an important message from the international community, telling all perpetrators that they will ultimately be identified and called to account for their horrific crimes.

Background information:

The OPCW is investigating reports on the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria with a Fact-Finding Mission (FFM). The OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission has confirmed the use of chemical weapons – chlorine gas, mustard gas and sarin – in Syria in a number of reports.

The United Kingdom, France, the United States, Germany and other countries convened a Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which took place from 26 to 28 June 2018 in The Hague, in response to the repeated deployment of chemical weapons – not only in Syria. There, the States Parties agreed by a large majority that the OPCW with its technical expertise should also investigate information about those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. To this end, the OPCW is currently forming a new Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) which is due to begin its work in the spring.

Keywords

Biological and chemical weapons →