

HRW Says Assad is Still Using Chemical Weapons

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Press Statement

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Following a report by Human Rights Watch concluding Assad used chemical weapons against civilians at least on six occasions in April and May this year, spokesperson of the Syrian Coalition said:

“This is another report among several others by Human Rights Watch and other international agencies, including the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria (COI), that show Assad is still using chemical weapons in contravention of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and UN Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015).

“The OPCW Fact Finding Mission also concluded in September 2014 that chlorine was used in Syria. However, the mission was not mandated to assign responsibility. In the absence of an effective preventive mechanism, chemical attacks against the civilian population continued.

“The UN Security Council needs to act on HRW findings, as well as previous ones on chemical attacks, to provide a mechanism of establishing culpability, which would be the first practical step towards stopping Assad’s chemical atrocities in Syria.

“As has been documented by the OPCW Fact Finding Mission, chemical attacks are mostly delivered through barrel bombs, which are dropped from helicopters. Evidence also shows that the vast majority of civilian casualties are caused by the use of indiscriminate barrel bombs filled with explosives and shrapnel. A no-fly zone established in the north of Syria will prevent the use of barrel bombs to deliver chemical attacks, protect civilians from the regime’s aerial bombardment and alleviate the suffering of civilians by facilitating unhindered access of urgently needed humanitarian aid.”