

03 May 2018

United Nations Secretary General

His Excellency, António Guterres,

Excellency,

Regarding a scientific reflection of the Douma incident, our country's scientists at the Academy of Medical Sciences of the Islamic Republic of Iran have scrutinized the many ambiguities connected to the Douma incident, 7th April 2018. A summary of the items discussed is sent to you for your attention in advance of the full and final consideration given to the assessment of this incident by the UN certified centres.

The first reports of the incident were made by two foreign funded Syrian opposition groups; The Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) and The Syrian Civil Defense (White Helmets). In these two reports released on 08th April 2018, which were very similar to each other, a group of over 500 chemical victims in an area controlled by Jaysh al-Islam (Army of Islam) is documented presenting clinical symptoms indicative of exposure to a chemical agent.¹⁻² In the reports, a female victim is recorded as convulsive and having *pinpoint pupils*. Apart from these, another 43 cases of people being dead in their homes showing cyanosis, excessive oral foaming and corneal burns have been reported. These symptoms are more likely consistent with exposure to organophosphate compounds. Subsequently, many news agencies reported these symptoms quoting the two reports,³⁻⁵ and others cited similar symptoms quoting unidentifiable sources including a local news agency; paramedic; and relief forces.⁶

A- Regarding the clinical symptoms

One of the signs mentioned in these reports which is also very important for the diagnosis of nerve gas poisoning are *pinpoint pupils* (extremely constricted pupils). The points below should be observed regarding this matter:

1 – In those Syrian cases, very little photographic evidence exists showing *pinpoint pupils*, and the degree of pupil constriction is much less than expected in cases of nerve gas poisoning.

2 - One of the signs mentioned in more than 500 cases is corneal burns which points to the carrying out of an examination of the victims' eyes. How is it possible that in such a large group only one instance of *pinpoint pupils*, in a severe case, has been observed?

3- Due to our extensive experience during the time of Iraq's chemical warfare, *pinpoint pupil* has no relation to the severity of poisoning and is normally apparent even in mild poisoning and will remain

for one to two days after the exposure. Therefore, in the presumption of a nerve gas attack, there should be many mild cases showing eye symptoms, but no evidence has been reported in this regard. Four photographs showing cases of *pinpoint pupils* related to nerve gas used during Iraq's chemical attacks on Iran (1980-1988) are attached for comparison to those from the Douma incident. In the alleged chemical attack on Douma, there should be many patients like the Iranian victims of nerve gases with clear symptoms of *pinpoint pupils*, but such photographic evidence in the case of Douma patients do not exist. The only photographic evidence released have been of the single questionable case, and these do not show any sign of *pinpoint pupils*. Also attached is a link to a short video of the light reflex of a nerve gas victim (17th March 1984- the first ever nerve gas attack in history *) who was moved from war zone to an infirmary in Ahvaz-Iran. The patient is in relatively good general condition a day after poisoning in comparison to a healthy nurse.

We suggest that the videos and pictures that were used by the three countries for judgment, if classified be handed to OPCW for precise diagnosis.

B- Regarding the biological samples

The U.S. State Department said on Saturday reports of mass casualties from an alleged chemical weapons attack in Douma, "These reports, if confirmed, are horrifying and demand an immediate response by the international community," ⁷. Following this, The U.S. President begins his threatening tweets.⁸ On the 10th of April, the White House spokesperson was asked during a press briefing that "the British government said they're still looking for confirmation that Assad used chemical weapons last weekend. Is the President still looking for confirmation of that?" Her reply was: "I can't get into specific classified information."⁹ The fact that pictures of victims had already been published in the media before the conclusion of the UN report regarding the incident would appear to suggest that these cannot be the classified information referred to in the response of the White House spokesperson. What then is the information that is waiting for confirmation and is still classified? The only information that would clear all ambiguities can be nothing less than the biological samples that only the U.S. appears to possess but refrains from making it public. Eventually on the 12th of April U.S. officials made reference to what they declared as evidence, saying "The U.S. now has blood and urine samples from last Saturday's deadly attack in Syria that have tested positive for chemical weapons . . . suggested the presence of both chlorine gas and an unnamed nerve agent."¹⁰⁻¹¹ Then on the 13th of April CNN claims "the substance used in the attack was a mixture of chlorine, sarin and possibly other chemicals", and on the same day the U.S. ambassador to the UN firmly tells reporters that a chemical weapons attack happen and that the U.S., France and UK have also confirmed it.¹³ Finally, during the early hours of the morning on the following day, the missile attack of those three countries against Syria is carried out based on this "evidence", the most important of which are the biological samples. If we were to accept the authenticity of the sampling claimed by the U.S., there are a few obscurities:

1 - How many samples were there, how many were positive? Were there control samples? Were these samples analyzed in only one laboratory in the United States or analyzed in France and the UK

and other laboratories as well, and were the results compared? Were they internationally recognized laboratories? How the samples were obtained and what was the chain of custody?

2 - Did the samples include those from live patients as well as those who lost their lives?

3 - Have there been any cases in which both chlorine and nerve gas was observed in the same single sample?

4 – Has the method of chlorine poisoning been confirmed from biological samples, when up until now there has not been any scientific source that supports the claim that this can be determined by biological fluid sampling?

I suggest that some of these samples, which have formed the basis of justification for the U.S., France and the UK carrying out a military attack on Syria, be immediately handed to the OPCW and made public to obtain a definitive answer about the test results.

Yours sincerely,

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Resources:

- 1- A Statement about the Chemical Attack on Eastern Ghouta. Syria Civil Defense, 8 April 2018.
<http://syriacivildefense.org/press-release/statement-about-chemical-attack-eastern-ghouta>
- 2- SAMS, Syria Civil Defense Condemn Chemical Attack on Douma. Syrian American Medical Society Foundation, 8 April 2018.
https://www.sams-usa.net/press_release/sams-syria-civil-defense-condemn-chemical-attack-douma
- 3- Dozens Reported Killed in Suspected Syria Chemical Attack. NBC News, 8 April 2018.
<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/state-dept-monitoring-reports-new-chemical-attack-syria-n863691>
- 4- Syrian Government Accused of Using Nerve Agents as Death Toll from Douma chemical Weapons Attack Rises. The Independent, 8 April 2018.
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-chemical-weapons-attack-latest-sarin-douma-eastern-ghouta-nerve-agent-chlorine-russia-us-uk-a8294741.html>
- 5- Dozens killed in apparent chemical weapons attack on civilians in Syria, rescue workers say. Washington Post, 8 April 2018.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/dozens-killed-in-apparent-chemical-weapons-attack-on-civilians-in-eastern-ghouta--rescue-workers/2018/04/08/231bba18-3ac0-11e8-af3c-2123715f78df_story.html
- 6- Dozens Killed in Suspected Chemical Attack on Syrian Rebel Enclave. The Guardian, 8 April 2018.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/08/syrian-government-accused-of-chemical-attacks-on-civilians-in-eastern-ghouta>
- 7- U.S. Says Reports of Chemical Attack in Syria 'horrifying' if confirmed, calls for response. Reuters, 8 April 2018.
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-attack-usa/u-s-says-reports-of-chemical-attack-in-syria-horrifying-if-confirmed-calls-for-response-idUSKBN1HF02N>
- 8- Syrian Government Accused of Using Nerve Agents as Death Toll from Douma chemical Weapons Attack Rises. The Independent, 8 April 2018. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-chemical-weapons-attack-latest-sarin-douma-eastern-ghouta-nerve-agent-chlorine-russia-us-uk-a8294741.html>
- 9- Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders. The White House, 10 April 2018.
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/press-briefing-press-secretary-sarah-sanders-041018>
- 10- U.S. Officials: Blood Samples Show Nerve Agent in Syria Gas Attack. NBC News, 12 April 2018.
<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/mideast/u-s-has-blood-samples-show-nerve-agent-syria-gas-n865431>
- 11- White House: No Final Decision on Syria Action. NBC News, 12 April 2018.
<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/trump-meet-national-security-advisers-syria-action-n865121>
- 12- Official: Biological Samples from Syria Attack Site Test Positive for Chlorine and Nerve Agent. CNN, 13 April 2018.
<https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/13/politics/syria-chemical-attack/index.html>
- 13- Haley Slams Russia over Syria Chemical Attack. CNN, 13 April 2018.
<https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/13/politics/haley-russia-un-syria-meeting/index.html>

* Nerve gases were produced by the Germans during WWII in industrial scale but were never used therefore the first use of at least three types of nerve gases (including Tabun, sarin and cyclosarin) was by Iraq against Iran and Iranian physicians diagnosed and treated these patients for the first time in history.

Annex



Pinpoint pupils in four patients of different chemical attacks by Iraq on Iran (1980-1988)
Notice that around one day after treatment and in complete consciousness, the pinpoint pupils is still visible.



The light reflex of a victim of the first nerve gas attacks on Iran (1984)
On the right, healthy nurse , on the left, nerve gas victim

Video link:

<https://www.aparat.com/v/4r8l9>