

# OPCW Completes Inspection in Syria Beginning to Look More Like Fake News

FOLLOWING THE ALLEGED APRIL 7 chemical attack laid at the feet of Syrian President Bashar al Assad, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW – an independent international organization that works in conjunction with the UN but is governed by its own Executive Council.) sent a team to Syria to investigate the allegations. However, *before* they could conduct their investigation, the combined forces of the United Kingdom, France and the United States launched an April 14 missile attack on Syria.

After the attack, the OPCW team was delayed from initiating their investigation. [Liberal media outlets accused Russia of being behind the delay's](#). Their motive, according to media sources was time needed to clean up the chemicals left behind, the residue of Assad's alleged attack.

This scenario, while interesting and highly provocative, does *not* make much sense, especially when it is realized that it was the Russians who asked for the original investigation launched by the OPCW. On April 10, following the allegations of a chemical attack by Assad and prior to the missile attack by the US, Vassily Nebenzia, [Russian Ambassador to the UN](#) issued a draft resolution at the UN calling for a special mission to investigate the allegations. In the resolution, it is stated that:

*“OPCW experts had conducted a field mission. On 10 April, when his country's draft resolution (Russia's) on the OPCW special mission had been blocked, he (the Russian Ambassador) had been assured that such a document had not been needed,*

*and that the (OPCW) mission would visit and investigate the sites. However, the 13 April aggression (US missile attack) had laid bare that that was not the issue (missiles were launched before the mission commenced)... 'This is how you want international affairs to be conducted,' he asked. 'This (he said) is hooliganism' from major nuclear powers" ([United Nations Official Documents](#)).*

The Russian ambassador was referring to the fact that **an internationally recognized team was already on the ground and in place ready to investigate the alleged chemical attack, but before they could investigate, The United States, France and Great Britain launched their missile attack** thereby impeding the investigation, which *might* have turned up nothing, thereby exonerating Assad, had it been permitted to investigate.

Similarly, the Syrian Ambassador to the UN stated that his country had:

*"...officially invited OPCW to send its fact-finding mission to investigate alleged chemical weapons use. Syria welcomed that visit and stood ready to cooperate fully, and it looked forward to the fact-finding mission conducting its work with transparency and professionalism while relying on evidence. The fact-finding mission would get full access to a liberated Douma" ([United Nations Press Releases – April 10, 2018](#)).*

The US launched the airstrike on April 14, but on April 9th the Russian delegate to the UN was (as stated above) pleading for an independent investigation to be conducted by the OPCW going so far as to assure that Russian soldiers would protect the OPCW team and facilitate the mission:

*"[The Russian envoy](#) called for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) investigative team to conduct a thorough inquiry surrounding the allegations of chemical weapon use, saying these teams could be escorted*

*by Russian and Syrian forces as soon as Tuesday” (April 10).*

Ambassador Nebenzia iterated the fact that:

*“The draft by his country had also reflected the Government of Syria’s invitation to the OPCW fact-finding mission in order to carry out its investigation in line with that organization’s standards” ([UN Press Release](#)).*

[UK Envoy to the UN, Karen Pierce](#), even expressed her interest in pursuing this course of action:

*“I was very interested to hear the Russian offer that OPCW fact-finding mission could visit and would have the [protection](#) of Russian forces.... I believe that this is an offer worth pursuing but it would of course be necessary for the OPCW mission to have complete freedom of action and freedom of [access](#).”*

Most importantly, the OPCW itself announced the fact, that both Syria and Russia had called for an investigation after the allegations that Assad had deployed chemical weapons and before the US led missile strike:

*“Today (April 10), the OPCW Technical Secretariat has requested the Syrian Arab Republic to make the necessary arrangements for such a deployment. This has coincided with a request from the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation to investigate the allegations of chemical weapons use in Douma. The team is preparing to deploy to Syria shortly” ([OPCW Website](#)).*

In short, it is *not* likely that the Russians or the Syrians impeded the *post-missile strike* investigation, they both desired a *pre-missile strike* investigation. It was the France, the UK and US that impeded the investigation by launching a

large scale missile attack hours before it was to be conducted thereby making a pre-strike investigation impossible.

### **Here is a Concrete Example of Fake News “Cherry Picking” to Manufacture a False Story from Partial Truths**

The CBS news report cited in sentence two above is an example of fake news by means of partial truths. Despite a full two page letter drafted by Ahmet Üzümcü, the Director General of the OPCW regarding its investigation, [CBS](#) reported only one sentence from the two page report, the only one that in any way supports their case:

*“The Syrian and the Russian officials who participated in the preparatory meetings in Damascus have informed the FFM (Fact Finding Mission) Team that there were still pending security issues to be worked out before any deployment could take place.”*

Focusing on this one sentence, CBS simultaneously disregarded the remaining letter that negates their illusory case. The [actual entire letter](#), reveals a quite different story. It contains sentences such as the following:

*“On Tuesday 10 April, we (the OPCW) handed to the Syrian delegation a note verbale notifying them of our decision to deploy the FFM as early as possible, as well as the names of the team members for issuance of visas. **On the same day, the Syrian delegation submitted to the Secretariat a note verbale requesting the FFM to be dispatched. We also received a letter from the Ambassador of the Russian Federation supporting the Syrian request. Following these communications which are circulated to the States Parties on 10 April, I received a letter from the Syrian Vice Foreign Minister expressing his government’s support for the deployment of the FFM”** ([OPCW Executive Council](#)).*

And

*“An advance group of three experts from the FFM arrived in Beirut on Thursday (three days before the missile firings), while the remaining six members joined them on Friday. The full team received a security briefing from the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) in Beirut on Friday. On Saturday the team proceeded to Damascus (hours before the missile attack), where they met with officials of the National Authority to work out a plan for the deployment.”*

The fact is that both Russia and Syria were the initiators of the investigation, both favored and asked for it as well as made plans to facilitate it. Three days prior to the missile attack the OPCW team was already in Lebanon (Beirut); on Saturday they were moved to the Syrian capital in Damascus from which they were to proceed to Douma pending final arrangements by the Syrian military. Before final plans could be implemented, US-UK missiles rained over the city and province thereby directly affecting the ability of the OPCW to carry out the Russian-Syrian requested investigation of the alleged chemical site.

If the US, the British, French and Israeli intelligence communities were unaware of the OPCW presence on the ground in Syria and Jordan, it is a failure of gross proportions – the whole reason of the OPCW’s existence is to investigate chemical sites. Or did they know the OPCW team was on the ground undertaking an active investigation, and that is precisely the reason they bombed Syria – that is, to interrupt the investigation? If so, this is tampering of ultimate proportion.

Moreover, the *tweet* employed by CBS to distort the news and chastise Russia and Syria is merely an irrelevant tweet, an unidentrified opinion emanating from the Official Twitter account of the [#UK](#) Delegation of the OCDF, a delegation that

stands in opposition to Russia and Syria. In short, it is a nonsense tweet from an unidentified source from a highly biased UK delegation, a delegation of a nation engaged in war with Syria.

[https://twitter.com/UK OPCW/status/985816921395298305?tfw\\_site=CBSNews&ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cbsnews.com%2Fnews%2Frussia-opcw-syria-alleged-chemical-attack-after-us-strikes-2018-4-16%2F](https://twitter.com/UK OPCW/status/985816921395298305?tfw_site=CBSNews&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cbsnews.com%2Fnews%2Frussia-opcw-syria-alleged-chemical-attack-after-us-strikes-2018-4-16%2F)

### **Future Investigation**

Regardless of the above situation, over two weeks have passed since the missile attacks; finally, OPCW inspectors have entered Douma and taken [samples](#) from the site of the alleged April 7 chemical attack. [According to the OPCW itself](#),

*“...samples collected will be transported to the OPCW Laboratory in Rijswijk and then dispatched for analysis to the OPCW’s designated labs” ([Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Website](#)).*

The findings will have to wait until analysis is completed, but anticipation is growing as the UK, France and US have all made claims that both the Syrians and Russians have “tampered” with the site and [delayed](#) the OPCW investigation.

The OPCW, however, has stated that the [only obstacle](#) to their post-missile investigation of Douma was the UNDOSS. Moreover, experts are highly skeptical about the possibility of removing all chemical evidence from the site. That is, if chemicals were used, evidence will be found. According to Dr. Homer Venters, Director of Programs for Physicians for Human Rights, which investigated Halabja, Iraq, in 1992 (four years after a chemical weapons attack), despite the passage of four years, samples still showed evidence of a chemical attack on Kurdish villages in Iraq. Therefore,

*“It is unlikely”, he said, “that all traces of evidence could be removed” (in Syria or anywhere) [NBC News](#).*

In conclusion, no matter how much the news is twisted, an objective analysis reveals that Russia and Syria did *not* impede the investigation of Douma prior to the firing of missiles by the US cohort; rather, **they asked for and facilitated that investigative mission.**

Given the fact that both Russia and Syria asked for, and fully cooperated with, the UN investigation team prior to the missile attacks seems to negate any further allegations of tampering with the alleged crime scene.

It is more likely that the forces behind the missile attacks, attacks that occurred just *prior to* the planned on-site investigation, are the same forces that delayed efforts *following the missile attacks*. First the Syrians are accused of using chemical weapons and then of delaying tactics employed to buy time necessary for the removal of evidence. Unfortunately, they are being accused by the very forces that *obviously*

(1) ignored the UN plans for an investigation by firing over 100 missiles thereby

(2) obliterating the OPCW investigation, an investigation that would have been much different prior to the firing of missiles than after.

Yes, the whole thing is beginning to look a whole lot more like “fake news”.