



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 27, 2013

Evidence Shows Syrian Rebels Behind Chemical Attack

Reports of a chemical weapon attack in Syria's Aleppo Province last week provoked leaders and politicians, particularly in the West, to advocate more fiercely for the overthrow of the Assad regime, despite the vague details surrounding the attack. Current data seem to suggest, however, that it was not government forces behind the attack, but rebel forces.



AntiWar.com [reports](#):

The attack, intelligence sources appear to agree, [was launched by rebel fighters](#) and not government forces. Since the victims were overwhelmingly the Syrian military, this was not a huge shock, but is important to reiterate.

Likewise, the Assad forces called upon the United Nations to launch an investigation into the attack.

Evidence also indicates that the attack involved lachrymatory agents, not nerve agents, and that the deaths were caused by suffocating on chlorine-based gas injected into the warhead. The significance of this information, as noted by AntiWar.com is that "it is not the sort of weapon Syria has in its arsenal, rather it is a lower-tech solution."

The *Telegraph* [reports](#) that a "trusted and hitherto reliable source who does not wish to be identified" states that the military believes the "locally-manufactured rocket" contained a form of chlorine, which is available as a swimming pool cleaner, dissolved in saline solution. The warhead was fired at a military checkpoint near the entrance of the town of Khan al-Assai, which has been in government control since mid-March. Khan al-Assai, however is an area where much fighting has occurred and certain areas in the region frequently witness changes of control. According to the source, rebel Sunni groups with al-Qaeda sympathies have been attacking the town.

Because the weapon is believed to have contained chlorine, it is not considered a "chemical weapon" based on terms defined by international treaties.

The *Telegraph's* trusted source also asserts that the military believes the rocket to have been fired from somewhere near Al-Bab, a district near Aleppo controlled by Jabhat al-Nusra, a jihadist group linked to al-Qaeda. "Just to the east of Aleppo, there is a rather nondescript factory whose purpose is to produce chlorine," the source said.

Another source, a medic at the local civilian hospital, reportedly witnessed Syrian soldiers helping those who were wounded and dealing with the fatalities at the scene.

Still, regardless of evidence to the contrary, House Intelligence Committee chair Mike Rogers is pointing to the incident as a reason to invade Syria.

"I think that it is abundantly clear that that red line has been crossed," Rogers told CBS on Sunday. "There is mounting evidence that it is probable that the Assad regime has used at least a small quantity of chemical weapons during the course of this conflict."

And President Obama expressed skepticism last week at the notion that it was in fact the rebels who



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launched the attack.

“I am deeply skeptical of any claim that, in fact, it was the opposition that used chemical weapons,” he said. “Everybody who knows the facts of the chemical weapon stockpiles inside Syria as well as the Syrian government’s capabilities I think would question these claims.”

The President also took the opportunity to state that such a move by Assad would be a “game changer.”

Just how these leaders will respond to increasing indications that the attack was in fact launched by the rebels remains to be seen. RT [opines](#), “Although Washington has worked with regional allies to prepare in the event that the Assad regime resorts to the use of chemical weapons, it doesn’t seem it has any contingency plan in the event that the militant opposition, which it is so determined to support, gets its hands on these very real weapons of mass destruction.”

This is not the first time that the rebel forces have committed heinous acts in their war on the Assad regime.

Last October, the rebel forces were responsible for four suicide bombings in Aleppo that killed approximately 40 civilians and wounded many more. The *Daily Mail* explained that the square targeted by the suicide bombings was in a government-controlled district in western Aleppo. According to the *Mail*, “Rebels have resorted to bomb attacks in areas still controlled by President Assad.”

Jebhat al-Nusra, a group linked to al-Qaeda, has taken credit for the bombings.

Additionally, the rebels were also responsible for the massacre of over 90 people in [Houla](#) last year. Immediately following that event, the United States, France, Great Britain, and Germany blamed Assad for the killings and expelled Syria’s ambassadors from their countries in protest. Later reports, however, pointed to evidence that the massacre was in fact carried out by anti-Assad rebel forces.

Photo of victim of chemical attack in Syria receiving treatment: AP Images



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