


Statement by National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice on the UN's Report on Chemical Weapons Use

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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

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We welcome the report made public today by the United Nations mission established by Secretary-General Ban to investigate allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria. The U.N. report adds even more evidence to what we have already concluded – that sarin was used by the Syrian regime on a large scale on August 21 in the suburbs of Damascus. The U.N. team collected a wealth of evidence – including surface-to-surface rockets, dozens of environmental and soil samples, and biomedical samples – that tested positive for signatures of sarin. Although the team's mandate was not to determine who was responsible for these heinous attacks, the technical evidence included in the report and in today's briefing by the U.N. – including the statement that the sarin was high-quality and that a particular type of rocket was used in the attack – reinforces our assessment that these attacks were carried out by the Syrian regime, as only they had the capability to mount an attack in this manner. We deeply appreciate the thorough work of Dr. Ake Sellstrom and his team, who carried out this difficult mission at significant personal risk.

This weekend's talks in Geneva developed a framework that could bring about the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons in a transparent, expeditious, and verifiable manner, which would end the threat these weapons pose to the Syrian people, the region and the world. We will continue working urgently with Russia, the United Kingdom, France, the United Nations, the OPCW, and others to ensure that this process is verifiable, and that there are consequences should the Assad regime not comply with the framework agreed. And, if diplomacy fails, the United States remains prepared to act.