

Statement by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Josh Earnest on Allegations of Chemical Weapons Use in Syria

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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

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The United States is deeply concerned by reports that hundreds of Syrian civilians have been killed in an attack by Syrian government forces, including by the use of chemical weapons, near Damascus earlier today. We are working urgently to gather additional information.

The United States strongly condemns any and all use of chemical weapons. Those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable. Today, we are formally requesting that the United Nations urgently investigate this new allegation. The UN investigative team, which is currently in Syria, is prepared to do so, and that is consistent with its purpose and mandate. For the UN's efforts to be credible, they must have immediate access to witnesses and affected individuals, and have the ability to examine and collect physical evidence without any interference or manipulation from the Syrian government. If the Syrian government has nothing to hide and is truly committed to an impartial and credible investigation of chemical weapons use in Syria, it will facilitate the UN team's immediate and unfettered access to this site. We have also called for urgent consultations in the UN Security Council to discuss these allegations and to call for the Syrian government to provide immediate access to the UN investigative team. The United States urges all Syrian parties including the government and opposition, to provide immediate access to any and all sites of importance to the investigation and to ensure security for the UN investigative team.