

# Ban renews appeal for access to Syria for UN chemical weapons probe

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June 14, 2013



UN Photo/Evan Schneider

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

14 June 2013

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today reiterated the need for an on-the-ground investigation into allegations of reported chemical weapons use in Syria, and called again on Damascus to grant his team long sought access.

“Dr. [Åke] Sellström and his team continue to collect and analyze information and material that have been made available by various Member States, for which I again express my deep appreciation,” the Secretary-General told journalists in New York.

“The validity of any information on the alleged use of chemical weapons cannot be ensured without convincing evidence of the chain-of-custody,” he added.

Mr. Sellström, a Swedish scientist, heads the fact-finding mission, which was launched by the Secretary-General following a formal request from the Syrian Government. The initial focus of the probe will be an incident involving the alleged use of chemical weapons in Kfar Dael region in Khan Al-Asal area in Aleppo governorate.

“Our goal remains a fully independent and impartial inquiry. I have complete faith in the integrity and professionalism of Åke Sellström and his team,” Mr. Ban said.

He also noted that he has read the statement issued by the United States on the question of the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Mr. Ban said he and Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi continue to push for a negotiated transition and to get the parties to the table in Geneva “as soon as possible”. Russian and US officials announced last month their intention to convene an international conference, expected to be held in Geneva, to find a political solution to the Syria crisis.

“All countries involved must uphold their responsibilities to seek a resolution of this tragedy,” Mr. Ban added.

“There is not military solution to this conflict,” the UN chief stressed, “even if both the Government and the opposition, and their supporters think there can be.”

“The military path points directly towards the further disintegration of the country, destabilization of the region and inflammation of religious and communal tensions,” he continued, in reference to the more than 93,000 people killed, 1.5 million displaced and 6.8 million in need of humanitarian assistance.



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29 April 2013

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today renewed his appeal for unfettered access to Syria for the United Nations team probing the alleged use of chemical weapons during the conflict, as he met in New York with the head of the investigation.