

Statement by NSC Spokesperson Ned Price on U.S. Sanctions Designations for Syrian Regime Chemical Weapons Use

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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

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Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced sanctions designations for 18 senior Syrian regime officials in response to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations (UN) Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) reports last year that confirmed the regime's use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in 2014 and 2015 through an independent and neutral expert investigation. This is the first time the United States is sanctioning specific Syrian officials in connection with Syria's violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and UN Security Council Resolution 2118.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons. The Asad regime's barbaric continued attacks demonstrate its willingness to defy basic standards of human decency, its international obligations, and longstanding global norms. Syria agreed to join the Chemical Weapons Convention after its horrifying sarin chemical attack on Syrian civilians in the Ghouta area of Damascus on August 21, 2013, which killed more than a thousand people, many of them children. The United States worked closely with partners after that attack to remove and destroy the Syrian government's declared chemical weapons program – an unprecedented operation to eliminate a dangerous threat to innocent civilians in Syria and the international community.

The United States remains committed to working with our international partners to use all appropriate diplomatic mechanisms to hold the Syrian regime accountable for its abhorrent use of chemical weapons. We strongly urge every UN member state and parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, including Russia, to support efforts to enforce accountability through the UN Security Council and using domestic law. The international community must make clear that chemical weapons use is unacceptable and violators will face significant consequences for their actions.