

Russia:

UN Report on Chlorine Gas Attack in Syria Inconclusive

DAMASCUS (Press TV) – Syria and Russia have rejected findings by a UN-led investigation that claims Damascus used chlorine gas in two attacks in 2014 and 2015.

“These conclusions lack any physical evidence, whether by samples or attested medical reports that chlorine was used,” said Syrian Ambassador Bashar al-Ja’afari after a closed-door UN Security Council meeting over the report.

The report was “totally based on witnesses presented by terrorist armed groups,” he added.

Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin also stated that he had “very serious questions” over the investigation’s findings and suggested the panel should gather more information.

“There are a number of questions which have to be clarified before we accept all the findings of the report,” he said.

The investigation was carried out by the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the UN and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), claiming that

Syrian forces had used chlorine in two attacks against terrorists, once in 2014 and once in 2015.

Following the UNSC meeting, the UK and France called for sanctions against the Syrian government, but Churkin stressed, “There is nobody to sanction in the report... It contains no names, no specifics, no fingerprints.”

“Clearly there is a smoking gun. We know that chlorine was most likely used, but there are no fingerprints on the gun,” he added.

Damascus surrendered its stock-

piles of chemical weapons to the OPCW-UN joint mission following an attack outside the Syrian capital two years ago.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimates that over 400,000 people have been killed in the conflict in Syria. The UN has stopped its official casualty count in Syria, citing its inability to verify the figures it receives from various sources.

Zionist Tanks Enter Gaza, Fire Live Rounds at Palestinian Farmers



Zionist troops stand by a tank near the Gaza Strip, May 4, 2016.

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – Palestinian sources say several Zionist battle tanks, escorting bulldozers, have entered the central part of the besieged Gaza Strip, and fired a number of shots at Palestin-

ians gathering to stop the ravaging of farms.

The sources, speaking anonymously, said four tanks and two armored bulldozers belonging to the Zionist regime advanced more

than 150 meters into farming lands east of the Bureij refugee camp on Wednesday morning, and bulldozed them while unmanned aerial vehicles flew overhead, the International Middle East Media Center reported.

They added that the soldiers also fired many live rounds to keep Palestinian farmers out of their own lands during the invasion.

The Zionist regime launched its latest war on the Gaza Strip in early July 2014. The 50-day military aggression, which ended on August 26, 2014, killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians, including 577 children. Over 11,100 others — including 3,374 children, 2,088 women and 410 elderly people — were also wounded in the war.

The occupying regime continues to carry out attacks on the Pales-

tinian enclave from time to time.

Zionist troops target Palestinian lands in the northern and eastern parts of the blockaded Palestinian coastal sliver on a rather regular basis, preventing farmers from working on their own lands.

The Zionist regime’s fighter jets also frequently bomb the Gaza Strip. The Zionist regime’s military also uses drones over the impoverished terrain either to monitor and photograph Palestinian military units in the blockaded coastal enclave, or launch aerial attacks against targets.

The Gaza Strip has been under a Zionist siege since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standards of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

Continued Savagery

ISIL Sews Iraqis’ Mouths in Mosul

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Local sources in Nineveh province disclosed on Wednesday that the ISIL has put stitches on the mouths of four civilians in the city of Mosul after they discussed the Iraqi army’s recent victories.

“The ISIL has punished 4 citizens of al-Tayran region in Mosul city after they spoke of the Iraqi army’s victories in recent months and said the government troops’ capture of Mosul is imminent,” the Arabic-language media quoted an unnamed local source as saying on Wednesday.

The source said that the ISIL arrested the Iraqi citizens after the terrorist groups’ informants said that four civilians have been talking about the liberation of al-Qayyara region.

“The punishment was exercised after a Fatwa was issued by the Saudi judge who has just arrived in ISIL territories,” he added.

On Monday, the ISIL terrorist group executed several civilians in a new brutal method after charging them with spying for the government in the city of Mosul in Nineveh province.

“Six civilians were put between two trucks with their hands tied up to them; then the trucks moved in opposite directions as ISIL terrorists poured oil on the six and lit them up,” the Arabic-language media quoted a local source as saying.

The Mosul citizens were burned and maimed before the eyes of other people in a square near Hamam al-Alil square in Mosul city on Monday.

Takfiri ISIL terrorists have also reportedly executed more than a dozen people in Iraq’s northern province of Kirkuk on charges of facilitating the escape of civilian families from an area under the extremists’ control.



This file photo shows Takfiri ISIL terrorists in an undisclosed location in Iraq.

A provincial security source, requesting anonymity, told Arabic-language al-Sumaria television network on Tuesday evening that ISIL terrorists decapitated 13 people in the Riyadh district of the town of Hawijah, located about 282 kilometers (175 miles) north of the capital, Baghdad.

The executions came over the allegation that the victims had helped local residents flee to other areas in the province or the neighboring Salahuddin Province.

eastern village of Qaa, killing five people and injuring almost 30 others. There has been no claim of responsibility for the deadly bombings, but security officials believe Takfiri ISIL terrorists were behind the attacks.

Lebanon is suffering from the spillover of militancy in neighboring Syria. Terrorists have been active on the Lebanese areas situated close to the Syrian border.

Hezbollah fighters have been assisting Syrian army forces in-

side Syria and have also fended off several terrorist attacks inside Lebanon.

Since March 2011, Syria has been gripped by deadly militancy it blames on some Western states and their regional allies.

The Takfiri terrorists operating in the Middle Eastern state have suffered major setbacks over the past few months as the Syrian army, backed by allied fighters, has managed to liberate a number of areas.

Saudi...

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expected to rise to more than \$31 billion this year.

According to Bloomberg, the bond issue is draining funds from the system, reflected in interbank rates that are their highest since 2009.

The country is reportedly expected to raise more than \$10 billion from its first international bond sale in October. That may improve things for a short time but the long-term effect is likely to come down heavily on the country’s finances.

Saudi Arabia “faces an economic time bomb which, if not defused, will have severe and possibly irreversible effects both nationally and internationally,” the Times magazine wrote last December.

Germans...

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“Companies are afraid of U.S. retaliation,” he added.

Many Western financial institutions are hesitant about engaging with the Iranian market for fear of facing U.S. fines, Wolf said. That reticence complicates payments.

“Even though there is a positive influence from all the events since last year, the international money transfer system is not officially open yet,” said Ashkan Pirayesh, an Iranian-German with German firm Richter Lighting Technologies GmbH, who participated in a German business delegation to Iran last September. Pirayesh said Richter is in the process of building a local office in Tehran but was not yet exporting to Iran.

Despite the removal of many nuclear-related sanctions imposed by U.S., the European Union and United Nations, other U.S. sanctions on Iran persist. The U.S. still blocks loans to the country by international banks with ties to the U.S., and consequently Iran’s access to global markets.

“Monetary transactions with Iran have been severely penalized by the U.S.,” said Ludovic Subran, chief economist at Euler Hermes Group, a German trade-insurance provider backed by Allianz SE. “Everyone is waiting for the Americans to take the first step.”

Nevertheless, the payment situation has eased since last year, experts say. At that time, German firms active in Iran had to route payments through indirect channels such as the United Arab Emirates or Turkey.

Now German companies have a few more options, said Amir Alizadeh, deputy managing director at the Tehran-based German-Iranian Chamber of Commerce.

Hamburg-based European-Iranian Trade Bank AG, which until January had been blocked by sanctions, is back in business and a conduit for German firms to receive payments, Alizadeh said. Some smaller banks with limited ties to the U.S. have also begun working with Iran, he said. The trade bank could not be reached for comment.

The German government in June settled a longstanding debt dispute with the Iranian government, handled through Euler Hermes, which reopened export-credit guarantees for companies that want to trade with Iran. This could pave the way for more German firms to establish business ties in coming months, Mr. Alizadeh said.

Some deals have taken time to conclude. Siemens in May signed agreements with Iran to modernize its energy infrastructure, including providing Iran with the technological know-how to build some gas turbines. Siemens also aims to develop Iran’s wind-power capabilities and its railway sector.

A spokesperson for Siemens said the company’s portfolio in Iran was “precisely aligned” to help the country achieve plans to increase steel and cement production, export cars and become a gas-and-electricity hub.

Siemens declined to elaborate on how it would obtain payments from Iran.

Beyond the challenges of payment, obstacles remain for German and other western firms pursuing opportunities in Iran, according to experts.

“Nevertheless, Iran is going to be an interesting market in the long term, especially for German exporters,” Euler Hermes’s Mr. Subran said. “In the best case, German exporters could double their exports in the coming years.”

Pakistan...

(Continued From Page 2)

Iranian gas to Pakistan is their biggest bilateral project which has yet to see the light of day.

The joint project was launched in 2010 and includes construction of 1,900 kilometers (over 1,100 miles) of pipeline from Iran to Pakistan.

Iran has completed its part of the gas pipeline with a total investment of above \$2 billion, but Pakistan has yet to do its own, having already fallen behind the schedule to take delivery of gas in 2014.

Islamabad has dragged its feet under pressure from the US which is supporting a rival project to pump gas from Turkmenistan and urging Pakistan to consider other options.

The Iranian pipeline route is about 700 kilometers shorter, while the gas pipeline from Turkmenistan has to pass through Afghanistan in the areas ridden with militancy.

Roadside Bomb Kills 1, Wounds 11 in Lebanon

BEIRUT (Press TV) – At least one person has been killed and 11 others, including a child, have sustained injuries in a bomb explosion on a road in Lebanon’s eastern Bekaa Valley.

The head of the Lebanese Red Cross, George Kettaneh, said the casualties came after the bombing hit near the city of Zahle, the capital of Bekaa province, on Wednesday.

Local media reported that the victim of the explosion was a

woman.

Meanwhile, an unnamed security source told Lebanon’s Daily Star that the explosive device was planted on the Ksara-Saadnayel road close to Zahle’s southern entrance. The source also added that the blast did not appear to target any political figure.

No individual or group has claimed responsibility for the bombing.

Back in June, eight bombers set off their explosives in the north-