

Eliot Higgins' fight for the prerogative of interpretation



of the events leading up to a possible world war

Today Eliot Higgins tweeted:

 **Eliot Higgins**  @EliotHiggins Folgen 

Thread - If we take the Russian claims about the Douma chemical attack at face value it means the following -

22:55 - 15. Apr. 2018

168 Retweets 153 „Gefällt mir“-Angaben



10 168 153

 **Eliot Higgins**  @EliotHiggins · 3 Std. 

1 - Within a couple of hours of the attack a building had been filled with dead bodies, including babies, showing signs of chlorine exposure to fake the impact site.

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 **Eliot Higgins**  @EliotHiggins · 3 Std. 

2 - After that, two chlorine cylinders had been placed inside buildings, including one with modifications to make it look like chlorine cylinders used in previously documented chlorine attacks.

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 **Eliot Higgins**  @EliotHiggins · 3 Std. 

3 - The rooms they were placed in were damaged to make it look like the chlorine cylinders had penetrated a ceiling.

4 13 31

 **Eliot Higgins**  @EliotHiggins · 3 Std. 

4 - One of these cylinders was placed on top of the building full of corpses, the other cylinder wasn't, for whatever reason.

3 12 31

 **Eliot Higgins**  @EliotHiggins · 3 Std. 

5 - Contemporary accounts from locals, doctors, and activists shared through social media and platforms like WhatsApp shortly after the attack were all faked or lies.

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 **Eliot Higgins**  @EliotHiggins · 3 Std. 

6 - Multiple people interviewed after the event describing the attack, by different journalists in different locations gave consistent stories, suggesting some form of collaboration between them.

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 **Eliot Higgins**  @EliotHiggins · 3 Std. 

7 - The two Hip helicopters spotted leaving Dumayr airbase towards Douma 30 minutes before the attack, and spotted above Douma moments beforehand were either made up by aircraft spotters and records created as the fake attack was happening, or were just hanging out above Douma.

6 16 40

 **Eliot Higgins**  @EliotHiggins · 3 Std. 

So if anyone has any actual evidence any of the above is the case, then please share it with the world.

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He suggests that no other interpretation of the events is possible. Nevertheless, he – as always – neglects a lot of essential questions e.g. regarding the context of that war, the motif and so on. He in a highly likely british manner blames Assad, Russia, the usual suspects and so on ...

Higgins argument 1 – not enough time:



There were several airstrikes that day. First allegations about chemical attacks were published at about 4:30pm. Only 2 images of alleged victims of the first CW attack exists. The image shows 2 children. One of it has a respirator.



The CW allegation came right at the time when the White Helmets posted videos of their rescue efforts in dense dust.



Breathing problems and red eyes might be common in this situation. At the same time "Said Rajeh (pseudonym), a member of the civil defense civil defense crews, told the VDC" that he smelled chlorine. No further prove of a chemical attack can be found so far.

Later that day another anonym source and the head of the SAMS hospital (probably living in Turkey at that time) reported another chemical attack in Douma but at 7:30pm and in a different place. It is unclear if the same anonym source shared his information with the VDC and Dr. Kuttoub. If so then only one anonym source spread the news about symptoms of organophosphates.

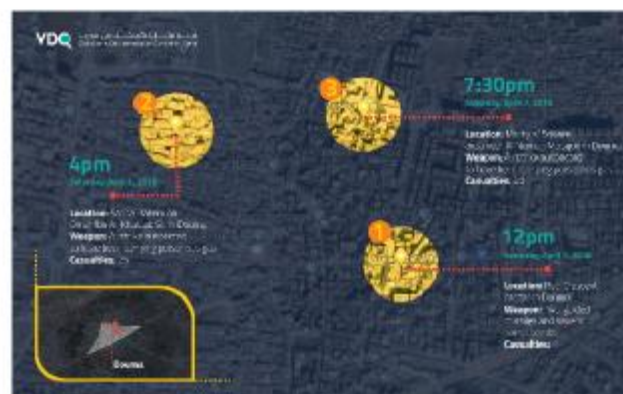
Dr. Katoub tweeted 7:00pm:



And reported the attack to the VDC. The VDC cited him and one anonym doctor:

Dr. Jamal Rafie (pseudonym), told the VDC that the symptoms that he saw on patients "do not resemble chlorine attack symptoms. Chlorine alone cannot induce such symptoms because while it does cause suffocation, it does not affect the nerves. There were symptoms indicative of organic phosphorus compounds in the sarin gas category. But the smell of chlorine was also present in the place."

Dr. Mohammed Kuttoub from the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) told the VDC that his colleagues in Eastern Ghouta saw symptoms on people that include: "pinpoint pupils, slow heartbeat, slow breathing, heavy foaming from the mouth and nose, and the burning of the cornea in some cases."



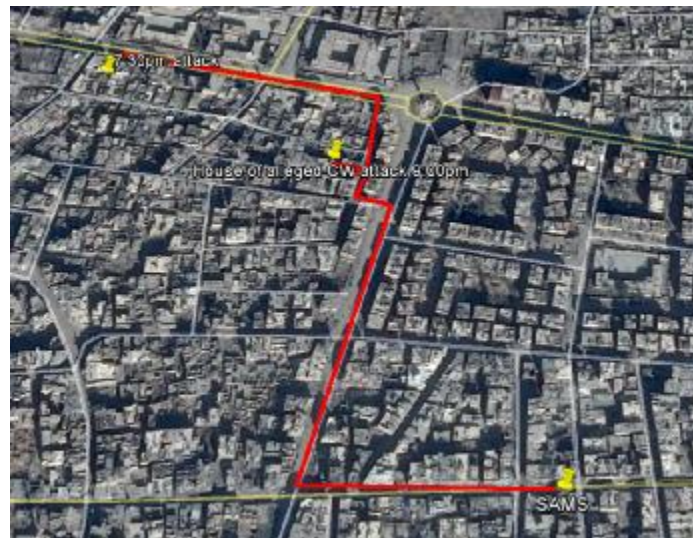
This attack maybe turned out to be not a chemical attack and wasn't reported at any later time.

It seems to be likely that the 7:30pm attack caused a fire in a basement and numerous choking victims as later reported by two members of the medical staff at the SAMS hospital.



The still living victims were moved to the SAMS hospital where the medical team saw no symptoms of a chemical attack.

If – hypothetically – the dead bodies from that basement and the surrounding area were moved to an empty house (that later became the scene of the alleged chemical attack) then 2 hours were plenty of time to move the bodies.



Any earlier decision to fake an organophosphates attack would have given more time for preparations but there are reasons to believe that – hypothetically – everything was arranged in a hurry.

The first images from inside the house were published at 11:09pm shortly followed by Dr. Katoub (SAMS, source of VDC) at 11:14pm who reported the symptoms of a 7:30pm attack to the VDC and now reports a 3rd attack and victims in a basement.



A few minutes later at 11:26pm the Chicago based Dr. Zaher Sahloul tweeted the image. The White Helmets published the same images more that half an hour later.



Note: No victim was found in the basement of the allegedly attacked house.

Note: 7 minutes after Dr. Katoub (head of SAMS) published the images of the alleged victims the SAMS hospital tweeted a final tweet addressed to the US, UK, HRW and the Syrian opposition saying:



The Douma Medical Center is the SAMS hospital in Eastern Ghouta. As proven by the videos taken inside the hospital showing the “decontamination of victims of the chemical attack” the hospital was neither damaged nor out of duty. So, either the videos were shot earlier, or the hospital was cleared right before the first alleged victims possibly arrived.

If someone planned a fake “decontamination” then this move was about to clear the scene for the show. Indeed, this is exactly what the images suggest.



Thomas Binder
@Thomas_Binder

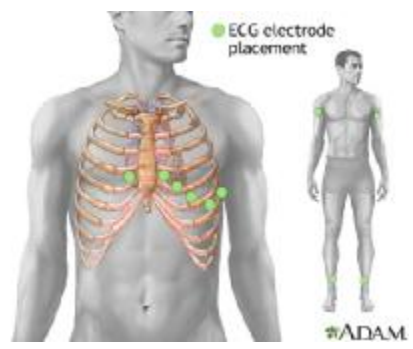
As a cardiologist I can say that these ECG electrodes are completely wrong positioned. They would not get any signal. This picture is faked!
@VanessaBeeley @EvaKBartlett

Original English description

01:22 - 14 Apr. 2018

5,577 Retweets 8,940 „Getit mit“-Angaben

348 8.8 Tsd. 8.9 Tsd. F1



Higgins argument 2 – a problem to place the chlorine cylinder



The problem doesn't exist.

In the night of the alleged attack a team of White Helmets, fighters and photographers stormed into that building without any protection.

They acted like being the first at the scene documenting the horror. Only one White Helmet had a gas mask but no gloves. He is the only one who was pictured by this team e.g. with a dead baby.

The unprotected photographer was also seen at the scene when the dead bodies were removed from that building. He shows no signs of some intoxication.



The White Helmet without gloves holding a baby the after the photo was replaced on top of the pile of bodies. This photo quickly was used for the White Helmets propaganda.

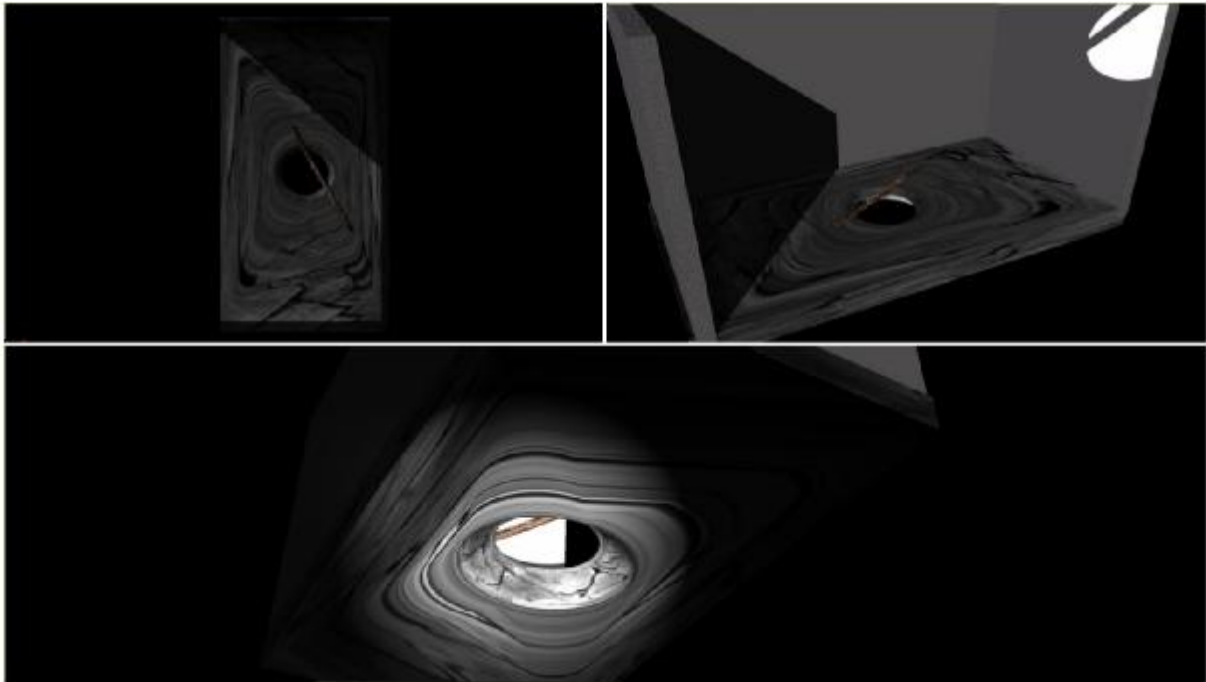


The most crucial moment of that nightly visit is the moment the team hurried up to the 3rd floor of the building. There the camera pans up to the ceiling and shows a hole in reinforced concrete roof to “document” the entry of some weapon.

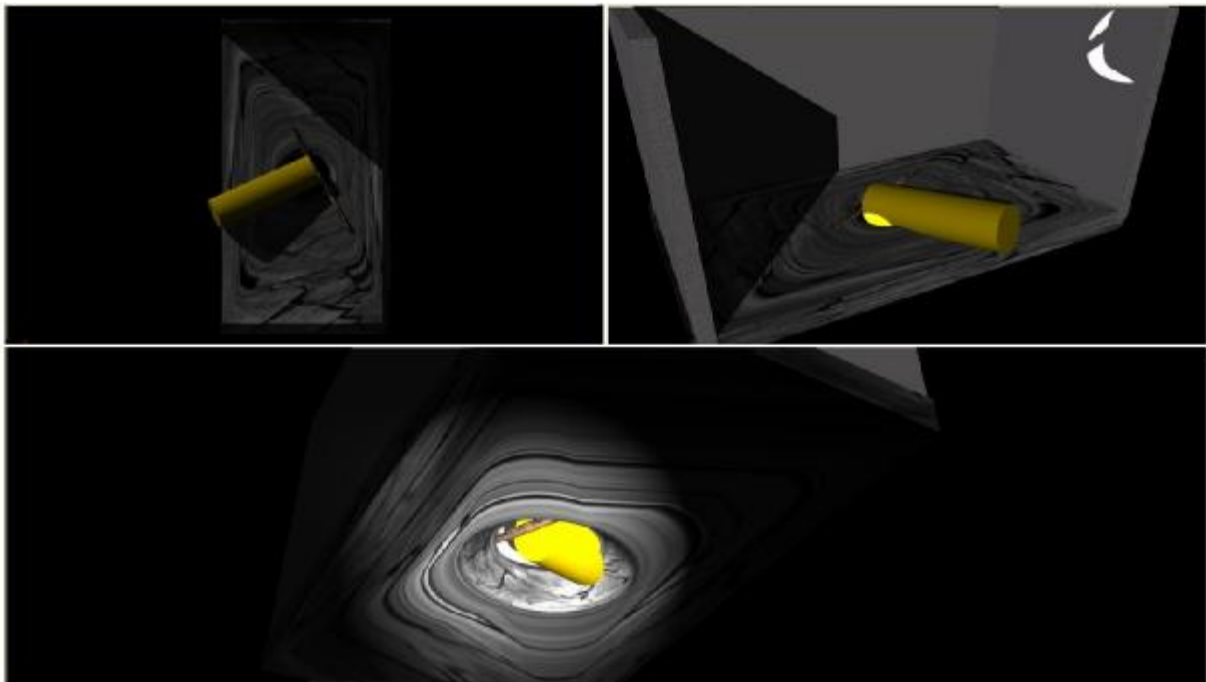


In fact, the hole doesn't look like max. 2 hours old. The crucial point is, that no yellow gas cylinder is blocking the sight onto the white side of the balcony above (illuminated white by the spot light mounted on the camera).

3D model of the scene without a gas cylinder:



3D model of the scene with a gas cylinder:



The bodies were removed the next morning ~11:00am on April 8.

The Russian inspection arrived at about 3:00pm April 9 at the scene and found – according to their statement – nothing that proves a chemical attack.

The statement of the Russian inspection was published on April 10 in the morning.

In the evening of April 10 at 9:06pm the White Helmets published a video shot at 7:02pm the same day to provide the evidence for a yellow chlorine cylinder that allegedly was dropped by a helicopter

and damaged the roof of the house. The major problem with this video is that the video taken at night from below shows no yellow cylinder in the very same hole.

The White Helmets hat retweeted
The White Helmets @SyriaCivilDef · 10. Apr.
Important: video from 9 April, 7:02 pm showing presence of chemical gas canister in Douma. Same location as video of casualties. Also same location that Russia visited reporting 'no sign of chemical weapons'.

44,3 Tsd. Aufrufe 0:09 / 0:38

93 736 564

1523383611 Timestamp to Human date

GMT: Tuesday, 10. April 2018 18:06:51

`ip" href="https://twitter.com/SyriaCivilDef/status/988768286133386800" data-conversation-id="983788264133806038" data-original-title-label-part="last" data-time="1523383611" data-time-est="1523383613900" data-long-form="true">18. Apr. />span`

But there is more to say about the timeline. About one hour before the Russian inspection arrived at the house Eliot Higgins tweeted a screenshot of a video that also shows the yellow cylinder in that hole. Shortly afterwards he deleted that tweet allegedly for the security of the provider.

Eliot Higgins @EliotHiggins
Despite claims to the contrary, we do have images of the munitions used in the Douma chemical attack, and they look just like the same modified yellow gas cylinders dropped from Syrian air force helicopters in previous attacks.

04:00 · 9. Apr. 2018

350 Retweets 208 „Gefällt mir“-Angaben

Eliot Higgins @EliotHiggins
I see the usual suspects have got to the point where they realise they can't deny there was a chemical attack and they can't claim the victims are actors, so now they're using the old "they were kidnap victims killed by Al Qaeda to fake the chemical attack" fairy tale

04:11 · 9. Apr. 2018

130 Retweets 236 „Gefällt mir“-Angaben

Eliot Higgins @EliotHiggins · 9. Apr.
"You see, the rebels copied the modifications on the chlorine cylinders used by the Syrian air force, planted them in the building, smashed through the roof to make it look like it had been dropped, killed everyone, then got everyone else to cover it up"

1523272753 Timestamp to Human date

GMT: Monday, 9. April 2018 11:19:13

`ip" href="https://twitter.com/EliotHiggins/status/988768286133386800" data-conversation-id="983788264133806038" data-original-title-label-part="last" data-time="1523272753" data-time-est="1523272753" data-long-form="true">18. Apr. />span`

The screenshot proves that the cylinder either was moved between the Higgins screenshot and the later White Helmet video or the White Helmets video shows an entirely different cylinder.



The later published White Helmet cylinder:



The video (screenshot deleted by Higgins) appears to be shot between 12:00 and 13:00 either the same day on April 9 or at any other day before.



However, not just the cylinder was moved but also the metal lattice in the foreground. Some tools disappeared, and a red curtain wasn't visible before. So, the question is why there was no cylinder visible in the night of the incident and why the Russian inspection didn't find it.

Furthermore, a 70kg (when filled) steel cylinder dropped from a reasonable height that punched a circular hole (at 160mph or more) into the reinforced concrete wouldn't bounce back to land on the roof just balanced on a bowed metal stick without visible deformation. Note, the same force that acted on the concrete acted also on the cylinder.

Higgins argument 3 – the rooms were damaged



Eliot Higgins @EliotHiggins · 3 Std.

3 - The rooms they were placed in were damaged to make it look like the chlorine cylinders had penetrated a ceiling.



No, certainly not. Since the physics suggest that the hole was punched by a different projectile and the damage looks old it is “highly likely” that the house was chosen because of that hole.

A second video linked by Higgins shows questionable physics too. In that video taken at an unknown location a yellow cylinder allegedly penetrated the ceiling, bounced and landed on a bed. This cylinder lacks any deformation too and even the valve (penetrating first, hitting the ground first) is intact.



All forces would act on the valve first:



Note that the carpet is on top of the fins while some rubble is on top of the carpet. This suggests that the yellow cylinder was placed on the bed and some rubble was thrown on it afterwards.



The commentator of this obviously staged chemical attack even mentions the greenish color of the bed as prove for the chemical that ran over the bed.



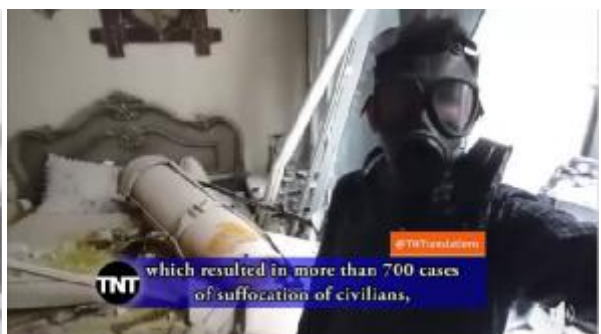
Here on this bedding is a yellow substance,



of substances from this rocket containing chemical substances,



that targeted the city of Duma yesterday, the seventh day of April, 2018,



which resulted in more than 700 cases of suffocation of civilians,

It isn't clear how a yellow greenish gas can color fabric and wood in a greenish-yellow tint. The best explanation is a selective color-correction using professional video editing software.

However, a second video taken in the same room shows a very different color:



Higgins argument 4 – why two different locations


Eliot Higgins @EliotHiggins · 3 Std.
 4 - One of these cylinders was placed on top of the building full of corpses, the other cylinder wasn't, for whatever reason.

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The reason seems to be obvious: to provide the proper evidence requested by Higgins, the US State department, the media and millions of people. The green-bed video was shot by a young activist who fights against the alleged chemical weapons use. He might be the right one to ask this question. Why, especially during the last day of jihadist power?




يالا أبو صلاح @1BatalAbuSalah

يشاهد صاروخ يحمل مواد كيميائية لم يتفجر لكنه يطلق الغازات الكيميائية حتى اللحظة. الصاروخ سقط داخل أحد منازل المدنيين في مدينة إدلب يوم أمس حيث وقع حتى اللحظة لكثير من ضحية مدنية بالكيموي، كما سقط العشرات من الشهداء جراء قصف المدينة بشتى أنواع الاسلحة بالبلد. يصف إدلب بالكيموي.

2:21 PM - Apr 6, 2018
 107 262 people are talking about this


يالا أبو صلاح @1BatalAbuSalah · 2. Feb
 The Assad regime is using chlorine gas against civilians in eastern Damascus. Today the city of Douma was hit by three rockets filled with chlorine gas. Please take a selfie covering your mouth, stand in solidarity with the victims of this attack. Use the hashtag #DoumaSuffocating

Original (English) Übersetzen



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Higgins argument 5 – all the accounts must be right



The danger / fear of a future chemical attack was around since the Khan Sheikhou incident.

An article written in March "Four days to declare a Cold War" by Thierry Meyssan has this to say:



Although it has the fourth largest army in the world, the United Kingdom is unable to defy Russia without the support of allies. It therefore has to invent a casus belli to make its partners react and lead them to stand beside it.

The British government and certain of its allies, including US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, have attempted to launch a Cold War against Russia.

Their plan was to fabricate an attack against an ex-double agent in Salisbury and at the same time a chemical attack against the « moderate rebels » in the Ghouta. The conspirators' intention was to profit from the efforts of Syria to liberate the suburbs of its capital city and the disorganisation of Russia on the occasion of its Presidential election. Had these manipulations worked, the United Kingdom would have pushed the USA to bomb Damascus, including the Presidential palace, and demand that the United Nations General Assembly exclude Russia from the Security Council.

<http://www.voltairenet.org/article200232.html>

Once the news of a chemical attack was spread on a day like this full of airstrikes, dust and death one can easily create a panic that in return creates hundreds of "witnesses". Ake Sellström, former head of the OPCW delegation to Ghouta had this to say:

GW: Do some of these 'mistaken' claims make it more difficult to assess the more likely ones? That they are either 'crying wolf' because they have been asked to, or because chlorine or some kind of obscurant has been released. Does this make it harder to pick out the likely ones?

AS: Yes, and we realised in this investigation that we needed to invest in some science and technology. You can get many symptoms from other items in a war: phosphorous smoke, tear gas, many of these devices in a battlefield scenario will affect the lungs, eyes and give you respiratory problems. Also, in any theatre of war, people will claim that they are intoxicated – we saw it in Palestine, Afghanistan and everywhere else. No-one knows what happened, but we need to be better at differential diagnostics on the intoxication, better medical markers. The people who made the allegations had poor background material to give to the Secretary General;

http://www.cbrneworld.com/uploads/download_magazines/Sellstrom_Feb_2014_v2.pdf

Higgins argument 6 – all the reporters...



The “some form of collaboration” is explained above.

Note that the VDC cited an anonymous doctor while the second source of the VDC – the head of the SAMS hospital – also was told by an anonymous doctor. The SAMS hospital officially was destroyed and out of duty. This is what one witness has to tell:



His account perfectly fits the appearance of the scenario filmed in the allegedly destroyed hospital.

On the other side we observe some journalists who think they can smell a chemical attack days later in refugee camp dozens of miles away.



So, yes, there is some kind of a collaboration between them. Eliot Higgins and Bellingcat are an essential part of it.

Higgins argument 7 – the spotted helicopters



Eliot Higgins @EliotHiggins · 3 Std.

7 - The two Hip helicopters spotted leaving Dumayr airbase towards Douma 30 minutes before the attack, and spotted above Douma moments beforehand were either made up by aircraft spotters and records created as the fake attack was happening, or were just hanging out above Douma.

6 16 40

There is little doubt that even helicopters played a role in the airstrikes that day. The question is, was there a chemical attack or not?

The Indian Times reported already at 10:00am Syrian time two helicopters in the air.

Fresh air strikes hit Syria's rebel Douma: rescuers

AFP | Apr 7, 2016, 12:32 IST

📷 📺 A- A+



Syrians gathered next to a burnt car hit by a shelling by members of the Army of Islam rebel group at Raissa near... Read More

BEIRUT: Fresh air strikes pounded the rebel-held Syrian town of Douma on Saturday, rescuers and a monitor said, after a night of heavy bombing on the opposition holdout outside Damascus.

"The bombing still hasn't stopped. There are three warplanes in the sky and two helicopters," Firas al-Doumi, a rescue worker inside Douma, told AFP on Saturday morning.

Since the spotters are clearly not an independent unbiased source, their account might be motivated especially in the last minutes of jihadist rule.

Dr. Zaher Sakhal @DrZaherSakhal

Latest estimate of deaths from #DoumaGasMassacre is 180 mostly women and children
[youtube.com/watch?v=Ncag20DnZw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ncag20DnZw)

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"At exactly 8:30 pm on Saturday, a helicopter took off from the military airfield of Dikra 427 and headed towards Duma city in the eastern Ghouta, carrying sarin gas, accompanied by three helicopters, and began circling until the hovering in front of it ended. He entered the

10:14 - 8 Apr 2016

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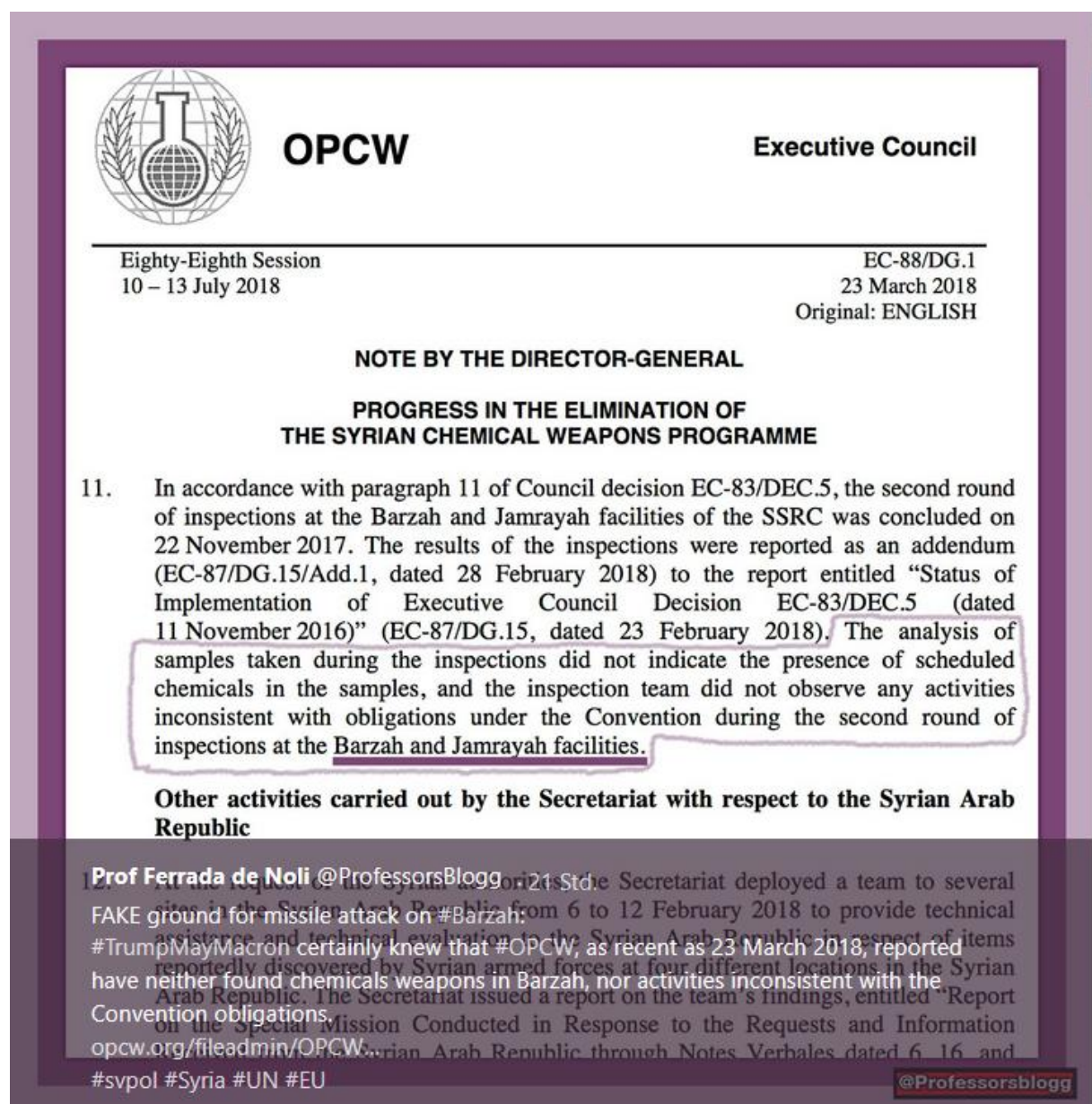
"At exactly 8:30 pm on Saturday, a helicopter took off from the military airfield of Dikra 427 and headed towards Duma city in the eastern Ghouta, carrying sarin gas, accompanied by three helicopters, and began circling until the hovering in front of it ended. He entered the Duma area and carried out his cargo, which was the gas sarin at 9:00 pm on Saturday. "

The next day Dr. Zaher Sahloul, the Chicago based Ex-SAMS doctor, spread the news of the flightplan of the helicopter still stressing that it dropped sarin.

Is he the source – the anonymous doctor – who reported the use of organophosphates? Or is his source the same anonymous doctor who reported the use of organophosphates to the VDC? Who tweeted that the hospital is “out of duty” and why?

However, no secondary contamination was reported. The images from the working hospital do not suggest the use of sarin.

The US bombed alleged sarin production facilities in Damascus, but no one was poisoned. The OPCW visited that facility on March 23, 2018.



The image shows a document from the OPCW Executive Council. At the top left is the OPCW logo, a globe with a chemical flask. To its right is the text "OPCW" and "Executive Council". Below the logo, it says "Eighty-Eighth Session" and "10 – 13 July 2018". On the right side, it says "EC-88/DG.1", "23 March 2018", and "Original: ENGLISH". The main heading is "NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL" followed by "PROGRESS IN THE ELIMINATION OF THE SYRIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAMME". Item 11 states: "In accordance with paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the second round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC was concluded on 22 November 2017. The results of the inspections were reported as an addendum (EC-87/DG.15/Add.1, dated 28 February 2018) to the report entitled “Status of Implementation of Executive Council Decision EC-83/DEC.5 (dated 11 November 2016)” (EC-87/DG.15, dated 23 February 2018). The analysis of samples taken during the inspections did not indicate the presence of scheduled chemicals in the samples, and the inspection team did not observe any activities inconsistent with obligations under the Convention during the second round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities." Below this is the heading "Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic". At the bottom, there is a dark grey box with white text: "Prof Ferrada de Noli @ProfessorsBlogg 21. Std. the Secretariat deployed a team to several sites in the Syrian Arab Republic from 6 to 12 February 2018 to provide technical assistance and technical evaluation to the Syrian Arab Republic in respect of items reportedly discovered by Syrian armed forces at four different locations in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat issued a report on the team's findings, entitled “Report on the Special Mission Conducted in Response to the Requests and Information opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW... Syrian Arab Republic through Notes Verbales dated 6, 16, and 21 February 2018.” #svpol #Syria #UN #EU @Professorsblogg".