# General Assembly 1

*Research Report*

*The Question of:*

*Compliance with the convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their destruction in the Syrian Arab Republic*

*Research Report*

Leiden Model United Nations 2018

*~ fresh ideas, new solutions ~*

# Introduction

The topic of Syria and their compliance with the chemical weapons convention (CWC) is a complicated matter due to the ongoing civil war of the past 7 years. There has been speculation that Syria had chemical weapons previously, and it became publicly evident that there were chemical weapons in Syria in 2012. However, after numerous attacks over the course of the war, the Syrian government has denied all claims that they had used chemical weapons and instead accused the Syrian Opposition Forces, their opposition in the conflict, for the use of chemical weapons. In 2013, a major step was made in trying to solve the issues with chemical weapons as after a major attack took place, the Syrian Arab Republic officially acceded to the CWC and agreed to the destruction of their chemical weapons. However, this step proved ineffective as many years later, an attack shared that there had been undeclared weapons, leaving the issue of chemical weapons in Syria back to where it had been, years before[1].

# The Committee

The general assembly first committee, also referred to as GA1, is a committee concerning disarmament and international security. The UN general assembly first committee deals with issues and international challenges that threaten peace and can disrupt the global community. The UN committee therefore tends to work closely with the disarmament committee in evaluating all methods to bring peace to pressing issues. The committee was the first to create a resolution of the general assemblies concerning: "Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy" passed in 1946 in order to maintain the usage of Atomic Energy, that had recently been discovered and monitor any problems that could be created through it. They continuously work on resolving issues to work towards the greater goal of establishing peace.

The General Assembly committees will join for a plenary session in order to discuss three resolutions, one from each of the general assembly committees that has passed in their own committee. The plenary session will take place on the third day of the conference and will conclude this session of LEMUN for the general assembly committees.

Key Terms

Acceded - To Accede means to agree to a treaty or demand.

Chemical weapon - A chemical weapon is specialised munition that uses chemical formulas to create a weapon intended to kill or injure people. They are classified as Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) due to their devastating impacts[2]. They are classified so due to them being extremely hard to control as well as inhumane. Their placement depends massively on wind and other factors out of human control making it easy for innocent civilians to be harmed or killed as a result.

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[1] Kawashima, Yuta. "Timeline of Syrian Chemical Weapons Activity, 2012-2018." *Arms Control Association*, Arms Control Association, 13 June 2018, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity.

[2] Kawashima, Yuta. "Timeline of Syrian Chemical Weapons Activity, 2012-2018." *Arms Control Association*, Arms Control Association, 13 June 2018, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity.

Regime - A regime is an authoritarian government that generally rules under one leader, a dictator.

CWC - Chemical weapon convection, it is a treaty concerning the usage, producing, stockpiling and developing of chemical weapons that all of the world have signed or acceded to with acceptation to Egypt, South Sudan, Israel and North Korea. The convection went into action on April 29th 1997.

OPCW - Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the organisation themselves began as the body to implement and maintain the CWC. They were founded the same day the CWC went into action, 29 April 1997.

JIM - Joint investigative mechanism, set up by the UN and the OPCW together in 2015 in order to try and establish who was using chemical weapons. It was set up due to the investigations only finding material and not who was responsible.

# General Overview

Chemical weapons in Syria has been an extremely complex matter for decades. Although suspected to have one of the largest stockpiles of chemical weapons in the world, Syria denied owning them. After the civil war broke out, international concern arose on the safety of the citizens of Syria, specifically to do with these chemical weapons. Chemical weapons and their destruction has previously caused havoc and so any avoidance of that is necessary in order to maintain peace in their state. The conflict in Syria, commonly known as the Syrian civil war, has been taking place since March 15th 2011, making it over 7 years since the conflict began.

Syria's chemical weapon program begun in the 1970s. However, before July of 2012, Syria had not publicly stated that they were producing chemical weapons. The destruction of their chemical weapons therefore began immediately after it became public knowledge that Syria had been producing chemical weapons. On September 14th, 2013, Syria engaged in multiple agreements on international levels that called upon the destruction of their stockpiled chemical weapons, as well as acceding to the chemical weapon convention. Therefore, the question placed now is whether or not Syria are complying with the terms they agreed to by acceding the chemical weapon convention along with multiple others.

First, it is necessary to know about the engagements Syria made that resulted in them acceding to destroy their chemical weapons. In July of 2012 the Syrian Arab Republic stated that these types of warfare, chemical (as well as biological) warfare, would not be used unless Syria was forced into a place of extreme external aggression. However, later that year, in December, Syria engaged their first act of chemical warfare. The attack was quickly reported by the French government, stating that seven people lost their lives as a result of this attack. Later, in March of 2013 there were alleged chemical weapons used in the suburbs of the two largest cities of Syria, Aleppo and Damascus. The Assad regime, which is the government under the rule of the president Bashar al-Assad, had claimed that the chemical weapons were used by independent Syrian opposition forces[3]. Following this attack, the Assad regime, as the Syrian government, requested for the UN to conduct an investigation to support their claims that opposition forces had used the chemical weapons which resulted in 25 people's deaths. The following day, the United Nations Secretary General announced that there would be an investigation conducted with the help of the World Health

[3] "Syria's Civil War Explained from the Beginning." *Israeli–Palestinian Conflict | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 14 Apr. 2018, www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/syria-civil-war-explained-160505084119966.html.

Organisation (WHO) and OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons). However, over the following weeks, Syrian opposition activists and the Syrian Observatory for Human rights (SOHR) claimed that the Syrian forces had used chemical weapons in multiple other gas attacks. The investigation of the March attacks was then delayed as the UN stated that Syria failed to agree to the scope of the UN inquiry. By the end of April however it was almost certain to the UN and OPCW that the Assad regime had used chemical weapons due to the clear evidence there had been found after the investigation continued against the Assad regime. It was confirmed on June 4th that the Assad regime had used sarin multiple times. On August 14th Assad agreed for a UN inspection into three possible uses of chemical weapons, however the agreement only allowed for discovery of whether chemical weapons were used, not who had used them[4].

One of the most harmful and devastating attacks occurred on the 21st of August 2013 in Ghouta, Syria. The Ghouta chemical attack consisted of two different attacks, one on Eastern Ghouta at around 2:30 am and the other occurring at around 5 am in Western Ghouta. Both attacks used the chemical agent sarin which was sent by rockets and impacted major radiuses outside of the initial hitting point. The results were devastating. Over a 1000 people were affected by the attacks, many of whom were innocent civilians. Immediately after, the UN and the OPCW began an investigation on the attacks. On August the 26th, the secretary of state of the USA stated that there was clear evidence that chemical weapons had been used and then stated that the Assad regime (Syrian government) had attempted to cover-up the attack over the following days. In response to this, the President of Syria, Assad, stated that he saw this statement as "politically motivated". Over the following days, the USA concluded that the Assad regime were responsible for the attacks and debated whether to send military power to Syria following this use of chemical weaponry. A few days after this, the French government released an intelligence assessment stating that sarin gas had been used in the attacks which violated the Geneva protocol of 1925. The attacks were therefore a key cause towards acceding the chemical weapon convention that took place less than a month later, as well as agreeing to the destruction of their chemical weapons. On the 12th of September, the Assad regime sent a letter confirming they would accede to the CWC and following that on the 14th of September a plan was laid out concerning the destruction of their chemical weapons[5].

Over the course of September 2013 to June 2014, the destruction of chemical weapons took place. The agreement was that all chemical weapons were to be declared a week after the agreement was made and following this percentages along the way would be structured to be done by June 2014. Although one deadline was missed, the final deadline was met. The process of shipping to destruction was handled by Syria and monitored by UN and OPCW officials, and as of June 23rd 2014 all chemical weapons had been shipped, and 32% had already been neutralised at that point.

However, since the Ghouta chemical attack countless other chemical attacks have taken place, despite the destruction of their chemical weapons. These chemical attacks use chlorine gas as a method of killing people as confirmed by the OPCW reports conducted on the matter. Chlorine gas has commercial uses and so could not be taken away in the process of destroying chemical weapons despite the harm it can cause. This therefore made the issue even more complex due to it being

[4] Kawashima, Yuta. "Timeline of Syrian Chemical Weapons Activity, 2012-2018." *Arms Control Association*, Arms Control Association, 13 June 2018, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity.

[5] Shaheen, Kareem. "Dozens Killed in Suspected Chemical Attack on Syrian Rebel Enclave." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 8 Apr. 2018, www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/08/syrian-government-accused-of-chemical-attacks-on-civilians-in-eastern-ghouta.

nearly impossible to completely wipe out the use of chlorine by a nation, meaning that bad could always come through the use of it.

Following the previous point of the convention that they had acceded to, the chemical weapon convection (CWC) is a treaty concerning the usage of chemical weapons that all of the world have signed or acceded with acceptation to Egypt, South Sudan, Israel and North Korea. The Syrian Arab Republic themselves have acceded to the treaty as of 2013 as part of the agreement for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. The treaty itself is overseen by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which is the organisational body made to implement and monitor the compliance of the treaty.[6].

Syria acceded to the convention, which meant that they agreed to the terms that the CWC presents. However, since Syria's accession to the CWC, the Assad regime has continued to use chemical weapons, despite the UN and OPCW investigation and the destruction of its declared stockpiles. Countless attacks have taken place over the course of 2013-2018, meaning that Syria has not complied to the terms of the CWC. After the Ghouta attacks, the Assad regime (Syrian government) agreed their stockpiles of chemical weapons were to be destroyed and for international supervision over this matter. Their destruction was to be done by the end of the first half of 2014. All declared category 1 materials (category 1 materials being the most destructive and hurtful materials) and weaponry were destroyed as of August 2014. This marked what should have been the final dealings with chemical weapons in Syria.

However, chemical weaponry attacks continued, and in April of 2017 an attack took place in Khan Shaykhun that showed that there were stockpiles of materials that had not been declared by Syria. The previous chemical attacks that had taken place over the previous years had not shown this, because of the fact that the chemicals that were being used also had commercial purposes, such as chlorine. And so the severity of the chemicals used resulted in the Khan Shaykhun chemical attack resulting in the most devastating outcome since the Ghouta attacks just under four years earlier. The chemical attack involved the use of sarin, a chemical that should have been declared before in 2013 due to it being classified as a highly dangerous chemical that can cause death (classified as a category 1 material). Additionally, sarin breaks the 1925 Geneva protocol and so The Assad regime had broken this protocol in Syria in April of 2017, as they had done years ago in the attacks of 2013 as well. The fact that these weapons hadn't been declared led to more speculation as to whether or not more chemical weapons had been declared or not. This attack however also lead to more speculation as to whether or not the Syrian government (Assad regime) was responsible for the majority of attacks that had not yet had any side held responsible due to the evidence that suggested the attack was initiated by the Syrian government. Although the Syrian government denied all accusations and president Assad had declared that the USA was the one who fabricated this and was working hand in hand with the terrorists, the evidence points towards them. On September 6th, months after the attack, an agency of the UN concluded that the aircraft responsible for dropping the sarin was a Syrian Arab air force aircraft from the Syrian armed forces, who have been a part of the Assad regime since the war outbreak. This was released in a report by the OPCW in October. This report also established that it would have been nearly impossible for any other party in Syria to get their hands on nerve gas as complex as sarin. Most therefore believe that the Syrian government was responsible for this attack despite their denial[7].

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[6] OPCW. "Chemical Weapons Convention." Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW, www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/.

[7] BBC. "Syria War: What We Know about Douma 'Chemical Attack'." *BBC News*, BBC, 16 Apr. 2018, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43697084.

The issues continued further that year, and despite multiple UN security council meetings, no terms were reached due to the vetoes made by Russia due to their siding with the Assad regime over the opposition forces. Chlorine attacks and sarin attacks had both been confirmed by the OPCW throughout 2017 and in to 2018[8].

The entire conflict has reached an international scale too. Many large powerful nations have come out as stating their support to one side of the conflict. With nations such as the USA, France and the UK supporting the Syrian Opposition Forces whereas nations such as the Russian Federation, Iraq and Iran support the Assad regime. The nations in support of the Opposition Forces often conduct investigations to prove that the Assad regime are those who use and develop the chemical weapons as well as providing military support on occasions however in a more limited manner. The USA has even used missiles after the chemical attack on Khan Shaykhun to destroy a warehouse after claiming that that warehouse was the source of the attacks, also providing advisors and degrees of military support when absolutely needed. France has supported Syrian Opposition through use of airstrikes as well as providing arms to Syrian rebels. The UK, has supported through airstrikes but also through supporting other branches of the military through medical equipment as well as communication devices. Both France and the United Kingdom have encouraged more military invasion from the USA, however the success of this encouragement in most cases has been limited.

As for those supporting the Assad regime, the Russian Federation has been involved in the Syrian civil war since 2015, when the Assad regime out reached for help in fighting rebel groups. Russia supported by assisting them with air strikes and have continued to do so, even stating that their intentions were "stabilising the legitimate power in Syria and creating the conditions for political compromise". Iraq and Iran too have provided military support, Iran having provided support and Iraq having allowed Iranian aircrafts to fly in their airspace. Iraq also has been providing diesel fuel to the Syrian government for their military[9].

# Major Parties Involved

**Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) -** the OPCW play a large role during the conflict and its dealings with chemical weapons. As they work closely with the United Nation in looking into many of the occurrences with chemical weapons, they have become a major part of this conflict and trying to take a step towards resolving the matter. They often conduct the investigations involving whether or not chemical weapons were involved due to their knowledge and expertise in the matter. OPCW officials were also present in monitoring the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. The OPCW having created and enforcing the CWC have power to demand investigations and impose certain measures with the assistance of the UN. However, the OPCW have successfully managed to negotiate investigations with Syria, these investigations look into what chemical were used to instigate the attack and they along with the UN hold this information until it's ready to be released.

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[8] Kawashima, Yuta. "Timeline of Syrian Chemical Weapons Activity, 2012-2018." *Arms Control Association*, Arms Control Association, 13 June 2018, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity.

[9] Pearson, Alexander. "What Foreign Powers Want from the Syrian War | DW ." *DW.COM*, DW, 12 Apr. 2018, www.dw.com/en/what-foreign-powers-want-from-the-syrian-war/a-42686306.

**Assad regime -** The Assad Regime are one of the sides that have been fighting during the Syrian civil war. The term Assad regime refers to the governing and authority of Bashar al-Assad, the current President of Syria. The Assad Regime can therefore also be considered the Syrian government when looking at the course of the conflict and the blaming of the opposition forces and of the Syrian government. The Assad Regime have continuously blamed the Opposition forces since the beginning of their existence for all chemical weapon attacks that have taken place. They, as the Syrian government have, denied all accusations of them being involved in using chemical weapons however there has been multiple pieces of evidence since the beginning of the conflict that suggest they have used chemical weapons. Specifically on April 4th, 2017 when sarin was used in an attack, which not only suggested that there had been undeclared stockpiles of chemical weapons, but also due to the fact that there were government aircrafts in the area around the time of the attack. Before this however, they had been accused of many chemical attacks involving chlorine from 2014 to 2016 specifically, but also for many of the chemical attacks that took place in 2013 leading to the acceding to the CWC. For many of these cases however, the Syrian government requested investigations to test what had exactly occurred, but for multiple of these investigations, they had been also accused of attempting to cover up attacks.

**United Nations -** The United Nations have been a part to the conflict since its beginning. The Security Council especially have been a major part of attempting to resolve the conflict in many instances and have been a major ally to the OPCW with attempting to investigate any involvement with chemical weapons and damage done through that. The United Nations also had officials present during monitoring of the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons.

**National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (Commonly known as the Syrian Opposition Forces)** - Established on the 18th of March 2013, just before Chemical attacks took place in the suburbs of Aleppo and Damascus which they had been accused of instigating by the Assad regime. Whether they did, never was disclosed or never found out. However a month later, after two further attacks, the Syrian Opposition Forces accused the Assad Regime and therefore the Syrian government of instigating those attacks. They have been the main point of blame for many of the chemical attacks that have taken place over the course of the conflict by the Assad regime.

**ISIS -** ISIS have not always been the most relevant to the crisis over the more recent years however over the starting years of the crisis ISIS have been blamed twice by JIM for chemical attacks in Syria. In addition, they have been slowly claiming more and more land space in Syria through the crisis. The Assad regime has blamed ISIS multiple times for chemical attacks, however the truth of these claims is unknown. In return, ISIS have blamed the Assad regime.

**Russian Federation -** The Russian involvement in the Syrian civil war began in 2015 in September when the Syrian government requested military aid for fighting against rebel groups. This began with aiding them through air strikes that target the opposition forces in Syria. Russia have since then continued to aid Syria, with their president Putin having stated that their goals in Syria were: "stabilising the legitimate power in Syria and creating the conditions for political compromise".

**United States of America (USA) -** The USA has been involved in attempting to resolve the issue. They have made clear that they have always supported the Syrian Opposition Forces along with the United Kingdom and France and have multiple advisors that are deployed in Syria in attempt to helping the issue. The majority of the perspective comes from history that the USA have had with other nations involved in the issue. The USA have always been against ISIS, a terrorist organisation, they have also not had good relations in the past with Russia, who have supported the Assad regime, additionally many of their allies and them agree that the Assad regime is what is causing

the crisis and so are against him. Military intervention from the United States has been a debated upon topic for several years however any doing so has been highly limited[10]. Currently, president Trump has had little sophisticated involvement in the crisis and so the stance of the USA in this crisis remains on the side of the Syrian Opposition Forces.

**France/United Kingdom** - Both nations have supported the Syrian Opposition Forces along with the USA. France has been responsible for reporting several of the attacks but both nations have been involved in previous investigations as well as support in some cases to the Syrian Opposition Forces.

**Iraq/Iran -** Both nations have been in support of the Assad regime, having extended military support through aircraft and through fuel.

# Timeline of Events[11]

| Date | Event |
|---|---|
| 3 September 1992 | The chemical weapon convention was drafted. |
| 13 January 1993 | The CWC was signed or acceded to by the majority of nations. |
| 29 April 1997 | The CWC treaty enters into force. |
| 15 March 2011 | The Syrian civil war begins. |
| 23 July 2012 | The Syrian Arab Republic publicly states that they have produced chemical weapons. |
| 23 December 2012 | First chemical weapon use in Syria is reported, seven people were killed as a result of this attack. |
| 19 March 2013 | Chemical attacks were reported in the two main cities: Aleppo and Damascus's suburbs. |
| 21 March 2013 | After the Assad regime requested the day before, the UN announced it would conduct an investigation on the use of chemical weapons. |
| 13 April 2013 | The Syrian army (Assad regime) is accused of using chemical weapons by the UN and OPCW. |
| 17 April 2013 | The secretary general of the UN states that Syria has delayed the investigation due to these claims. |
| 21 August 2013 | After continuous claims of chemical weapon use, the Ghouta attacks occur and create devastating results. |
| 25 August 2013 | The Syrian regime announced that the UN inspection team will investigate past chemical attacks. |

[10] Pearson, Alexander. "What Foreign Powers Want from the Syrian War | DW ." *DW.COM*, DW, 12 Apr. 2018, www.dw.com/en/what-foreign-powers-want-from-the-syrian-war/a-42686306.
[11] Kawashima, Yuta. "Timeline of Syrian Chemical Weapons Activity, 2012-2018." *Arms Control Association*, Arms Control Association, 13 June 2018, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity.

| Date | Event |
|---|---|
| 26 August 2013 | Syrian president announces they did not use chemical weapons on August 21st. |
| 12 September 2013 | Syria accedes to the CWC. |
| 27 September 2013 | UN Security Council resolution 2118 passes, the resolution was created as a result of the Ghouta attacks and calls for all of Syria's chemical weapons to be declared and destroyed by mid 2014. |
| 28 September 2013 | Syria agrees to the destruction of their chemical weapons, including to declaring all of their chemical weapons within a week. |
| 6 October 2013 | Destruction of the chemical weapons begins. Syria does this themselves with the monitoring of the UN and the OPCW. |
| 23 June 2014 | All declared chemical weapons have been shipped from Syria for destruction. |
| September 2014 | The OPCW formally states that 96% declared chemical weapons in Syria had been destroyed. |
| 6 March 2015 | UN Security Council resolution 2209 is passed, condemning the attacks, after the OPCW confirmed that countless chlorine attacks had taken place. |
| 7 August 2015 | Resolution 2235 was adopted by the UN SC creating an joint investigative mechanism (JIM) to determine the responsible parties for the chemical attacks in Syria. |
| January 2016 | The OPCW formally states all declared chemical weapons in Syria had been destroyed despite countless attacks having continued. |
| 31 October 2016 | Resolution 2314 is passd, extending the mandate of JIM |
| 4 April 2017 | Chemical attacks took place in Syrian northern Idlib province, also referred to as the Khan Shaykhun chemical attack. The Syrian government was accused of the attacks due to the aircrafts that were in the area at the time. Additionally, the suspected use of sarin in this attack proved that there had been unannounced stockpiles that hadn't been destroyed. |
| 12 April 2017 | Russia vetoed a resolution condemning Syria for the attack 8 days earlier. |
| 26 October 2017 | OPCW-UN investigation finds the Assed regime guilty of using sarin in the 4th of April attack. |
| 1 February 2018 | Chemical attacks continue and the third this year is reported, chlorine gas use is determined. |
| 7 April 2018 | A major chemical attack occurred in another suburb outside of Damascus after multiple chlorine attacks in weeks before. |
| 13 April 2018 | Multiple UN Security Council meetings were held to try to agree on a resolution on Syria. |
| 14 April 2018 | France released a national assessment document concerning the 7th April attack, confirming the use of chemical weapons and suggesting that it had to be the Syrian Armed Forces. |

# Previous attempts to solve the issue

The treaties acceded to by Syria can be considered the main attempts that there have been at monitoring the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons in Syria. This is because the treaties make it clear that it is against the law to do anything towards the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and in addition allow the OPCW in most cases to conduct investigations on misuse. However since acceding to the chemical weapon convection the use of chemical weaponry has not stopped in Syria. Although the government has claimed that they do not use chemical weapons, evidence from specific attacks suggests they have[12], such as on April 4th 2017, where Syrian government aircrafts were said to have been in the area around the time of the attack. Also, due to the fact that chemical attacks that had taken place in April 2017 revealed that stockpiles had been undeclared and used.[13].

In addition, the retaliatory air strikes conducted by the United States have been used in order to try and resolve the issue at hand and have had minor success. A notable return strike was after the Khan Shaykhun attack where the USA fired missiles in the following hours at a warehouse where they claimed the missiles came from. Despite attempting to help, their actions remained useless to the crisis.

The investigations set up didn't work because they didn't determine who had been responsible, they only discovered what had been used and so the joint investigative mechanism, a UN-OPCW group, was created to do so. It was hoped to discover who was behind the attacks however it was unsuccessful as the conclusions were contested.

Other attempts included actions made by the United Nations. These included instances such as the condemning of chemical attacks by UN - security council resolutions specifically to do with chlorine chemical attacks which mainly took course over the years 2014 to 2016 among many other instances outside of these years. Another example of attempts made by the UN was their actions concerning investigations on chemical weapon attacks. Investigations set pressure towards anyone hiding anything, however, they also need declarations, which leaves time for any evidence to be covered-up, which Syria has been accused a few days after the Ghouta attacks. Whether these accusations are true or not has never been determined, however investigations still take place concerning these matters, including a unit dedicated to this purpose. Overall, attempts made to solve this issue have not been as affective as hoped due to the difficulty of ensuring that each of the involved groups, organisations or nations will hold true to their word[14].

# Possible solutions

There are two common methods at looking to solve the issues that are currently occurring in Syria. The method, often endorsed by the United States of America is enforcing sanctions on Syria for not complying to the terms they acceded to in the chemical weapon convention. However, many other

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[12] OPCW. "Chemical Weapons Convention." Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW, www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/.

[13] "UN Report Says Syrian Regime behind Khan Shaykhun Gas Attack." *Discrimination against Muslims Spikes in France*, *England*, TRT World, 28 Oct. 2017, www.trtworld.com/mea/un-report-says-syrian-regime-behind-khan-shaykhun-gas-attack-11700.

[14] Kawashima, Yuta. "Timeline of Syrian Chemical Weapons Activity, 2012-2018." *Arms Control Association*, Arms Control Association, 13 June 2018, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity.

nations believe that enforcing sanctions would be unjust for the refugees due to the continuing crisis. Enforcing sanctions seems to therefore be too harsh during the current situation and so has not been enforced as punishment.

The other method, which tends to be more endorsed by Europe, is the resolving the crisis and using that to stop the use, stockpiling and production of chemical weapons in Syria. Solving the crisis would take major strands as there would no longer be a reason to use chemical weapons.

The way that the side against Europe, namely Russia, Iraq and Iran has supported as a possible solution is simply creating a peace plan that keeps Assad in charge but ends the war. This option has slowly been thinning out however as the crisis continues and seems highly unlikely to ever end up so.

Either of these methods could possibly solve the issue with chemical weapons however, finding methods to enforce these end solutions safely and fairly is the challenge[15]. A possible step that could be taken to help towards reaching one of the end goals could be to urge other nations to not ship chemicals that have been commonly used in chemical weapon attacks in Syria, such as mustard gas or sarin, which have both been key elements in multiple highly deadly attacks, to Syria or any of their allies, these chemicals serve no commercial purposes and serve only to harm and injure as weapons and so have no legitimate purposes commercially. In addition, weapons such as these can also be created and so the products that can be used to create these chemicals should also not be shipped to Syria or any of their allies, in order to ensure that no harmful weapons can still be created.[16].

Furthermore, an important issue to overcome is the issue regarding the health and safety of those going into Syria in attempts to help or for investigations on attacks. The OPCW and the UN workers who go into Syria trying to investigate an attack often cannot reach the site due to health and safety risks. Specialists need to be able to conduct full investigations in order to define what the problem is as this has been an issue in the past. Steps such as these are needed in order to resolve the issue of chemical weapons in the future as well as to hopefully bring an end to the civil war occurring there.

# Further Reading

Useful sources:

https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity

https://www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/

https://www.opcw.org/special-sections/syria-and-the-opcw/

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/13/solve-syrian-crisis-assad-jihadist

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[16] Mousavian, Seyed Hossein. "To Solve the Syria Crisis, We Need to Overcome These Three Obstacles." *The Huffington Post*, TheHuffingtonPost.com, 7 Dec. 2017, www.huffingtonpost.com/seyed-hossein-mousavian/syria-crisis-obstacles_b_8740514.html?guccounter=1.

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http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1540

http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2209

http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2118

http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2235

http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2314

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