

Russia to Issue Separate Syria Statement

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Russia will issue a separate statement on the use of chemical weapons in Syria as an attachment to the G8 joint declaration, underscoring the divergence of opinions on the issue among the participants of the summit, a senior Russian diplomat said Tuesday.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said the statement would clarify the Russian position on several aspects of the G8 document, including the investigation of the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

He dismissed Western claims that Assad's forces used chemical weapons against the armed opposition as unproven, and said a new investigation involving a team of independent international experts must be launched to determine the validity of such claims.

The Syrian government called the claims “a statement full of lies based on fabricated information,” while Moscow said that the evidence presented by Washington was “unconvincing” and warned that providing military assistance to Syrian rebels could hamper efforts to convene a peace conference on Syria that Russia and the United States proposed

jointly on May 7.

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