The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Calls for Safe Work of UN Weapons Inspectors in Syria

By The Moscow Times

August 26, 2013

Russia is urging everyone who can influence Syria's armed opposition groups to pressure them to make the work of UN chemical weapons inspectors in the country safe, the Foreign Ministry said.

Opposition groups should avoid organizing armed provocation, ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said in a statement on Sunday.

The United Nations reported Sunday that following talks with UN representative for disarmament affairs Angela Kane, "the Syrian Government has affirmed it will grant access to UN inspectors, beginning tomorrow, to sites in the suburbs of Damascus where chemical weapons were allegedly used last week."

Kane met in Damascus with high-ranking Syrian officials on Aug. 24 and 25 to seek the government's cooperation in a probe into the Aug. 21 incident in the Ghouta area where

chemical weapons were allegedly used, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's spokesman said in a statement.

The Syrian opposition has accused the government of killing scores of people in a massive nerve gas attack in Damascus on Wednesday, with death toll estimates varying from a hundred to more than a thousand people. The Syrian government promptly denied the reports as baseless.

The UN team of chemical weapons investigators, headed by Swedish expert Ake Sellstrom, started working in Damascus last Monday. The team is expected to visit three sites where chemical weapons attacks allegedly occurred earlier. One site is the town of Khan Assal, in Syria's northern Aleppo province, where the Syrian government claimed rebels used chemical weapons in March.

The unrest in Syria began in March 2011 and later escalated into a civil war. More than 100,000 people have been killed in the conflict so far, according to the UN.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/08/26/russia-calls-for-safe-work-of-un-weapons-inspectors-in-syria-a27078