

Italy to Host Syrian Weapons Transfer Despite Local Opposition

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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ROME — Italy will honor a pledge to host the transfer of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal despite growing domestic opposition and this week will name the commercial port where the handover will take place, a government source said Sunday.

The transfer of chemicals aboard a Danish vessel to a specially adapted U.S. ship, where they will be destroyed at sea, is part of an international accord engineered by Russia in the wake of a poison gas attack on the outskirts of Damascus that killed hundreds, including children, last August.

Italy agreed last month to allow the use of a port on its territory for the transit of the toxins used in making sarin, VX gas and other lethal agents, prompting vocal opposition from some areas touted by the media as possible destinations.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is overseeing the destruction

of Syria's chemical arsenal, and ships from Denmark, Russia, Norway and China are providing maritime security to the operation.

The mayor of the southern Italian city of Brindisi and the governor of the region of Sardinia have both said they would put up a legal and political fight if their ports were chosen for the handover. Several criteria are being considered in selecting the port, the government source said, including "its distance from densely populated centers."

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