

Russia Vetoes UN Probe on Syria Gas Attack

April 13, 2017



Vladimir Safronkov, Russia's deputy U.N. envoy, is seen raising his hand in opposition to the draft resolution during the vote. **Zuma / TASS**

Russia has vetoed a UN proposal urging the Syrian government to aid an investigation into a deadly gas attack in northern Syria.

Ten nations on the 15-member Security Council voted in favor of the resolution during a meeting on Wednesday night, [the Reuters news agency reported](#). Russia and Bolivia stood against the proposal, while China, Kazakhstan, and Ethiopia abstained.

The proposal would have asked Syrian President Bashar Assad to provide information such as flight plans to experts investigating the attack, which killed more than 85 civilians in the rebel-held province of Idlib.

Related article: [‘Don’t You Dare Insult Russia Again!’ Moscow's UN Rep Screams in New York](#)

Vladimir Safronkov, Russia's deputy U.N. envoy, claimed that the purpose of the resolution was to assign blame for the attack before an independent investigation could be carried out.

Other politicians accused the Kremlin of shielding Assad.

"Russia once again has chosen to side with Assad, even as the rest of the world, including the Arab world, overwhelmingly comes together to condemn this murderous regime," U.S. UN Ambassador Nikki Haley told the council. "If the regime is innocent, as Russia claims, the information requested in this resolution would have vindicated them."

More than 85 civilians died in the Syrian village of Khan Shaykhun on Wednesday, April 5 after being hit by a cloud of deadly sarin gas.

Related article: [Russian 'Failure' Led to Syria Gas Massacre, Says Tillerson](#)

Syrian President Bashar Assad has been widely blamed for the attack, with eyewitnesses saying military jets dropped canisters of the gas across the region. The reports have led Russia to face widespread condemnation for supporting Assad and failing to ensure that the regime had destroyed its stockpile of chemical weapons.

The Kremlin has dismissed the accusations, saying that the gas spread from a warehouse containing "toxic substances" after it was hit in a terrorist attack.

The attack spurred U.S. President Donald Trump to launch a missile strike on a government-held airbase close to the city of Homs, leading many to question if the United States could be poised to take a more active role in the conflict.

The UN and Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have already found the Syrian government guilty of carrying out three illegal chlorine gas attacks in 2014 and 2015. Militants from the Islamic State terrorist group have also been blamed for using mustard gas.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/04/13/russia-vetoes-un-proposal-on-syria-gas-attack-probe-a-57712>