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The West Supplied Chemical Weapons to Syrian Rebels, Says Russian Foreign Ministry

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Maria Zakharova **Vyacheslav Prokofiev / TASS**

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Thursday there is evidence that the West is supplying chemical weapons to militants in Syria.

“Yes, it’s true,” she told the state-funded Vesti FM radio station on Thursday morning. "Western countries and regional powers are directly and indirectly supplying militants, terrorists and extremists in Syria with banned toxic substances.”

The comment came after Syria’s Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad said on Wednesday that chemical weapons supposedly produced by the United States and Britain had been found in areas previously held by Islamic State.*

The Syrian regime of President Bashar Assad, which Russia backs, has been been widely accused of using chemical weapons. In June, a report by the Organization for the Prohibition

of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) said the banned nerve agent sarin had been used in an attack in northern Syria in April.

A joint United Nations and OPCW investigation earlier said Syrian government forces had used chlorine gas in three attacks in 2014 and 2015.

During the interview, Zakharova said the West was also providing terrorists in Syria with small arms, money and "informational support," citing the White Helmets, a volunteer group which works in opposition-held territory in Syria, as an example.

She said it was "a proven fact" that the White Helmets engaged in the "falsification of its humanitarian activities, the recording of 'fake videos' on the reanimation of children and civilian population."

"And look at what happened in the West," she said. "I'm not even talking about the fact that [the White Helmets] were cited practically on a daily basis, that its videos were shared online with the speed of light on platforms supported by the West."

"The pinnacle was when they received an Oscar," she said, referring to the Oscar-winning Netflix documentary on the group. Zakharova also slammed the fact the group was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia

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