

**Syria: UN team must get full access to investigate 'chemical weapons' claim 21 August 2013**

In response to the publication of a series of videos apparently showing that chemical weapons have killed scores of civilians, including many children, on the outskirts of Syria's capital Damascus, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui said: "The allegations of use of chemical weapons against Syrian civilians, which Amnesty International has not been able to verify independently, underscore the urgent need for the United Nations team currently in Syria to have a full mandate and unimpeded access to all locations to investigate these and any other incidents of alleged use of chemical weapons." (...) "If the latest allegations are corroborated, the attacks would amount to war crimes. The only way to deal with the endless catalogue of abuses we have witnessed in Syria is for the UN Security Council to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court, as Amnesty International has been urging since 2011." "It is a violation of international law to manufacture, stockpile, transfer or use chemical weapons, which cannot distinguish between civilians and combatants."

(...)

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