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## State Dept Claims Syria Chemical Attack, Blames Russia

A [new flare-up of violence in the last rebel-held city](#) in Eastern Ghouta has served as an opportunity for the US State Department to [claim chemical weapons](#) were being used. The allegations were quickly endorsed by the [White Helmets](#), a Syrian medical NGO active in a number of rebel territories. The White Helmets are often making allegations of war crimes in Syria.



*file photo*

40 were killed Friday, and scores more Saturday, in airstrikes against Douma. There is no conclusive evidence that this was anything other than a conventional attack, and indeed conventional airstrikes often kill that many people. In fact, the BBC originally claimed 150 killed, later reducing the figure to 70, saying “[A tweet – later deleted – by the White Helmets put the number of dead at 150.](#)”

Images of dead bodies are [common enough too after such strikes, but combining them](#) with a story that everyone suffocated on some exotic gas makes it a much bigger story. It

also is in keeping with the State Department's interest in boosting international calls for regime change.

It also plays well in international politics, as the State Department is insisting that whatever happened in Douma is ultimately Russia's fault, and that "Russia ultimately bears responsibility for the brutal targeting of countless Syrians with chemical weapons."

Evidence has been lacking in claims of chemical attacks by Syria's government, and proof has been non-existent. US officials, however, never let uncertainty get in the way of a good story, and will not only be repeating this claim as unquestioned fact for years to come, but as seen last year, may use it as a pretext for a military strike on Syrian forces.