

4 Simple Reasons It is Extremely Unlikely Syrian Rebels Carried Out the Chemical Weapons Attacks



By Brian Frydenborg September 2, 2013

14 upvotes



Photo Credit: Reuters

Most experts agree that it is very unlikely that that rebel groups launched the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) chemical attacks we've been hearing about in the news, and that the culprits were instead Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government forces.

Here are the main reasons why:

1. Syria's government has *one of the biggest chemical weapons stockpiles and programs in the world.*

Yeah, I know you're saying that you heard the same thing about Iraq from Bush & co. But unlike Iraq, Syria never had a Gulf War which, as part its aftermath, instituted an intrusive **United Nations WMD inspections and dismantling regime** that essentially destroyed, peacefully, Saddam's WMD program, which was, at the time, one of the world's largest. This disarmament process went on for years and was well documented. But today, Syria is thought to have the **third largest chemical weapons program in the world**, behind only the U.S. and Russia.

2. Al-Qaeda and other terrorists *have tried for years to acquire or make chemical weapons, and have failed.*

With the exceptions of Japan's **Aum Shinrikyo** and **handful of bombings involving chlorine**, no terrorist group has successfully carried out a chemical weapons attacks attack. Why? These groups don't have chemical weapons. If they did, they would be using them. Since many of the same groups that operate in Iraq **are now operating right across the border in Syria**, we would see those weapons used being used in Iraq. But we aren't.

3. Chemical weapons require special training to use, know-how that these rebels and terrorists are very unlikely to possess.

Chemical weapons are sophisticated pieces of equipment, and require special handling and care, or they can easily end up killing the people trying to use them. In particular, the [sarin](#) nerve agent [used in these specific attacks](#) [requires a lot of advanced technology](#) to be produced and delivered. They [require an analysis of weather and atmospheric conditions](#) to be effective tactically, as these weapons were. It is doubtful that many of these rag-tag terrorist groups, or any, have the scientific and technical knowledge or equipment to operate and handle such weapons even if Santa delivered them to them personally. It's one thing if a group was working on developing a specific weapon, it's entirely another for them to stumble upon random chemical weapons and to all-of-a-sudden be able to identify and use those specific weapons.

4. The weapons were fired from regime held-territory and hit rebel positions.

While some of the rebels would certainly use these weapons, and while it's not out of the realm of possibility that they would use them against other rebels or civilians to make it look like the regime carried out the attacks, it's much more likely that if rebel positions and sympathizers were gassed, it was the government they are fighting and/or are hostile to that carried out the attacks. In this specific situation, the Obama administration [knows](#) that the weapons [were launched from regime held-territory](#), and [landed in rebel-held territory](#).

Even though a spattering of reports are claiming that the rebels conducted the attacks, and the Syrian regime is making the same case (for obvious reasons), the evidence and common sense point to the Syrian government, and not the rebels, as the guilty party.