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# Turkey finds sarin gas in homes of suspected Syrian Islamists – reports

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Published time: May 30, 2013 16:56

Edited time: May 31, 2013 12:02

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Turkish security forces found a 2kg cylinder with sarin gas after searching the homes of Syrian militants from the Al-Qaeda linked Al-Nusra Front who were previously detained, Turkish media reports. The gas

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was reportedly going to be used in a bomb.

The sarin gas was found in the homes of suspected Syrian Islamists detained in the southern provinces of Adana and Mersia following a search by Turkish police on Wednesday, reports say. The gas was allegedly going to be used to carry out an attack in the southern Turkish city of Adana.

On Monday, Turkish special anti-terror forces arrested 12 suspected members of the Al-Nusra Front, the Al-Qaeda affiliated group which has been dubbed "*the most aggressive and successful arm*" of the Syrian rebels. The group was designated a terrorist organization by the United States in December.

Police also reportedly found a cache of weapons, documents and digital data which will be reviewed by police.

Following the searches, five of those detained were released following medical examinations at the Forensic Medicine Institution Adana. Seven suspects remain in custody. Turkish authorities are yet to comment on the arrests.

Russia reacted strongly to the incident, calling for a thorough investigation into the detention of Syrian militants in possession of sarin gas.

*"We are extremely concerned with media reports. Russia believes that the use of any chemical weapons is absolutely inadmissible,"* Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said on Thursday.

In a separate incident in Adana, police reportedly received intelligence that an explosive-laden vehicle had entered the town of Adana on Thursday, the Taraf daily reports.

Ankara has attempted to bolster the Syrian opposition without becoming embroiled in the Syrian civil war, a policy which Damascus claims lead to the deadliest act of terrorism on Turkish soil.

On May 11, 51 people were killed and 140 injured after [two car bombs](#) exploded in the Turkish town of Reyhanlı, located near the country's border with Syria. A dozen Turkish nationals have been charged in the twin bombings, and Ankara has [accused Damascus](#) of helping the suspects carry out the attack.

*"This incident was carried out by an organization which is in close contact to pro-regime groups in Syria and I say this very clearly, with the Syrian Mukhabarat [intelligence agency],"* Interior Minister Muammer Guler said.

Syria's Information Minister Omran Zoubi denied any link the attack, saying his country "did not commit and would never commit such an



act because our values would not allow that". Zoubi further charged the Turkish government had facilitated the flow of arms, explosives, funds and fighters across the country's border into Syria, claiming that that Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his party bear direct responsibility [for the attack]."

Reports of chemical weapons use by both Damascus and the Syrian opposition have surrounded the conflict in Syria for months.



In this image made available by the Syrian News Agency (SANA) on March 19, 2013, a man is brought to a hospital in the Khan al-Assal region in the northern Aleppo province, as Syria's government accused rebel forces of using chemical weapons for the first time (AFP Photo)

In March, the Syrian government invited the United Nations to investigate possible chemical weapons use in the Khan al-Assal area of rural Aleppo. Military experts and officials said a chemical agent, most likely sarin, was used in the attack which killed 26 people, including government forces.

Damascus claimed Al-Qaeda linked fighters were [behind the attack](#), further alleging Turkey had a hand in the incident.

*"The rocket came from a place controlled by the terrorist and which is located close to the Turkish territory. One can assume that the weapon came from Turkey,"* Zoabi said in an interview with Interfax news agency.

US President Barack Obama [has warned](#) any confirmed use of chemical weapons by Damascus would cross a "red line" which would prompt further action. Both Washington and London claimed there was growing evidence that such chemical agents had been used.

Less clear perhaps is whether a similar red line would apply to Syrian opposition groups such as Al-Nusra by the US and NATO allies. Author and historian Gerald Horne, for one, told RT that there are greater political dynamics at work.

*"Well, one would think so, but of course we know that the United States*

*along with its NATO partners Britain and France are quite close to the main backers of the rebels -- I'm speaking of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. We know, for example, according to the Financial Times that Mr Sarkozy, the former president of France, is in very close financial relationship with the Qataris,"* says Horne.

That would be under the existing paragraph in the story: US President Barack Obama has warned any confirmed use of chemical weapons by Damascus would cross a "red line" which would prompt further action. Both Washington and London claimed there was growing evidence that such chemical agents had been used.

This case being similar to an earlier one, with the findings of UN chemical weapons expert Carla Del Ponte - who had found evidence of their use by the rebels – some think the fallout will be what it was then as well.

Journalist and RT contributor, Afshin Rattansi believes that the same fate will befall this story, as far as media coverage goes. All possible doubts will either be hushed or directed elsewhere, as they were toward Del Ponte's findings.

*"Carla Del Ponte – one of the greatest experts on this from the United Nations – did do an in-depth investigation only a few weeks ago, and of course, the mainstream media tried their best to ignore it and to character-assassinate Del Ponte... she did masses of work on this, and [found] It was the rebels and not the government."*

Rattansi goes on to say that *"the news management of the Syria story has been incredibly sophisticated, and I don't think it will be on the front pages of any newspapers in Britain or the United States – it will quietly disappear like Del Ponte's case. The big story, of course, will be Russia and the delivery of the S-300."*

A day before the Reyhanlı bombing, Erdogan released a statement claiming he had evidence the Syrian government had had used chemical weapons, crossing the red line set by President Obama. The accusation contradicted a statement made at the time by a leading UN investigator, Carla Del Ponte, who heads

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, said there were *"concrete suspicions but not yet incontrovertible proof of the use of sarin gas"* in Syria.

*"This was use on the part of the opposition, the rebels, not by the government authorities,"* Del Ponte continued.

Exposure to large quantities of sarin gas, whose production and stockpiling was outlawed by the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, causes convulsions, paralysis, loss of respiratory functions and potentially death.

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## Comments (227)

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**Barbydol Crymeseen** 01.09.2013 06:03

[quote name='Kamara Albert' time='31.05.2013 13:19']As one of the most important countries in the Arab world..... I think Turkey need to re-examined its' position on the current insurgency in Syria..... For the interest of its national security.....[/quote ]

you do know that us Turks are not arab and we are not part of the arab world right ??? , and frankly Arabs should be dealing with there own problems , get all these so called refugees to Arab lands and off Turkish soil ,how do these people show gratitude? they don't, they are animals



**Ross A Lloyd** 31.08.2013 01:13

Saudi Arabia has been funding Muslim terrorists and Islamification activities for years and must be dealt with soon!



**Ross A Lloyd** 31.08.2013 01:11

I'm with Russia on this issue. I don't believe that Assad would have authorized the use of chemical weapons in Damascus as claimed by OBama. There was not strategic advantage to be gained and it would only aggravate the rest of the world. Putin (the new leader of the Free World as we view it) is absolutely right in this....

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