Assad Used Chemical Weapons Against Palestinian Refugee Camp, Opposition Claims

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The Syrian National Coalition has accused the Bashar Assad regime of using chemical weapons against civilians in Yarkmouk, the Palestinian refugee camp located south of Damascus.

In a statement published on the Syrian opposition umbrella group's Facebook page Monday, it called on the international community to intervene and protect the civilians from the regime, which "does not hesitate to use all forms of weapons, including chemical."

According to the coalition, testimonies collected clearly prove that poisonous gas and chemical rockets were used by the Syrian Army against civilians. They did not report the number of casualties and no video footage was published that corroborates the use of chemical weapons. Yarmouk is one of the largest suburbs of Damascus, where tens of thousands of Syrians and Palestinians live side by side.

In recent months, concerns were raised that chemical weapons were used in Syria. In June, France accused the Assad regime of using sarin gas against opposition forces. The U.S. also pointed a finger at the Syrian government, which rejected the claims. Damascus said it would agree to an international inspection committee on the issue, however, a UN mission has been waiting for three months for approval from Syrian authorities to enter.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called on the Syrian opposition and government Monday morning to cooperate in an effort to get the terrorists out of the country. Lavrov, who met with Syrian Deputy Prime Minister Qadri Jamil, asserted there is no military solution to the crisis in Syria and called on the opposition to agree to the proposal to take part in the Geneva-2 conference. Jamil, referring to the S-300 missiles, said all the signed agreements between Moscow and Damascus are still in tact and that Russia will continue to provide weapons accordingly.

Syrian government troops killed at least 75 rebels over 24 hours in battles for control of the capital Damascus, activists said Monday, one of the deadliest single-day tolls for opposition fighters in the 2-year-old conflict.

The death toll, reported by the Britain-based Observatory for Human Rights, included 49 rebels killed in an ambush in Damascus' northeastern suburb of Adra early Sunday. The group said an elite Republican Guard unit attacked the rebels as they were trying to push into the capital, and that the government commander leading the operation also died in the ensuing gun battle.