

Turkish Opposition Reveals ISIS, Not Assad, Perpetrated 2013 Sarin Attack in Syria with Turkish Supplies



CHP MPs Eren Erdem and Ali Seker at the Press Conference
(Photo: *Today's Zaman*, October 21, 2015)

My colleague Ilana Friedman has been telling me for some time that Sarin Gas attacks in Syria may have been perpetrated by ISIS, not the Assad regime. Yesterday, two members of the Turkish opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) held a press conference in Istanbul revealing their findings from an investigation into the gas attack in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta in 2013 that took the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians that led to the declarations of so-called red lines by the Obama Administration. The Obama declarations against the Assad regime led to Russia's Putin presenting the stand down option of inviting in The Hague based [Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#) (OPCW) to clean up a portion of the country's CW stockpiles. This CHP press conference comes less than two weeks before the Parliamentary election slated for November 1st. Further it comes a day following a *Reuters* [report](#) that the OPCW will be investigating use of mustard gas against Kurdish peshmerga forces in Iraq. Already there are suspicions that the devastating twin bombings at an [Ankara October 10th peace rally](#) with a toll of 102 dead and 400 injured, may also have been perpetrated by possible security echelons of the AKP regime, whose immediate declarations were that ISIS terrorists might have perpetrated the bombing. Our usually astute European observer of

developments in Turkey brought to our attention, that the October 10th Ankara peace rally had no security for the large assembly of marchers from trade union, socialist and Kurdish HDP supporters.

MEMRI produced a translation of the Turkish *Zaman Today* news report, "[Turkey's Main Opposition Party CHP Accuses AKP Government Of Crimes Against Humanity: Says 2013 Chemical Attack In Syria Was Carried Out By ISIS With Sarin Gas Supplied By Turkey; Turkish Government Closed Investigation Into This Affair, Released Suspects Into Syria.](#)"

Here is a summary of the CHP press conference report courtesy of MEMRI:

At an Istanbul press conference yesterday (October 21, 2015), two MPs from Turkey's main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), Eren Erdem and Ali Seker, claimed that the August 2013 chemical attack on the Damascus suburb of Ghouta, in which hundreds of civilians were killed, was carried out not by the Assad regime but by ISIS, and that the gas used in the attack had been manufactured in Turkey and supplied to this organization with the knowledge of the AKP government. They stated further that the government instructed a Turkish prosecutor to close the file in a probe into this affair, and accused the government of involvement in crimes against humanity.

The CHP press conference reported by *Today's Zaman* had the following detailed findings:

Erdem and Seker said that the office of the Chief Prosecutor in Adana had launched an investigation into suspicions that chemical weapons had been supplied from Turkey, via several businessmen, to jihadist organizations that joined ISIS in Syria. The indictment against the suspects also included accusations against the

government.

According to the MPs, the prosecutors determined that the suspects had provided the state-owned Turkish Mechanical and Chemical Industries Corporation (MKE) with raw materials they brought from abroad, some of which were used by this corporation to manufacture the toxic gas. The Rockets used to fire the capsules containing the toxic gas were also manufactured in Turkey. It was also found that monetary transactions between Saudi Arabia and Turkey had taken place regarding these materials.

Holding up the 190-page file, Erdem said that the prosecutor's office had conducted detailed technical surveillance and wiretaps, and added: "It's all in this file. All the details and audio recordings are here, on how the sarin gas was manufactured in Turkey and delivered to terrorists. Their phone conversations reveal all the details, even their addresses." Erdem said further that a crime against humanity was committed and that those responsible were the AKP government and then-PM Erdogan, who supplied the sarin gas to the ISIS terrorists. He claimed further that AKP government officials instructed Mehmet Arikan, the Adana prosecutor handling the case, to "close the file" and that [then-]Justice Minister Bekir Bozdog also summoned him and demanded to be informed in the future before any such investigation was undertaken against any Islamic organization.

Seker said that the government had misleadingly asserted that the sarin used in the attack had been provided by Russia and used by Assad against his own people, in order to provoke a U.S. military intervention in Syria to topple Assad regime, in line with then-PM Erdogan's political agenda. He also stressed that the indictment and the evidence in it documented a war crime that had been committed within the borders of the Turkish Republic. No government, he stated, can be permitted to send arms and

even sarin gas to another country in order to topple its government. If millions of Syrians are now knocking on the doors of Turkey and Europe, and if the body of the little refugee boy Aylan has been washed ashore, the responsibility lies with those who sent these arms. "Mankind will one day hold [then-] Prime Minister [Erdogan] and justice minister [Bozdog] to account," he declared.

Independent opposition daily *Cumhuriyet* published the alleged transcripts of some of the recorded conversations between suspects in the case, in which they state that the delivery of the chemicals, to which they refer as 'mineral water', over the Turkish border went smoothly and that officials would not make problems. The paper stated further that all 13 suspects initially arrested were released on July 1, 2013, following government's closure of the case, and were allowed free passage into Syria. [\[1\]](#)

Media also reported that the origin of the sarin gas used in the attack was the subject of a U.N. investigation and that a report will soon be released. [\[2\]](#)

This Turkish opposition report has broad implications when confirmed by the OPCW. The revelations could materially impact Turkish membership in NATO, US support for the AKP regime in the anti-ISIS coalition and the current Russian alliance with Iran, proxy Hezbollah and Cuba in the current offensive aimed at clearing Aleppo Province. This will also raise questions about who planned and executed the Ankara peace bombing on October 10th. How this may affect the looming November 1st Turkish parliamentary elections we will soon see. Stay tuned for developments.