

UN Security Council Approves Investigative Panel for Syrian Chemical Attacks



United Nations, September 11 (RHC)-- The United Nations Security Council has approved the UN chief's recommendations for launching an international investigation to determine who was responsible for the deadly chemical attacks in Syria.

On Thursday, the 15-member council endorsed a letter to Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in support of a joint investigative mechanism proposed by the UN and the global chemical weapons watchdog, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The letter, which was signed by Russia's ambassador to the UN and the Security Council's current president, Vitaly Churkin, authorizes Ban's recommendations for the establishment of a three-member independent panel with the freedom of movement to go anywhere in Syria to identify the perpetrators of chemical attacks in the Arab country.

The development came after the Security Council unanimously voted on August 7th in favor of a resolution on the creation of the panel aimed at punishing the perpetrators of chemical attacks in Syria through possible sanctions.

The United States has long been accusing Damascus of using chemical weapons against the Syrian people. Damascus, however, has constantly dismissed the allegations. Russia has also repeatedly argued that there is no proof that the Syrian government is behind any toxic attacks in the Arab country.

Last year, Syria handed over 1,300 tons of its chemical stockpile to a joint UN-OPCW mission for destruction.

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