

# *Russia Rejects US Accusations of Chemical Attack in Syria*

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Moscow, January 24 (RHC)-- Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Serguei Ryabkov has said recent statements by U.S. Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, blaming Russia and Syria for a chemical attack, are a provocation.

Tillerson's remarks came on the heels of unconfirmed reports of a new incident allegedly involving chlorine in East Ghouta.

Ryabkov described Washington's allegations as baseless, according to Telesur.

Meanwhile, former Assistant Treasury Secretary Paul Craig Roberts told Russia Today he believed the accusations are clearly designed to ramp up tensions in the country to help the US to "justify its continued illegal military occupation of part of Syria,"

"Washington's false allegation against Syria focuses attention away from Washington's illegal occupation, which should be the topic under discussion," Roberts told RT.

For his part, former CIA officer and counter-terrorism specialist Philip Giraldi said that the timing of the blaming, just a week before the scheduled Syrian National Congress in Russia's Sochi, might be an attempt to jeopardize Moscow's 'spearheaded peace process.

“The US knows it is irrelevant to the peace conference whether it attends or not. It is trying to make Russia and Syria appear to be complicit in a war crime, which will diminish the legitimacy of the [Sochi] meeting,” Giraldi told RT.

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