

# News story: RAF JETS STRIKE CHEMICAL WEAPON FACILITY IN SYRIA

A Tornado GR4 from 903 Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW), based out of Royal Air Force Akrotiri, Cyprus. Crown copyright.

At 0200 UK time on 14 April, British forces joined close Allies in a precision strike on Syrian installations involved in the regime's use of chemical weapons against its own people. The strike was launched as a response to the chemical weapon attack on 7 April in Douma which killed up to 75 people, including young children; a significant body of information, including intelligence, indicates that the Syrian regime was responsible for this latest attack.

As the Prime Minister has made clear, this pattern of behaviour must be stopped, not just to protect innocent people in Syria from these horrific weapons, but also because the erosion cannot be allowed of the international norms that prevent the use of chemical weapons.

Our action is proportionate, specifically aimed at degrading the regime's ability to use chemical weapons and deterring further such appalling acts; it is therefore focused on regime facilities linked to the production and use of chemical weapons.

The UK element of the carefully coordinated joint action was contributed by four Royal Air Force Tornado GR4s. They launched Storm Shadow missiles at a military facility – a former missile base – some fifteen miles west of Homs, where the regime is assessed to keep chemical weapon precursors stockpiled in breach of Syria's obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Very careful scientific analysis was applied to determine where best to target the Storm Shadows to maximise the destruction of the stockpiled chemicals and to minimise any risks of contamination to the surrounding area. The facility which was struck is located some distance from any known concentrations of civilian habitation, reducing yet further any such risk.

Detailed analysis of the effectiveness of the strike is currently underway, but initial indications are that the precision of the Storm Shadow weapons and meticulous target planning have resulted in a successful attack.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The reprehensible use of chemical weapons in Douma is further evidence of the Syrian regime's appalling cruelty against its own people. We will not stand by whilst innocent civilians, including women and children, are killed and made to suffer.

The international community has responded decisively with legal and proportionate military force. Let these united actions send a clear

message to the regime – the use of chemical weapons is categorically unacceptable and you will be held to account.

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## **Press release: PM statement on Syria: 14 April 2018**

Prime Minister Theresa May:

This evening I have authorised British armed forces to conduct co-ordinated and targeted strikes to degrade the Syrian Regime's chemical weapons capability and deter their use.

We are acting together with our American and French allies.

In Douma, last Saturday a chemical weapons attack killed up to 75 people, including young children, in circumstances of pure horror.

The fact of this attack should surprise no-one.

The Syrian Regime has a history of using chemical weapons against its own people in the most cruel and abhorrent way.

And a significant body of information including intelligence indicates the Syrian Regime is responsible for this latest attack.

This persistent pattern of behaviour must be stopped – not just to protect innocent people in Syria from the horrific deaths and casualties caused by chemical weapons but also because we cannot allow the erosion of the international norm that prevents the use of these weapons.

We have sought to use every possible diplomatic channel to achieve this.

But our efforts have been repeatedly thwarted. Even this week the Russians vetoed a Resolution at the UN Security Council which would have established an independent investigation into the Douma attack.

So there is no practicable alternative to the use of force to degrade and deter the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Regime.

This is not about intervening in a civil war. It is not about regime change.

It is about a limited and targeted strike that does not further escalate tensions in the region and that does everything possible to prevent civilian casualties.

And while this action is specifically about deterring the Syrian Regime, it

will also send a clear signal to anyone else who believes they can use chemical weapons with impunity.

At this time, my thoughts are with our brave British servicemen and women – and our French and American partners – who are carrying out their duty with the greatest professionalism.

The speed with which we are acting is essential in co-operating with our partners to alleviate further humanitarian suffering and to maintain the vital security of our operations.

This is the first time as Prime Minister that I have had to take the decision to commit our armed forces in combat – and it is not a decision I have taken lightly.

I have done so because I judge this action to be in Britain's national interest.

We cannot allow the use of chemical weapons to become normalised – within Syria, on the streets of the UK, or anywhere else in our world.

We would have preferred an alternative path. But on this occasion there is none.

History teaches us that the international community must defend the global rules and standards that keep us all safe.

That is what our country has always done. And what we will continue to do.

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## [News story: Country in full swing to party for the royal wedding](#)

With just over 1 month to go until the royal wedding, Pubs Minister Jake Berry MP is encouraging people to celebrate the big day with their community first at a street party and later at their local.

Pub opening hours have been extended for the special occasion and the industry stands to get a £10 million boost from celebrations.

As well as heading to their local community pub, people are also being urged to not leave it too late to plan a street party. Ahead of these royal celebrations we've updated our [online guidance](#) for those wishing to throw a street party and are providing a handy checklist and practical advice for what is needed.

Across the country councils are receiving hundreds of applications from residents wanting to hold a street party and while most councils are still

accepting applications, people need to be quick if they haven't yet sent theirs in.

To date, Reading has received 12 applications for street parties, Richmond 54 and Bromley around 60, to name just a few, and with many councils waiving fees for street party road closures, the minister is also encouraging people to get their applications in on time.

To help these street parties be the best ever, we're encouraging people to share their top tips using the hashtag #StreetPartyTips. Recipes, costume ideas, decorations – we want to see the different ways in which people are planning to celebrate.

Pubs Minister Jake Berry MP said:

Pubs are a cornerstone of many communities and I'm encouraging people to raise a glass to the happy couple in their local on May 19th.

Up and down the country, councils have answered our call to make it easy for people to throw a street party fit for a prince and his bride.

National Chairman of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Colin Valentine said:

CAMRA is not just raising a glass to the royal couple, but also to the government for their decision to extend pub opening hours during the Royal Wedding celebration.

Pubs play a hugely important role in landmark days in peoples' lives, including weddings.

Extending opening hours will provide a welcome boost to the industry and help ensure the public can celebrate, hopefully by toasting to the happy couple with a pint of traditional real ale.

Many councils, such as Salford, are screening the royal wedding in local parks, providing yet another way for people to celebrate the day.

For those living in areas where the deadline for submitting applications has already passed there are other ways in which you can celebrate. It is still possible to arrange a street meet on a driveway, parking area, front garden or end of a cul-de-sac.

The department's guidance includes a simple form people can use to let their local council know about their plans and information on how to apply for a road closure as well as information on playing music, insurance and fund raising.

View our updated [guidance on holding a street party](#).

More helpful tips, advice and support for organising a successful event can be found on the [Street Party website](#) and [The Big Lunch website](#).

See further information on [Street Meets](#).

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## **Press release: PM call with President Macron: 13 April 2018**

PM call with President Macron: 13 April 2018 – GOV.UK

Prime Minister Theresa May spoke with President Emmanuel Macron of France.



A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister spoke to the French President Emmanuel Macron this evening about the horrific attack in Douma, Syria on Saturday.

They agreed to keep working closely together on the international response.

Published 13 April 2018

Thank you for your feedback