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Damascus hands Moscow proof that militants used CW: Russian Deputy FM

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Syria has handed over to Russia evidence proving that foreign-backed militants were behind a recent chemical weapons attack in the suburbs of Damascus, a senior Russian Foreign Ministry official says.

“This evidence must be analyzed,” Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said, after receiving the evidence from Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem on Tuesday.

On Monday, the United Nations issued a report by UN investigators which said sarin nerve agent was used in the Damascus suburbs attack, without indicating who launched the attack.

Earlier on Tuesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that the report on the August 21 chemical weapons attack, which allegedly killed hundreds of people, had produced no evidence that Syrian troops carried out the attack and that Russia believed the foreign-backed militants were behind it.

Lavrov stated that the UN report proved that chemical weapons had been used, but it failed to answer a number of questions Moscow had asked such as whether the weapons were produced in a factory or they were homemade.

"We have very serious grounds to believe that this was a provocation," Lavrov said.

The United States, France, Britain and the foreign-sponsored militants blamed the Syrian government for the attack near Damascus.

The Assad government has vehemently denied the accusations, saying the attack was carried out by the militants themselves as a false-flag operation.

On September 10, Muallem said Damascus is ready to implement a Russian proposal to place its chemical weapons arsenal under international control.

The Russian government proposed the initiative during a meeting between Lavrov and Muallem in Moscow on September 9.

In response, US President Barack Obama asked Congress to delay a vote on authorizing military action against Syria in order to give the Russian proposal a chance to play out.