

Ian Henderson's Introductory Speech
UNSC Arria-Formula Meeting 28 September 2020

Good morning everyone. I am here again at the request of some delegations who requested that I provide my personal experiences as an OPCW inspector.

I will briefly clarify my situation on what I can do and can't do. I'm attending in my individual capacity as a scientist and a former OPCW inspection team leader with 12 years of service, and I would like to stress, impartial and committed service which was recognised. I have one request for everyone attending today - is to please kindly refrain from any suggestion that my role is part of anyone's disinformation campaign.

Going further, I should point out that I was not directly involved in the Llataminah FFM. Whilst I have studied the FFM reports and the report of the IIT on Llataminah, it would be inappropriate for me to provide opinion on that case in this forum.

However, I was directly involved with the Douma FFM investigation and the SSRC inspections in Syria, and I'll answer any questions on those topics as best I can. Now some of you may recall at the previous Arria Formula meeting on the Syria chemical dossier, I provided a written statement that subsequently became publicly available. In addition to that, the summary report on the engineering analysis on the Douma cylinders is publicly available, so on that score there's really little further that I need to add.

So why am I here? I speak for myself but I know there are other Douma FFM inspectors who hold the similar concerns that I do about the manner in which the investigation was controlled - locked down - and the findings reflected in the final FFM report. We believe that there is more than sufficient information out there today that has demonstrated our point that the findings reflected in the FFM report on Douma may not reflect the actual situation.

But I'm not imploring you to believe me; to implore you to believe us; that is not science. All we are saying is that surely there is sufficient information - facts out there today - that would justify a transparent technical inquiry aimed at clarifying what actually happened in Douma on 7 April 2018, and this needs to be done in a way that demonstrates scientific rigour and integrity, because that currently has not been done.

However, the lockdown on Douma remains, how can I say, impenetrable. A hope therefore remains that there's someone with the scientific discipline and integrity to recognise that something may have gone amiss with the Douma investigation and report. Perhaps more importantly we continue to hope that there's someone who is willing and able, someone who has the courage to do something about this. If and when that happens, we are ready to provide the impartial input of scientists and engineers and to have the facts and the findings assist on their merits. That's my introductory statement. Thank you.