

The British Pugwash Group invites you to a Discussion Meeting

The use of chemical weapons in Syria: misleading narratives and ongoing consequences

Speakers: Richard Guthrie and Dr Caitriona McLeish



Wednesday 1 July 2015

17.30-19.00

Members of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria in front of the last ISO container, just prior to loading onto the Ark Futura ©OPCW

Ramsay Lecture Theatre
Christopher Ingold Chemistry Building
University College London
20 Gordon Street, WC1H 0AJ
(Nearest underground: Euston & Euston
Square)

The meeting will be followed by an informal drinks reception

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

Admission is free, but if you are planning to attend, it would be helpful for catering purposes if you could let the British Pugwash office know.

Tel: 020 7405 6661; Email: office@britishpugwash.org

The theme

The use of chemical weapons in the East Ghouta area of Damascus led to international responses which included an unprecedented effort to remove chemical weapons and associated materials from a conflict zone. Various narratives were developed about the Syrian chemical weapons programme and the international responses, some of which presented highly contradictory themes. There are many ongoing consequences of the events in Syria, not least that the continuing use of chlorine in barrel bombs could weaken the taboo against the use of poisons as weapons.

The speakers

Richard Guthrie is the Co-ordinating Editor of CBW Events, a project to create a record of events to enable and encourage understanding of how policies on the issues relating to chemical and biological warfare (CBW) are developed. Richard has worked in and with the non-governmental, governmental and inter-governmental sectors; mostly looking at technology control and innovation issues that relate to materials and technologies that can have hostile as well as peaceful uses. His work in this field is much broader than that which would normally come under the rubric of arms control, including issues of interactions between governments and societies, in policies of access to official information, in emergency response and planning issues, and in international legal frameworks.

Dr Caitríona McLeish is a Senior Fellow at SPRU at the University of Sussex. She joined the Harvard Sussex Program on Chemical and Biological Weapons as a student in 1996 and became its Sussex Director in 2010.

McLeish's research interests are focused on the dual use problem in both the chemical and biological warfare environments. Her recent work includes analysis of past offensive and defensive programmes, especially procurement and acquisition routes; assessments of contemporary dual use CBW policies, including potential impact on the innovative capacity of scientific and industrial communities; how the two treaty regimes might better accommodate scientific and technical change. She is currently occupied with an ESRC funded project on chemical weapons use and allegations in Syria and an AHRC funded project exploring the historical context of the negotiations for the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention.

