

# The International Community's Response to the Ghouta Chemical Attack of 2013

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## Abstract

This paper brings to the fore several sociopolitical and legal dimensions related to the international response to the Ghouta chemical attack of August 2013 that completely redefined the way we approach the Syrian conflict in general. This deadly chemical assault should be seen as one of the most important events that defined the way the international community has dealt with the Syrian Arab Spring, for, according to several influential accounts, the magnitude of this attack clearly transcended the inviolability of the nation-state. Yet, despite gathering compelling *prima facie* evidence that this attack was linked to Bashar al-Assad's loyalists, the expected full-blown military retaliation against his regime did not occur. The Syrian regime did not face any severe consequences for its actions except for being exposed to the discomfort of temporary international sanctions that obliged the regime to relinquish its chemical weapons arsenal under international supervision. We know today that despite the promised full cooperation from Syrian officials, the mandate to relinquish all illegal weapons of mass destruction was fulfilled only to a limited extent.

## Introduction

As of today, the Syrian conflict is slowly but surely heading to its inevitable conclusion. Still, no matter what the future holds for this country, Syria has suffered an unimaginable scale of destruction and displacement that was caused by multiple actors during the last eleven years. In the end, there are no winners, only losers, of this conflict. Assad, having defeated his political enemies, did not win the war but survived it. Yet he is emerging from this confrontation as possibly the biggest loser, for his political credibility is virtually non-existent due to his regime's war crimes and various human rights abuses. This is particularly true due to his regime's involvement in the Ghouta chemical attack that happened on 21 August 2013 and accounts for one of the deadliest chemical weapons assaults in recent history and one of the most blatant examples of intentional human rights abuses orchestrated in recent decades (Burke, 2017).

The main goal of this paper is to scrutinize the nature of the policy-making mistakes committed during the negotiating process between American, Russian, and Syrian officials to equip

future decision-makers with better policy-making suggestions to deal with similar challenges in the future in a more effective manner. I intend to focus here on the international community's response to the Ghouta chemical attack of 2013. This attack and the international response to it, or lack thereof, can be seen as one of the most negative outcomes of this conflict from the international community's perspective. Moreover, this inaction has contributed significantly to the growing disillusionment as to the role of the international community and the United Nations in both Syria and the broader region.

Subsequently, I argue that an inadvertent consequence of the lack of an adequate response to the perpetrators of this chemical weapons attack ultimately killed the spirit of the Arab Spring in Syria, for it softened the moderate rebels' resolve, strengthened Assad's position in relation to his political opponents, and encouraged the jihadist forces to consolidate their gains in Syria. The lack of a more robust international response also produced more disillusionment among both the opposition fighters and potential recruits, for it gave them the impression that joining the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq or the al-Nusra Front (groups still not accused of genocidal actions in mid-2013, whose "full" radicalization, according to Human Rights Watch (2017), happened at the end of the year) would yield more results, for it was apparent that the Free Syrian Army (FSA)'s actions no longer enjoyed Western powers sufficient support. One can also argue that an unintended consequence of this far-reaching restraint of Western powers in Syria also resulted in the further deterioration into full-blown civil war in both countries (Syria and Iraq) in the following years. It may have also inspired Putin to intervene in September 2015 on behalf of Syria's dictator – in this instance, a fully earned pejorative (Washington Post's Editorial Board, 2020). I also maintain that had the international community pursued different goals and objectives in response to the Ghouta attack, some of the abovementioned negative consequences might have been avoided, and the local conflict zone in Syria would not have deteriorated into multiple military confrontations between various small and more sizable groups. However, there was no political will to intervene against the Syrian regime in 2013 due to the fear that the local balance of power was already very shaky. Back then, the moderate fighters had given their all in their fight against Assad, and they had made several noticeable advances. Still, their resolve had been significantly weakened by more than two years of intense fighting during the early stages of the uprising. That is why it was expected that Assad's removal from power at that stage of the uprising would not yield the desired outcome in the long run. There was simply no guarantee that the moderates would be capable of stopping any future jihadist takeover of Syria in the following months or years.

## Methodology

This interdisciplinary research hopes to provide the reader with a clear and impartial language of analysis, capable of embracing a more contemplative, evolutionary manner of investigation that is adjustable to the everchanging circumstances of the constantly fluctuating situation in the modern conflict zone. It is supported by a wide array of theoretical foundations, methodologies, fields of inquiry, and paradigms ranging from various disciplines such as the Theory of International

Relations, international law, geopolitics, military studies, conflict resolution strategies, and continental philosophy. It relies heavily on the author's commitment to a systematic collection and analysis of collected data, verifying, and synthesizing all the gathered information through verifiable sources, testdriving the results of this work by relating this debate to the discussions on the scope and scale of the international community's responsibility to bring peace and security back to the Syrian conflict zone after Ghouta attack of 2013, and in relation to the selected other chemical weapon's attacks that happened in this country between 2013 and 2019 (Pietrzak, 2021, pp. 43–76, 101–154).

### **Why we should assign such significance to this singular chemical attack when there had already been so much blood spilled in Syria**

Naturally, the Ghouta attack was not the first time that the Assad regime decided to treat its fellow citizens as cannon fodder, for there are countless examples suggesting that the Syrian president committed various crimes against humanity before 2013, such as persecuting his political opponents and forcing his fellow citizens to endure all sorts of suffering, illtreatment, discrimination, and denials of freedom. So, on this basis, one could ask why this situation was any different from previous assaults inflicted on the civilian population of Syria by the Assad regime. On this occasion, the situation was different, as the magnitude of this attack clearly transcended the inviolability of the nationstate, for it was probably one of the deadliest chemical attacks since the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988). It resulted in the loss of a significant number of lives (depending on the calculations, between 281 and 1729 casualties (Baker et al., 2013; Chulov et al., 2013; Borger, 2013)), and those people were killed with illegal weapons of mass destruction forbidden by the international community. Even though there was no explicit admission of guilt, many Western political commentators quickly “connected the dots” and made an educated guess suggesting that it was Assad's loyalists who were directly responsible for the use of deadly sarin gas in the attacks (White House, 2013). Despite the clear declarations that such or any similar attack would be seen as crossing a red line, the international community did not respond adequately to this blatant example of human rights violations, as gassing civilians is strongly forbidden by international law (Pietrzak 2019, pp. 33–94; Pietrzak, 2021, pp. 155–178).

Yes, the Syrian regime has never officially claimed any direct or indirect responsibility for the Ghouta attack (Higgins, 2014). Still, the intent here is clear, for it relates to the basic military principle of using all means necessary to halt the enemy's advances towards the capital. We need to remember that the situation in Syria in 2013 was much different than in 2015, for the regime was significantly weaker back then and was trying to close all potential gateways that might lead the FSA to taking the capital. If we apply this military rationale to these deliberations, he who takes the capital city is the ultimate winner of any war. Losing Damascus was something that Assad could not afford in 2013, for his political legitimacy was based on keeping a solid grip on power in Syria and in the capital city. His Machiavellian advisors must have persuaded him to do everything in their power to protect his rule, even if it meant using chemical weapons against fellow

citizens. The fact that the strategically important region of Ghouta ended up in the hands of the FSA in the first place must have been such an unexpected outcome that it must have caused the regime a lot of distress. That the Syrian army was not able to win it back in a conventional manner may also suggest that the perpetrators of the chemical attacks (if they were indeed related to the Assad regime) must have been strongly interested in changing this situation at any cost. As much as Syrian or Russian propaganda argued the contrary, it was difficult to frame the narrative in a way to suggest that the FSA would want to attack their own positions in Ghouta, especially since they had fought such a long time to reach that point. So, considering all those deliberations, we can make an educated guess and put forward a working hypothesis that the Assad's loyalists were behind these attacks, for they were desperate enough to pursue this strategy at any cost, even at the expense of a significant number of civilian lives.

## How Assad got away with the Ghouta chemical attack

The magnitude of the Ghouta chemical attack was such that it made headlines and caused significant global outrage among world leaders, including US President Barack Obama, British Prime Minister David Cameron, and French President Francois Hollande, who declared that they would seriously consider retaliatory military action against the Syrian regime. Given the depravity Assad had displayed and the moral outrage at using chemical weapons to kill the innocent, there was a strong case for permitting the expected military intervention. Furthermore, the vast majority of Western decisionmakers were not so keen to intervene in Syria before 21 August 2013. But on this occasion the situation was different, as the events in Ghouta were not just about another conflict in the Middle East – they were about the use of chemical weapons and about making sure that we as an international community would preserve our capability of deterring their use elsewhere in the future. So, as a matter of principle, it was in the international community's interest to respond to these attacks with a full retaliation for an unchecked use of deadly chemical weapons in one place in the world that would ultimately produce similar misuses of illegal chemical weapons elsewhere. According to the Geneva Protocol of 1925<sup>1</sup>, the use, possession,

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<sup>1</sup> Even though the Geneva Protocol of 1925 was signed prior to Syrian Arab Republic (re-)gaining independence from France on 17 April 1946 (*de jure* Syria was recognized as a parliamentary republic on 24 October 1945), the country became a party to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare of 17 December 1968. Still, Syria did not fully ratify this law until late 2013, and from legal perspective it opens the issue of this country's adherence to this law to various interpretations between 1968 and 2013. This ambiguity was ultimately cleared when Syria's officially acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (on 14 September 2013) and became its 190<sup>th</sup> State Party (on 14 October 2013). But the controversy was still in place in the direct aftermath of the chemical attack in Ghouta in August 2013. When we look at this controversy through the prism of the English School it is good to point out that Linklater and Suganami (2006) distinguish between at least two strong voices in this debate: a pluralist international society that suggests a limited degree of civility between independent political communities, and a solidarist international society that postulates an extended degree of civility in similar situations. Whilst English School pluralist theorists claim that Syria has been bound by this Protocol only inadvertently as a result of various agreements concluded by this country by reason of notification given by its government to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the English School solidarists would argue that Syria was inadvertently bound to this legislation in a very direct manner even before 2013, for the Geneva Protocol of 1925 is legally binding to all

and manufacture of chemical weapons is prohibited. Every member of the international community should comply with the relevant treaties preventing their use. Naturally, this piece of legislation is selectively interpreted, for even permanent members of the UNSC have had in their possession large stockpiles of chemical weapons. Still, the main emphasis in this debate is directed towards the concept of their use in military conflict rather than their possession. Still, despite his previous declarations, President Obama made it clear that the US would not respond in a unilateral fashion against the Syrian regime to deter this chemical weapons aggression (Richinick, 2013), and he called on the international community to authorize a collective retaliatory action against Assad at that point. From a legal perspective, the only international body that could authorize such a collective intervention was the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Still, one of its permanent members, the Russian Federation, was also a great ally of Assad and had vetoed similar initiatives in the past. In the end, because of the potential Russian veto (Davison, Landis, 2018; Deher, 2018), the permanent five members of the UNSC also decided to take more conciliatory measures against the Assad regime. Those measures forced him to give up his chemical weapons arsenal and placed his regime under international supervision until this task was completed. This outcome was achieved predominantly thanks to the diplomatic intervention of Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who outmaneuvered his American counterpart in a last attempt to defend Assad in a meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry, suggesting that the Syrian president would be ready to surrender his chemical weapons stockpiles in exchange for averting US retaliation. This was an unprecedented turn of events, as instead of punishing Assad for the actions of the loyalist forces under his command in the Ghouta region, the US and Russia decided to make a deal with his regime to offer him what later turned out to be impunity in exchange for relinquishing control of Syrian chemical weapons. This, in essence, meant something else from a criminal law perspective, for it introduced into international law the notion of plea bargaining, which usually involves the defendant's pleading guilty to a lesser charge, while in exchange, the prosecution (in this case the international community) would recommend some leniency in sentencing. However, in essence, this was a very lenient sentence that involved giving up the right to possession of the illegal weapons of mass destruction that should not have been in Assad's arsenal in the first place. One should not be surprised if the opponents of this "plea deal" were not excited about it because despite "having his fingers all over" the chemical weapons attack, the Syrian regime was suddenly, out of the blue, offered a generous "Get Out of Jail Free" card, without even admitting any wrongdoing. Furthermore, the message that Assad received in the aftermath of the 2013

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countries of the world without any exception. This has to do with the qualified progressive interpretation of the peaceful coexistence among nations principle that places mutually recognized limits on the use of force both in the international and domestic realm, simply because unequivocal restraint in respect of the use of chemical weapons is expected of all states in an international system of states, without any exception. The very fact that the Syrian government did not ratify this protocol until 2013 suggests that it was aware of the international community's legal standing in this respect. For more information in this respect, see Trapp (2014, pp. 7–23), Trapp (2017, pp. 363–378), Bain (2010), and *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction*. United Nations Treaty Collection, Chapter XXVI: Disarmament.

Ghouta attack was that the international community let him get away with the crime in exchange for his chemical weapons arsenal and that he could still “enjoy” the “luxury of pounding his foes city by city”, leaving them little space to retreat or regroup, for he would not be held accountable for the unjust imprisonment or torture of his political opponents that happened prior to 2013, if he only promised not to use chemical weapons again, at least not so often.

Naturally, the opponents of the post-Ghouta attack negotiation with Assad emphasized that this deal did not go far enough since it created conditions of impunity for any perpetrator of similar future attacks. It was also stressed that by agreeing to such a solution, global decisionmakers agreed to a silent conspiracy to pretend that nothing significant happened at Ghouta if the Assad regime plays by the rules and shows a readiness to relinquish its chemical weapons. Subsequently, it was also maintained that letting Assad get away with this crime seemed like a fundamentally wrong decision from an ethical standpoint as it allowed the responsible party to go unpunished for the crimes committed against the Syrian people. But clearly, Moscow and Washington were driven by different intentions during the post-Ghouta attack negotiations with the Syrian regime. The Russians wanted to protect the friendly despot from the Middle East at all costs, whilst the US government was interested in securing the destruction of the rest of the chemical weapons in Assad’s arsenal or at least placing them under international supervision so no Syrian would be exposed in future to chemical attack.

The paradox of the situation back then was that the parties considering retaliation against the Syrian authorities in response to the use of chemical weapons would most probably have utilized NATO’s experience in former Yugoslavia, for that is practically the best-known point of reference in such situations. But this would have meant that such an operation would have had a very militaristic character that would not have prioritized saving Syrian lives but rather would have entailed a limited bombing campaign against military targets, governmental buildings, or Assad’s private residence and bunker. However, from the perspective of the Obama administration, dropping a limited number of bombs on Syrian positions was not a viable option. Neither the US government nor the international community had the intention to deploy 100,000 pairs of boots on the ground to remove Assad from power and to bring the real perpetrators of the attack to justice. Implementing such an idea would have meant opening Pandora’s box, as George W. Bush did in Iraq in 2003. Such an action could not have produced any meaningful outcome that would have satisfied the expectations of those who advocated securing more tangible support for the moderates. Also, any irresponsible use of the US’s retaliatory arsenal might have created more harm than good. For these reasons, there was no point in pretending that Washington had obtained some miraculous cure that would have solved all the problems of the Syrian people and removed their leader from power. Instead, what Obama and his Russian counterpart achieved, was to put some of the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction in the world under international supervision. This also meant securing the destruction of chemical agents that were destined to be misused, as, by mid 2013, the Syrian conflict zone had seen a vast influx of jihadist fighters who had already openly started taking advantage of local chaos to lay the foundations for a mini jihadist state.

## The US response to the Khan Shaykhun chemical attacks of 2017

From the perspective of hindsight, we know that Assad's promises and explanations were largely disingenuous. Soon afterward, Syria became the site of a number of regime chemical attacks, at least up until early 2019.<sup>2</sup> Morgan Ortagus from the US State Department claims that "the Assad regime has used chemical weapons on its own people at least 50 times since the conflict began" (Ortagus, 2020). Still, if we were to compare the magnitude and the scope of the Ghouta chemical attack to any other chemical attacks after 2013, it would be to those that occurred in the town of Khan Shaykhun in the Idlib Province in 2017 (that killed at least 86 people, for regime hands were all over that attack again). A day later, the newlyelected US President Donald Trump criticized the Syrian regime for the attack and decided to authorize a swift retaliatory action against the Syrian regime with 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles that were fired against the Shayrat Airfield, where the warplanes used in these chemical attacks were located. Trump presented this action as a decisive action against a political player who was already persistent in overusing the chemical agents he found at his disposal at the expense of his fellow citizens to save his position. However, we need to say that this response was proportional but still inadequate, for this action achieved nothing of substance for the region's security. To anyone who compares this act of retaliation with previous US interventions in the region in the last twenty years, it must seem a somewhat conservative improvisation compared to what the US Army was really capable of. Also, this response had nothing to do with the concept of humanitarian intervention because of its retaliatory character: it did not intend to save civilian lives. It just showed that Trump was not interested in doing anything beyond striking an unknown military object of minimal strategic importance.

Clearly, the Obama administration had achieved more in 2013 by restraining from using military force than Trump in 2017 by responding unilaterally with "a couple of cruise missiles attacks", for, in essence, Trump prioritized this action's retaliatory character over the humanitarian needs of saving the lives of people who might have otherwise been subjected to chemical weapons in the following years. Naturally, the very fact that this attack has occurred suggests that despite the promised full cooperation from Syrian officials in 2013, the mandate to relinquish all illegal weapons of mass destruction was not entirely fulfilled, for very similar chemical attacks kept happening in Syria until at least the beginning of 2019. But, when we consider the full scale and scope of all of the prevented chemical attacks that might have otherwise happened with the use of a hundred tons of deadly chemical agents, it has to be admitted that there was merit to offering Assad a "plea deal" in 2013, for this decision has saved hundreds of lives. Thanks to that, much

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<sup>2</sup> See the reported chemical weapons attacks in: Al-Hasakah on 28 June 2015, Mare' on 1 September 2015, Sheikh Maqsood on 7 April 2016, Eastern Ghouta on 15 June 2016, Aleppo on 10 August 2016, Dandaniya on 25 August 2016, Kafri Zita on 1 October 2016, Sheikh Maqsood on 8 October 2016, Sheikh Maqsood on 25 November 2016, Wadi Barada on 8 January 2017, Al-Lataminah between 25 and 30 March 2017, Hbit on 3 April 2017, Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017, Douma on 11 January 2018, East Ghouta on 22 January 2018, Douma on 1 February 2018, Saraqeb on 4 February 2018, Aranda, Afrin on 16 February 2018, Douma on 26 February 2018, Douma on 7 April 2018, Aleppo on 24 November 2018, and Kabana on 19 May 2019. For more information in this respect, refer to similar reports prepared by Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Human Rights Watch (HRW).

larger humanitarian disasters in the making were averted as tons of chemical weapons did not end up in the hands of, for instance, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or any other radical from ISIS or al-Nusra (Prendergast 2019, pp. 336; Ruthven, 2014).

## Discussion

The Syrian conflict has caused catastrophic casualties, one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The ultimate responsibility for the cataclysm of this senseless war lies on the shoulders of many, not only the regime, the opposition forces, and the jihadists. Still, it is also shared with their foreign handlers who support them from afar, either by sending arms and ammunition or providing diplomatic coverage for specific actions on the ground. When it comes to the Ghouta chemical attack of August 2013, the Syrian regime's fingers are all over this deadly assault. Still, Bashar al-Assad did not face any severe consequences for his actions except for being exposed to the discomfort of temporary international sanctions that obliged his regime to relinquish its chemical weapons arsenal under international supervision.

The international community decided not to pursue any collective retaliatory actions against the culprits of this transnational crime. The logic behind this action can be partly explained by the need to remove these deadly weapons from the Syrian theater of war so they would not end up in the wrong hands of a less predictable government. The application of this logic was heavily criticized, especially given that it was reported that the regime had used chemical weapons on several occasions after 2013 (Human Rights Watch, 2013, 2015). This is, however, the only tip of the iceberg, for ultimately, the members of the international community have proven to be very reluctant to chase Bashar al-Assad to "the gates of hell" to bring him to justice because he happened to have a powerful Russian friend. If it had not been for Putin, the Syrian leader would have attempted to flee his country in the manner of Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich, who fled Ukraine in 2014, as he would have been afraid of facing the same fate as Muammar Gadhafi or Saddam Hussein. However, Assad did not have to "worry too much" about his safety, for Russia had blocked every UNSC suggestion of the necessity of implementing the so-called collective self-defense action of the former Yugoslavia type. Effectively, instead of punishing one of the most significant human rights abuses in the region, Assad's rule was artificially extended, which happened at the expense of the Syrian society. The Assad example illustrates that even if you are a human rights violator, when you have such influential friends as Russia and President Putin, you needn't fear for your safety. They seem to be inclined to protect your interest no matter what. You can sleep tight, as nothing wrong will happen to you.

This, naturally, opens up the question of protecting fundamental human rights and analyzing the situations in which they are so openly violated. Unfortunately, despite this system's complexity and our legislation's strength, we still suffer from a lack of the ability to use clearly defined retaliatory measures against those who violate international law. This means that there is still an explicit limitation of our UN-based global security system, for it is clear that international legislators have put too much emphasis on developing a very comprehensive set of laws and regulations



preventing countries from waging wars against each other and protecting the state sovereignty of any given country, but too little has been done to create conditions to protect the human rights of endangered populations in civil war scenarios. Indeed, the way in which the international community responded to the Ghouta crisis and the Syrian conflict, in general, can be partly explained by the way the international legal system works, for it is still heavily influenced by Max Weber's doctrine that the state owns a monopoly on violence, which is supported by the principle of nonintervention in the internal affairs of independent international actors. This legal, institutional basis is underpinned by the UNSC's position as the ultimate arbiter that is legally allowed to decide when the nonintervention doctrine should be bypassed and under what circumstances it should be respected. In this sense, UNSC is solely responsible for sanctioning coercion in the global environment and has a comprehensive mandate to decide what measures should be taken to restore the rule of law in the conflict zones of the contemporary world. So, naturally, we need to indicate the existence of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Doctrine<sup>3</sup> (one of the most recent additions to how humanitarian response law functions), for it reinterprets the traditional noninterventionist standpoint of the international community to a large extent. But the use of R2P is still rather selective because such influential states as Russia and China show a farreaching skepticism to the R2P's arbitrary use in the international realm.

Even if the UNSC fails to find a way to deal with a particular global issue at hand (especially if it happens to be as dynamic, complex, and elusive as the Syrian conflict), this organization should still be seen as the only body capable of authorizing an intervention aimed at protecting human rights in any given country, at least for the time being, for even though the story of the Syrian conflict and the international community's response to the use of prohibited chemical weapons has no happy ending, the UN-based collective security system is not a dysfunctional relic of the past, for there is a way to change it either through evolution or revolution. We surely can learn a precious lesson from our policymaking mistakes in Syria.

## Disclaimer

This paper was written prior to the outbreak of Russia's War in Ukraine in 2022. Therefore, it does not compare the situation in both war zones. However, it still can be used as a helpful point of reference in a broader debate on the scope and scale of the international community's responsibility for bringing peace and security back to the contemporary conflict zone affected by hypothetical chemical weapons attacks. Given that Putin's war in Ukraine does not look like a victorious campaign by any standard, and considering that the international community had shown a farreaching restraint when it comes to bringing the regimes that directly benefited from the use of chemical

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<sup>3</sup> The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Doctrine is the latest, modest but surely advantageous, legal innovation in this respect that was introduced by international legislators to prioritize human rights protection over the laws protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of any given state, especially in instances in which any given rogue regime attempts to hide under the shield of sovereignty (Genser, Cotler, 2011; Thakur, Maley, 2015, pp. 3–78).

weapons to justice, we can make an educated guess that President of Russian Federation and the commanders under his command may have the incentive to resort to the weapons of mass destruction to pursue particular military objectives if their army continues to underperform.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For more information in this respect, please see: Pietrzak, P. 2022. "A Comparative Study of Russia's War in Ukraine (2014-, including its 2022 escalation), Russia's aggression in Georgia (2008), and Russia's Military Operations in Syria (2015-)" *the 7th International Symposium of the Middle East "Political and Social Stability in the Middle East*: Edited by Gündoğdu, Emre, Turan, Yunus Bildiriler | and | Pietrzak, P. (2022). The Putinization of the situation of women and children during the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. *In Statu Nascendi Journal of Political Philosophy and International Relations: Special Issue: Gender Equality in Politics and International*, 5 (2), 19–76.

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