## **Syria using crematorium to hide executions, State Department says**

May 15, 2017

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Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-accuses-syria-of-mass-executions-and-burning-bodies/2017/05/15/b7b66c86-3986-11e7-8854-21f359183e8c\_story.html?pushid=5919d401a0c953380000001d&tid=notifi\_push\_breaking-news&utm\_term=.67bbcdf5ff4b

The Syrian government has constructed and is using a crematorium inside its notorious Sednaya military prison outside Damascus to clandestinely dispose of thousands of prisoners it continues to execute inside the facility, according to the State Department.

At least 50 prisoners a day are executed in the prison, some in mass hangings, said Stuart Jones, the acting assistant secretary of state for the Middle East. A recent Amnesty International report called Sednaya a “human slaughterhouse” and said that thousands of Syrians have been abducted, detained and “exterminated” there.

The government of President Bashar al-Assad, Jones said, has carried out these atrocities and others “seemingly with the unconditional support from Russia and Iran,” his main backers.

The information, he said, came from human rights and nonovernmental sources, as well as “intelligence assessments.” He released overhead photographs of the facility.

Russia, Jones said, “has either aided in or passively looked away as the regime has” engaged in years of “mass murders” and other atrocities, including extensive bombing of hospitals and other health-care sites and the use of chemical weapons on both civilians and rebel forces.

During last week’s meeting in Washington with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Jones said Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said that “Russia must now, with great urgency, exercise its great influence over the Syrian regime.”

Jones’s remarks, made in a special State Department briefing, were notable not only for their substance but for the harsh language used to call on Russia to take action.