



OPCW

Executive Council

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ENGLISH and FRENCH only

FRANCE

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC TO THE
OPCW AT THE NINETY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 7(C)**

Madam Chairperson,

We welcome the publication of two reports of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and take due note of their conclusions.

These two reports, which are very well documented and based on a converging body of evidence, confirm that chemical weapons were used in Marea on 1 September 2015 and in Kafr Zeita on 1 October 2016. Marea and Kafr Zeita can be added to the already long list of confirmed cases of use of these heinous weapons. That these allegations of use have been confirmed is of particularly grave concern. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons anywhere, anytime, by anyone, and for whatever reason.

It is now up to the Investigation and Identification Team to take up these conclusions to conduct its own investigation in order to identify the perpetrators of these attacks.

While we have heard criticism levied at the FFM in this forum, and others, we cannot stand idly by.

I wish to reiterate our full support and confidence in the FFM.

These two reports and their conclusions only underscore—if proof were necessary—the professionalism of the OPCW. When the FFM has sufficient evidence that is compelling and substantiated, it reports its findings. When its evidence is not sufficient to draw clear conclusions, it acknowledges as much. This fact bears out not only its independence and impartiality, but also the soundness of its expertise and credibility.

I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this session of the Executive Council and that it be published on Catalyst and on the OPCW public website.

Thank you.

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