



OPCW

Executive Council

100th Session
5 – 7 July 2022

EC-100/NAT.65
6 July 2022
ARABIC and ENGLISH only

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MILAD ATIEH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC TO
THE OPCW AT THE 100TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9**

Mr Chairperson,

We have read the draft report of the Technical Secretariat to the Executive Council entitled “Draft Report of the OPCW on the Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction in 2021” (EC-100/CRP.1, dated 20 May 2022).

In this regard, we would like to state the following:

Concerning the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (“FFM”), paragraphs 1.23 and 1.24 state that the FFM continued to hand information and material over to the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (“IIIM”) and the Investigation and Identification Team (“IIT”), pursuant to Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 and the memorandum of understanding between the OPCW and the IIIM regarding access to and the storage and handling of information and evidence.

Regarding the exchange of information among the IIIM, the IIT, and the FFM on alleged incidents in Syria, the content of the draft report is not consistent with the OPCW Policy on Confidentiality. By signing a memorandum of understanding with the IIIM, the Secretariat has gone beyond the Organisation’s mandate, which constitutes a violation of Article VIII, paragraph 34. The Convention does not provide for direct contact between the OPCW and United Nations bodies and the transfer of protected data without the approval of the State concerned and in disregard of the Annex on Confidentiality.

With regard to the Declaration Assessment Team (“DAT”), the Technical Secretariat repeats in the draft report what the Director-General stated in his monthly reports on the DAT and the twenty-fifth round of consultations. This was mentioned in paragraphs 1.25, 1.26, 1.27, and 1.28.

As for the reason why the twenty-fifth round of consultations has not been held, the draft report repeats what the Director-General stated on this matter, with a new detail added in paragraph 1.29 as follows: “The last, namely the twenty-fourth, round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority, took place in February 2021 in Damascus. The twenty-fifth round of consultations, which had tentatively been planned for May 2021 in Damascus, did not take place during the reporting period despite extensive efforts by the Secretariat. The delays in this deployment were initially (April to August 2021) caused by the absence of a response from



the Syrian Arab Republic.” The truth, however, is that Syria requested the Technical Secretariat to continue holding these rounds, as Syria has a serious desire to resolve all outstanding issues after the Director-General had suspended these rounds when he announced that expressly on 3 June 2021 during his briefing to the Security Council.

Concerning inspections at the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (“SSRC”), the Technical Secretariat addressed these operations in its aforementioned draft report in paragraphs 1.31, 1.32, and 1.33. What is striking here is the content of paragraph 1.32 of the report, which links the failure to hold the planned rounds of inspections to the COVID-19 pandemic and the delays caused to the DAT deployment, which seriously affected the planning and conduct of these inspections. We do not know the reason for linking the failure to conduct inspections with the delays in deploying the DAT.

Regarding the implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (2018), the draft report reaffirmed the credibility of the findings of the IIT on the alleged Saraqib incident (2018). Paragraph 1.36 states the following: “The conclusions of this report are based on the combination, consistency, and corroboration of the obtained information, after a careful assessment of its probative value through a widely shared methodology in compliance with best practices of international fact-finding bodies and commissions of inquiry. In its investigations, the IIT adhered to applicable OPCW procedures, including with respect to chain of custody, supplemented as appropriate.” We say that this report is based on misleading and inconsistent information, in contradiction with the most basic rules of fair investigation, as the Technical Secretariat disregarded the comments made on this report by Syria and other States.

Concerning the IIT, the draft report described Syria’s cooperation with this team as an obligation on Syria in accordance with Resolution 2118 (2013) and Article VII of the Convention. The IIT is illegitimate, and its mandate contradicts the Convention and the powers of the Security Council. Since the Technical Secretariat invokes resolution 2118 (2013) and requests Syria to comply with it, Syria reiterates its rejection of this team, as it believes in the principles and Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Therefore, Syria underscores the need to correct the errors in some paragraphs and to delete everything related to the illegitimate IIT, consistent with the spirit and letter of the Convention.

I thank you and I request that this statement be considered an official document of the 100th Session of the Executive Council and posted on the OPCW public website and on Catalyst.