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**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MILAD ATIEH  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC  
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE  
OF THE STATES PARTIES UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9(D) (SYRIA)**

Mr Chairperson,

Syria has emphasised time and again its firm position rejecting and condemning the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time, and under any circumstances. Syria calls for cooperation with it in combating terrorism and the crimes of killing and destruction perpetrated by terrorists who are carrying out the plans of the United States of America and its allies. Syria has always warned of the false-flag attacks staged by these terrorist groups and their offshoot, the White Helmets group, with the aim of blaming them on the Syrian government. We have said on more than one occasion: does it make sense that the Syrian government would resort in its war on terrorists to toxic substances which it does not possess in the first place, just to cause breathing difficulties to a few individuals, whereas it can use conventional weapons and achieve greater results on the ground in its war on terrorists?

We have reviewed the report by the Director-General (EC-101/DG.26, dated 29 September 2022) regarding the progress in the implementation of the decision adopted in 2018 by the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties on addressing the threat from chemical weapons use. In this respect, we state the following:

1. Syria has a genuine interest in addressing the threat from chemical weapons use because it is a victim of these weapons' use by terrorist groups at the behest of and with support from known States, in order to keep exerting pressure on Syria and justify their direct aggression on Syrian territories.
2. Syria reaffirms its explicit and clear position rejecting this decision, which was imposed through voting and which was only supported by less than half of the States Parties. Syria holds the view that this decision is political par excellence and contradictory to the provisions of the Convention. This decision was passed as a reaction by the United States and some Western States to the Security Council's non-extension of the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism because it lacked professionalism and integrity.
3. The report by the Director-General addressed the Syrian initial declaration and the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). The Director-General repeated the same accusations and insinuations contained in his monthly and other related reports that Syria is impeding the work of that team and thus the work of the Technical Secretariat.



Many States have adopted certain positions and levelled false accusations against Syria in this regard without even bothering to seek the truth.

4. We outline below the latest developments regarding the twenty-fifth round of consultations to clarify the facts:
  - (a) Concerning the twenty-fifth round of consultations, the Director-General states that since April 2021, the Technical Secretariat's attempts to hold this round of consultations have remained unsuccessful! Anyone reading this statement, without knowing the details of the efforts made by Syria to hold this round, would consider that Syria is obstructing the holding of the round of consultations. We have already explained in detail how Syria insisted that the Technical Secretariat hold that round of consultations as soon as possible and how Syria agreed to all the proposals made by the Technical Secretariat to hold that round in Damascus, The Hague and Beirut. This round of consultations is being obstructed by the Technical Secretariat which insists on not sending the DAT unless Syria grants all members of that team the required visas. Syria has asserted that it was willing to grant all members of the team the required visas and asked the Director-General to replace one DAT member with any other member that he deemed fit. However, the Technical Secretariat said that all DAT members must be dispatched; otherwise, it would not send the team to Syria. This is clearly a disruption and obstruction by the Technical Secretariat. Does the Secretariat not have other experts? It is the Technical Secretariat that is imposing conditions on a State Party.
  - (b) On 7 November 2022, the Secretariat requested that a meeting be held in Beirut on 15 and 16 November 2022 between a team of the Secretariat and a team of the Syrian National Authority, in order to discuss certain issues related to the Syrian initial declaration. Syria agreed immediately and informed the Secretariat on 9 November of its readiness to hold that meeting. Given the disastrous consequences of the unilateral coercive measures imposed by Western States in an unethical and inhumane manner on all aspects of life in Syria, including the economy, Syria asked the Technical Secretariat to cover the travel expenses for the Syrian delegation to Beirut. We were surprised by the reply of the Secretariat that it cannot cover the expenses of the Syrian delegation. Moreover, the Director-General of the OPCW accused Syria, in an undiplomatic language and in a manner that was far from his impartial role as a Director-General of an international organisation, of agreeing to hold the meeting in Beirut on the condition that the Syrian delegation's expenses be covered, although it knew that the Secretariat would not cover these expenses! This is an irrational accusation to Syria that it was hindering the holding of that meeting. The same happened in November 2021 when Syria agreed to hold a meeting in The Hague with the DAT upon the proposal of the Technical Secretariat. Back then, the Technical Secretariat responded that Syria may ask other States Parties to cover the expenses! Syria is not making spurious excuses. Everyone knows that the difficult economic situation, as a result of the unilateral coercive measures imposed by Western States, the United States occupation of parts of Northeast Syria, the Turkish occupation of parts of Northwest Syria, the plundering and stealing of Syria's wealth and oil in broad daylight, and the war that Syria is fighting against terrorism and Western-backed separatist

movements are the main reasons for the deterioration of the economic situation in Syria. Why not embarrass Syria by covering the expenses of its delegations' activities related to their meetings with the teams of the Technical Secretariat to test Syria's sincerity and see whether the accusations to Syria of evading participation in these meetings are true or not?

5. Concerning the illegitimate Investigation and Identification Team, Syria reaffirms its refusal to recognise it and deal with it because it was established on illegal grounds and reference. The mandate given to this team is illegal and is explicitly and clearly in contradiction with the provisions of the Convention. It is beyond the OPCW's competence and mandate. The reports issued thus far by this team prove indisputably the extent of its politicisation and the objectives for which it was established, based on the will, instructions, and directives of some States that are known for their anti-Syrian positions. My country's delegation regrets that the Technical Secretariat and some known States are blindly adopting everything that is issued by this team, not on the basis of its professionalism, integrity and objectivity, but because it drafts its reports to the liking of those States, namely accusing the Syrian government of chemical weapons use in alleged incidents.
6. As for the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), it has failed more than one test, and the evidence is clear to all States Parties. The FFM has proved to be biased and unprofessional, falsifying the facts in more than one of the reports that it has issued, especially the report on the Douma incident. My country's government is of the view that, following all these professional scandals, it is no longer acceptable to remain silent on the FFM continuing to operate according to those wrong methods.
7. Regarding the decision taken at the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties in April 2021, Syria has affirmed on more than one occasion that this decision is political par excellence, targeting a State Party to achieve political purposes and serve known agendas. It imposed sanctions on a State Party to the Convention for the first time in the history of the Organisation, without any scientific or logical reason, and exacerbated the divisions between the States Parties in the OPCW. The aim of this decision is to legitimise the Investigation and Identification Team and validate the findings contained in the report of that team regarding the Ltamenah incident and other incidents for which reports will be issued in the future, thereby confirming the accusation of chemical weapons use levelled against the Syrian government.
8. With regard to the reports by the Director-General, we have asserted on more than one occasion that these reports are drafted in a manner which is not neutral and suggest that Syria is not cooperating with the OPCW, that they ignore many facts, and that they make no mention at all of Syria's cooperation. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Head of the Syrian National Authority, has sent several letters responding to the fallacies contained in these reports. Examples abound in this regard.

I thank you and I request that this statement be considered an official document of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties and posted on the OPCW's public website and on Catalyst.