



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Seventh Session
28 November – 1 December 2022

C-27/NAT.94
29 November 2022
ENGLISH and FRENCH only

FRANCE

**JOINT STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF FIFTY-SEVEN STATES PARTIES
DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC TO THE
OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
STATES PARTIES UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9(D)**

Mr Chairperson,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of 57 States Parties, namely: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, the Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and Uruguay.

As we commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (“the Convention”), we reaffirm our shared commitment to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons anywhere, anytime, by anyone, and under any circumstances.

We condemn the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors over the past 25 years, including in Iraq, in Malaysia, in Russia, in the United Kingdom and, on numerous occasions, in Syria.

In June 2018, the Conference of the States Parties (“the Conference”) took measures in response to the recently growing number of chemical weapons attacks, and in particular the repeated cases of use of chemical weapons in Syria and the failure of the Syrian authorities to declare and destroy all of their chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities.

In April 2021, after the July 2020 decision of the Executive Council (“the Council”), and in response to the report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team which established the responsibility of the Syrian authorities in three cases of chemical weapons use, in Ltamenah on 24, 25, and 30 March 2017, the Conference, once again, adopted measures to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Convention. In particular, it condemned the use of chemical weapons by Syria and demanded that Syria immediately cease all use of these weapons and that it comply fully with its obligations under the Convention. We deeply regret that Syria has still failed to take the measures required by the Council in its decision of July 2020.



In April 2021, the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team found that the Syrian authorities used chlorine as a weapon in Saraqib on 4 February 2018. We condemn the acts of the Syrian authorities and their persistent obstruction of the work of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”). The Syrian Arab Republic must comply with its obligations under the Convention and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, and abide by the decisions of the Conference.

We welcome the publication in January 2022 of two new reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission, which demonstrated that toxic chemicals were used as a weapon in Marea on 1 September 2015 and Kafr Zeita on 1 October 2016. We look forward to the review of these cases by the Investigation and Identification Team.

It is totally unacceptable that, nine years after Syria’s accession to the Convention, the declaration submitted by Syria still cannot be considered accurate or complete. Syria must remedy the numerous gaps and inconsistencies in its declaration and live up to the obligations incumbent upon it as a State Party to the Convention.

We call on the Secretariat to strengthen its emergency response capabilities, as well as its investigative capabilities. We encourage all States Parties to continue, with the support of the Secretariat, their efforts to adopt the measures necessary for the full implementation of their obligations under the Convention.

We emphasise the importance of Article I of the Convention which underscores that States Parties undertake to never, under any circumstances, to transfer, directly or indirectly, chemical weapons to anyone or to assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited under the Convention.

We express our deepest sympathies and solidarity with the victims of the chemical attacks in Syria and their families. We reaffirm that all persons responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable and brought to justice. We welcome the exchange of relevant information between the OPCW and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism. We encourage all States Parties to exchange, in line with their national legislation, information relevant to any prosecution at the national level of criminal acts relating to chemical weapons.

We call on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention. We reaffirm our full support of the Director-General and the Secretariat in the exercise of their mandates under the Convention and in the implementation of the decisions adopted by the Conference.