

CSP 27 Agenda item 9: Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use (Syria)

Thank you Mr Chair,

The United Kingdom fully supports the statement delivered by France on behalf of 57 States Parties.

It is now nine long years since Syria made a formal undertaking to abide by the legal commitments enshrined in the Chemical Weapons Convention. Despite significant support from the Technical Secretariat and resource commitment from members of this Organisation, Syria has failed to fully account for its chemical weapons programme. Syria stands alone in using chemical weapons on a massive scale against its own people. The Syrian regime has clearly decided that its own survival justifies the use of these abhorrent weapons.

In the face of this assault on international law and the multilateral agreements designed to keep us all safe the OPCW has shown it has a critical role to play.

The second OPCW report, prepared by the Investigation and Identification Team and published in April 2021, found Syrian military units had dropped chlorine on Saraqib in February 2018. This was the eighth such finding by UN and OPCW independent investigations. We look forward to further reports issuing and we are determined to seek justice for the victims.

Syria has so far failed to respond to the Decision of this Conference in April 2021, calling on it to come into compliance and give up its chemical weapons. Syria's monthly reports do not address substantive issues and merely expose its lack of meaningful cooperation.

Until Syria takes the steps demanded of it by the OPCW policy making organs, we must assume that Syria continues to hold chemical weapons. Chemical weapons that the regime has shown that it is willing to use. Syria's behaviour, and that of the small number of states that defend it, poses an on-going threat to international security and disarmament.

We pay tribute to the staff of the Technical Secretariat and the Syria special missions for fulfilling the mandate set for them by the policy-making organs.

Syria should know that its actions will not be forgotten or ignored. Syria must cooperate, as all States Parties are required to do, with the Technical Secretariat. This Conference will judge Syria on its actions.

Thank you Mr Chair.