



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Nineteenth Session
1 – 5 December 2014

C-19/NAT.14
1 December 2014
ENGLISH and RUSSIAN only

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE
NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Distinguished Chairperson,

Allow me to congratulate you on behalf of the delegation of the Russian Federation with your election to this important post and voice our confidence that, under your leadership, the work of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction will be efficient and productive.

Today, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is one of the most productive working international structures in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as evidenced by its receipt of the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize in 2013 for its multi-faceted and focused efforts in eliminating chemical weapons. We are confident that the Organisation will remain on the frontlines in the future when it comes to resolving international issues in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation, and that it will serve as a highly professional arena where a spirit of mutual understanding, objectivity, and constructive cooperation prevails.

The Russian Federation, as per the decision of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference is making every possible effort to complete the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpiles remaining in its possession “in the shortest possible time”. In the time since the Eighteenth Session of the Conference in 2013, 2,807 tonnes of Category 1 chemical weapons have been destroyed. As a result, at this time the Russian Federation has already eliminated a total of 33,764 tonnes of chemical agents, or 84.5% of its initially declared stockpiles.

As you know, plans for 2015 involve completing the destruction of chemical weapons at four facilities in Maradykovsky, Leonidovka, Pochep, and Shchuchye. The combined amount of Category 1 chemical weapons to be destroyed by 31 December 2015 is about 36,500 tonnes of chemical agents, or 91.2% of Category 1 chemical weapons stockpiles in the Russian Federation. Operations at the Kizner facility will continue after 31 December 2015. The destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons at the Kizner facility is planned for completion no later than by 31 December 2020.

During the OPCW’s Executive Council sessions in 2012–2014, and during the Council’s visit to the Russian Federation (14–18 April 2014), the Russian Federation has reported in detail the reasons for extending the deadlines for Category 1 chemical weapons destruction.



We have just heard from the delegate of the European Union Member States, who expressed regret regarding the extension of the deadline for the destruction of chemical weapons in Russia by five years. In this context, I would like to say that instead of expressing regret, the European Union should take a more active role in helping Russia with this matter. This includes taking on a more principled and consistent position, when rather strange economic decisions contradicting international law are being pushed onto Russia.

The Russian Federation is fully committed to consistently and completely carry out its obligations under the Convention, and is taking and will continue to take the necessary measures to complete the destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles in the shortest possible time. But we will do so based on the actual economic situation as it unfolds, while following all safety standards that ought to be met during the implementation of such a complex technological task.

One of the Organisation's unquestionable achievements in 2014 was the successful implementation of the international programme for the elimination of the military chemical capability of the Syrian Arab Republic, which was the result of the good will of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, the very hard and well coordinated work of the Syrian authorities, the OPCW, and the United Nations with very active and effective support from the global community. Today, we can say with satisfaction that at present, the priorities for the chemical demilitarisation of the Syrian Arab Republic have been essentially resolved, specifically: its chemical weapons production capacities have been eliminated, as has the equipment used to mix the components thereof and fill munitions; unfilled means of delivery have been disposed of; and all declared chemical weapons components and precursors have been removed from the country. The active phase of the destruction of 12 of Syria's former chemical weapons production facilities has begun, and the completion of this phase is only a matter of time.

Here we would like to emphasise that all of this has been done and is being done in unprecedented short periods of time, in the extremely complicated military and political conditions of the conflict within Syria and in full compliance with the decision of the OPCW's Executive Council and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118.

With its key role in the elimination of Syria's military chemical potential, the Joint OPCW-United Nations Mission, the international community's contribution to the resolution of this extremely complex task has truly become a determining factor. And this all became possible only when the military and political radicalism and geopolitical adventurism relative to the internal Syrian conflict took a backseat to common sense and pragmatism.

Within this context, we should recognise the great significance of the material, technological, financial, and logistics support aimed at implementing the chemical demilitarisation programme of the Syrian Arab Republic provided by a number of States that often hold opposing views on various issues concerning the modern world order, and yet in this case came together as one for a safer world. The Russian Federation also did its part.

In this connection, I would like to express our gratitude to Director-General Üzümcü for his objective assessment of Russia's contribution to the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons.

Per the request of the Syrian authorities, in the shortest possible time Russia carried out large-scale deliveries of specialised modes of transportation, equipment, and other technical

material resources that other States, for political reasons, refused to provide. Thanks to Russia's contribution to the United Nations trust fund for Syria, the Joint OPCW-United Nations Mission was able to make additional necessary purchases. The Russian and Chinese navies worked with Danish and Norwegian ships to ensure the security of the sea-based phase of the operation to remove the toxic chemicals from the Syrian Port of Latakia using container ships provided by Denmark and Norway.

Unfortunately, a number of States Parties to the Convention, for one reason or another—mostly political—still have questions about the completeness of the declarations of what is now the former military chemical programme, or the circumstances under which toxic chemicals were used in that country, specifically chlorine, as chemical weapons. In this regard, we urge these States not to voice their subjective opinions and moreover not to draw any political conclusions before the completion of the work of the OPCW's special missions created with the consent of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in order to clarify these matters. First and foremost, professionals rather than agenda-driven politicians should be dealing with the technical aspects. On this note we would point out that Damascus is demonstrating its cooperativeness and is working closely with the OPCW and the international community—something that has been confirmed multiple times in both OPCW and United Nations documents.

Based on the current state of affairs, it can be said that the Syrian military chemical dossier is no longer an emergency. We believe that all future work in this area should be carried out exclusively on a pragmatic and de-politicised basis under the aegis of the OPCW and within the framework of its regular agenda.

While the situation is generally positive, we must mention the deeply concerning growing threat of the use of toxic chemical substances for military purposes by non-State actors in the Middle East; these actors are gaining direct access to components of chemical weapons, among other things. In this case, the subject at hand are the multiple reports of use of chlorine for purposes prohibited by the Convention by the "Islamic State" terrorist group both in Syria and Iraq. The situation surrounding the safety of the remaining stockpiles of chemical weapons in Libya also gives rise to concern.

The States Parties to the Convention should view its obligations stemming from United Nations Security Council resolutions 1540 and 2118 with great responsibility and immediately report any violations involving the acquisition by non-State actors of chemical weapons components.

The Russian Federation is keen for the OPCW, in accordance with the decisions of the Third Review Conference, to maintain its effectiveness and ability to promptly and adequately respond to new challenges and threats, perform its operations on a de-politicised basis, and take consensus-based decisions on all issues.

It is important to act consistently and in line with the fact that the Convention is a holistic mechanism in which the rights and obligations of the States Parties are closely interrelated. As a result, it is impossible to achieve progress in any one area—for example, in developing specialised international cooperation or providing assistance in eliminating threats related to chemical weapons—without duly carrying out the obligations under the Convention on a national level. If not all States Parties have aligned their legislation with the requirements of

the CWC, the main objective of the Convention—the complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons—will be unattainable.

The Convention also provides for monitoring measures in order to prevent the production of chemical weapons at companies in the chemical industry. The Russian Federation places great significance on this aspect of the OPCW's work. This is where it is important to maintain a rational balance between effective verification and minimising the verification workload at chemical industry companies to prevent creating any obstacles for the development of international cooperation in the chemical industry.

The Russian Federation gives priority to the universality of the CWC as well. We consistently raise this issue both in our bilateral contacts, as well as in multilateral arenas. The voluntary accession of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Convention should serve as an example for other countries that are still outside of the international and legal framework of this intergovernmental treaty. We also call on these States to urgently, and without any preconditions, accede to the Convention.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson, for giving the Russian Federation the floor.

We request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

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