

**NEW ZEALAND****STATEMENT BY MS ERIN MORRISS  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE OPCW  
AT THE EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thanks also to the Director-General for his update and the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) for their preparations for this meeting.

Firstly, we wish to express our condolences to the delegation of the Netherlands and to the family of Jan Lucas van Hoorn. As the New Zealand delegation is often seated next to the Netherlands, we have enjoyed a very close personal and professional relationship with Jan Lucas and we will miss him greatly.

New Zealand welcomes the Executive Council’s (hereinafter “the Council”) continued focus on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. It is critical that this Council continues to monitor the situation closely. In that regard, New Zealand appreciates the ongoing work of the Secretariat in response to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic - in particular the work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and Declaration Assessment Team (DAT).

New Zealand remains deeply concerned that despite the assistance provided by the Secretariat, and many countries represented in this room, the destruction of the Syrian Government’s declared chemical weapon arsenal has not resulted in the elimination of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat’s efforts to investigate the accuracy of the Syrian Arab Republic’s declaration have in fact resulted in a growing and alarming list of gaps and discrepancies.

We note that the Secretariat’s inspections of Syrian research facilities (mandated under EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016) occurred last week and we look forward to receiving further information about these inspections. It is imperative that the Syrian Government continues to work with the Secretariat to ensure that the Council decision is fully implemented.

We once again express our grave concerns with the findings of the third and fourth reports of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). New Zealand fully supports the ongoing and credible work of the JIM, all of which continues to be undertaken in extremely difficult circumstances. The JIM reports, released last year, clearly indicate that chemical weapons were used by the Syrian Government. Given this conclusion, it is clear that the Syrian Government’s declaration was incomplete.



We condemn this flagrant violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and call on the Executive Council to continue to act firmly to ensure accountability for all cases of non-compliance and to preserve the integrity of the Convention and this Organisation.

Finally Madam Chairperson, New Zealand condemns in the strongest possible terms the suspected use of the nerve agent VX in the recent attack at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on 13 February. Regrettably, this highlights that implementation of the Convention in prohibiting and eliminating chemical weapons is not yet universal, and threats still exist. New Zealand supports any assistance the OPCW and States Parties can provide to the Government of Malaysia.

I ask that this statement be issued as an official document and posted on the OPCW's external server and public website.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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