



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Thirty-Third Meeting  
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ENGLISH only

**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

**STATEMENT BY SIR GEOFFREY ADAMS  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE OPCW  
AT THE THIRTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

As this is the first time I have spoken on behalf of the United Kingdom at the Executive Council, may I first say how much I am looking forward to working with you, and with all my colleagues in this room.

I support the statement just made by the Ambassador of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

The decision we took on Friday evening – or technically Saturday morning – was unprecedented. The bilateral framework agreed by Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Lavrov on 14 September to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons was translated into a decision of this Council. Within a couple of hours our decision had been reinforced by a unanimous resolution of the United Nations Security Council.

Taken together, the decision and the resolution place a legally binding and enforceable obligation on Syria to declare the totality of its chemical weapon capability, and then to destroy it. This was indeed an exceptional reaction to exceptional circumstances.

And it is worth recalling what brought us to this point. For decades Syria has lied about its chemical weapons programme. Then, in Ghouta on 21 August this year, what the Secretary-General of the United Nations has called a war crime was committed. We condemned it utterly then, and we continue to condemn it. Following the objective and unequivocal report of the subsequent United Nations investigation mission, to which staff from this Organisation contributed their expertise, it is abundantly clear that the Syrian authorities themselves are the only party that could have committed this crime. Those responsible for this atrocity must be held accountable for it.

Now, we all recognise that the decision we took includes some very ambitious timelines. States Parties will need to provide additional expertise and resources to the OPCW so that the challenge can be met. The United Kingdom is ready to contribute to that effort, and as the Foreign Secretary, William Hague, announced in New York last week, the United Kingdom will immediately provide the OPCW with GBP 2 million for its work to deal with the Syrian programme.



All of us now – whether as States Parties, as members of the Executive Council, or as members of the United Nations Security Council – need to ensure that Syria meets its obligations, in full and on time. Syria’s chemical weapons and production facilities must be secured and destroyed in a verifiable manner and without further delay, in accordance with the clear and unanimous will of the international community. This will require swift and unambiguous commitment and action from Syria. It will require continued thoroughness, professionalism, and dedication from the Technical Secretariat. And it will require us, as the Executive Council, in our response to reports, information, and proposals from the Director-General, to act rapidly and decisively to ensure the successful and timely destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons programme. The United Kingdom is ready to play its full part in that effort.

I would like to request that this statement be issued as an official document of this Council meeting.

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