



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

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8 January 2014

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**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ROBERT P. MIKULAK AT THE THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

Approximately a hundred days ago, on 27 September 2013, this Council adopted its decision on the “Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons” and the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2118. During this brief period, significant progress has been made in destroying the infrastructure supporting the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons programme. All of the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons production, mixing and filling equipment has been functionally disabled, pending complete destruction. In addition, hundreds of unfilled chemical weapons-capable missile warheads and aerial bombs declared by the Syrian Arab Republic have been destroyed. OPCW inspectors have successfully inventoried all the chemical weapons facilities and stockpiles of agent and munitions declared by the Syrian Arab Republic and have monitored the disabling and destruction activities, all within the expedited timeline established by the Council.

The United States of America commends the staff of the OPCW for its competence and dedication in support of international efforts to eliminate the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons programme, as well as its support of the United Nations investigation of chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic. The United States of America also commends the OPCW-UN Joint Mission and the Special Coordinator, Sigrid Kaag, for their continuing efforts and leadership in seeking the complete elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons programme.

While much has already been accomplished in eliminating the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons infrastructure, the international community must now effectively address the core of the chemical weapons programme unleashed by the Syrian Arab Republic against its own people—the chemicals themselves, which constitute a declared stockpile of many tons of chemical weapons agents and chemical precursors.

The efforts to ensure the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons as safely and quickly as possible reflects the urgency for this felt around the globe. Many countries have provided financial and in-kind contributions. The United States of America continues its strong support of these efforts. We are working actively with the OPCW and international partners, including Russia, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Italy and the United Kingdom, to meet the 30 June 2014 target date for the total elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic’s CW programme. The United States of America has provided tens of millions of dollars in assistance to the OPCW-UN Joint Mission to support these efforts. That assistance for the



safe packing and transport of chemical weapons materials inside the Syrian Arab Republic includes drums, trucks, forklifts, and other items. We are also lending our unique technical capabilities to the international effort by outfitting a United States vessel, the MV Cape Ray, with proven hydrolysis technology to neutralise designated Priority 1 chemicals at sea.

Thanks to the contributions and active engagement of many countries, the international community is now poised to destroy the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons outside of the Syrian Arab Republic, as envisioned in the 27 September decisions. In addition to the United States neutralisation ship, other efforts include:

- (a) Danish and Norwegian ships (with Finnish support) are ready to enter the port of Latakia to load the chemicals for removal from the Syrian Arab Republic, accompanied by a chemical weapons emergency response team from Finland. Russia and China will help to provide security in Syrian territorial waters for the marine transport operation.
- (b) The Italian government is making available a port in which to transload chemicals from the Danish ship to the Cape Ray.
- (c) The United Kingdom will provide an in-kind contribution to destroy a portion of the precursor chemicals through commercial incineration.

This Council established 31 December 2013 as the completion date for the removal from the Syrian Arab Republic of the Priority 1 chemicals, namely mustard agent and the key binary chemical weapon components—DF, A, B, and BB, including BB salt—as declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. That completion date has slipped for a variety of reasons. However, given the extraordinary importance to international security of removal of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons, all States Parties involved should make every effort to avoid further delay and move rapidly to remove the Priority 1 chemicals from the Syrian Arab Republic as quickly as possible.

The international community is doing its part to facilitate the process, but the Syrian Arab Republic has not yet fulfilled its responsibility to transport all of its Priority 1 chemicals to the port of Latakia for removal. Eleven days ago, on 28 December 2013, the OPCW-UN Joint Mission reacted to the lack of action by the Syrian Arab Republic and made clear that “the Syrian Arab Republic needs to intensify its efforts to ensure that its international obligations and commitment are met, including under the Chemical Weapons Convention and in fulfilment of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118 and the relevant decisions of the OPCW Executive Council.” The United States of America strongly supports this statement and the efforts of the Joint Mission.

Mr Chairman,

It is the responsibility of the Syrian Arab Republic to transport to Latakia all of the chemicals slated for removal from the Syrian Arab Republic. The United States of America recognises the extraordinary accomplishments that have brought us to the beginning of the removal process, which took place yesterday. We urge that every effort be made to achieve the prompt and complete removal without further delay. Prior to joining the Convention, the Syrian Arab Republic successfully undertook, on several occasions, the relocation and consolidation of its chemical weapons stockpile amidst the fighting.

The United States of America expects the Syrian Arab Republic to intensify its efforts and to meet its obligations under the Convention, the decisions of this Council, and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118.

I request that this statement be made an official document of the meeting.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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