



OPCW

Executive Council

Forty-Fifth Meeting
26 September 2014

EC-M-45/NAT.2
26 September 2014
ENGLISH only

BRAZIL

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PIRAGIBE S. TARRAGÔ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL TO THE OPCW AT THE
FORTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

At the outset, I'd like to indicate our satisfaction to see you presiding over this meeting. A meeting, the convening of which took my delegation by surprise. For the Council has been called only a few days before its regular session to address an issue that will, in any way, be discussed at the session on the 7 October. But, since the meeting has been called, we could not but share some preliminary views on the matter.

Upon reading the second report of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), Brazilian authorities have instructed my delegation to reiterate their great concern at the possibility of chlorine gas having been used in attacks against civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic in the current year. As we all know, the misuse of industrial chemicals is simply unacceptable.

However, my authorities note that the report's findings have to be taken with a pinch of salt and cannot be deemed conclusive, as some relevant aspects of the incidents it describes have yet to be fully clarified.

It is noteworthy, for instance, that there is no concrete indication of the apparent cause for the absence of abnormalities in the survivors of the incidents, even though they would have been exposed to lethal doses of a highly reactive gas. There is also no verifiable information on the type and ownership of the delivery systems, and on whether they were produced using an industrial or improvised process. Also, the mission has not been in a position to collect the samples required to complete its work in an impartial and credible manner. We have failed to see in the second report the views of the Syrian Arab Republic's authorities in whose jurisdiction the incidents took place. Furthermore, we should be very careful before endorsing information obtained from sources, whose objectivity can be doubtful, and including it in OPCW documents. So, my delegation believes that we should proceed with utmost caution and avoid precipitous conclusions before considering the next steps on this matter.

While we are still on the chlorine gas issue, we have recently learnt in the media that the Iraqi police have indicated that the so-called ISIS has systematically used that gas in some provinces of Iraq. If confirmed, this information would bring a new perspective to the alleged attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic, as that terrorist group also operates in that



country. Regrettably, that is not the first attempt of a non-state actor to acquire and use chemical weapons capabilities. In 2007, combatants affiliated with Al-Qaeda exploded trucks with this same toxic agent in Iraq. In the case of the Syrian Arab Republic, as referred in their first report of the Fact-Finding Mission, a chlorine-producing plant close to Aleppo has been seized by armed groups, which reinforces the possibility that non-state actors are in possession of that chemical.

Mr Chairman,

My delegation's statement does not mean to uphold one side or another. But before rushing to fix responsibilities, we should clearly and unequivocally establish the facts, lest we commit an unfairness. The Secretariat has endeavoured to clarify the facts. However, the evidence collected thus far remains circumstantial, and should be properly weighted. Any responsible action from a policy-making organ should require that the forensic work be carried out with utmost caution in order to enable us to assess the risks and challenges of our decisions on an impartial manner.

I would ask that this statement be included in the official records of this meeting.

Thank you.

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