



OPCW

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JAPAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MR MASARU TSUJI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO THE OPCW
AT THE FORTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,
Director-General,

First of all I appreciate the briefing made by the Director-General this morning and for the second report of the Fact-Finding Mission. I would especially like to commend the Fact-Finding Mission for its continued efforts despite the very difficult circumstances in and around the Syrian Arab Republic.

Before I continue my statement, I wish to emphasise the importance for the Executive Council to continue to be engaged in this important issue. And, therefore, we welcome this opportunity to present our basic position on “the Second Report of the Fact-Finding Mission on the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.”

Reading the second report left us with very grave concerns about the situation. Based on a series of testimonies of witnesses and other relevant information, the report confirms that a toxic chemical was used as a weapon, systematically and repeatedly. The report of the Fact-Finding Mission also says, with a high degree of confidence, chlorine is the toxic chemical in question. The report further mentions that a number of witnesses explicitly referred to the presence of helicopters when attacks using chemical weapons occurred. Those elements combined, lead to a simple belief that activities in contravention of the Chemical Weapons Convention have been carried out in an organised way.

Under any circumstances, the use of chemical materials as a weapon is strictly prohibited under this Convention. And my Government strongly condemns the attacks using chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition to the use of chemical weapons in April and May as mentioned in the report, they have allegedly been used again in August.

Since last year, this Organisation, in cooperation with the United Nations, has taken on this very difficult task of destroying all the Syrian chemical weapons and production facilities. Many countries, including my Government, have made substantial contributions, financially or in-kind, to meet this serious challenge in front of us. Staff of this Organisation and the United Nations have taken enormous risks in implementing the course set out by this Council and the United Nations.



We are disappointed that while all these combined efforts by the international community were being carried out, another grave act, the use of chlorine, was committed. We should take these incidents very seriously. In my saying this, I fully take into account the concerns expressed by the Secretary General of the United Nations over the conclusion of the report.

If we let these pass without any consequence, the credibility of this Organisation and the Convention will be seriously undermined. Therefore this delegation supports the continuation of the work of the Fact-Finding Mission, in order to bring all the facts concerning the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic to light. Also this report reminds us of the need of this Council to continue to be fully engaged in taking up the remaining tasks, and to do its utmost in order to live up to its responsibilities under the Convention and to the expectation of the international community.

Mr Chairperson,

In closing, I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this meeting of the Council.

Thank you for your attention.

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