



OPCW

Executive Council

Forty-Fifth Meeting
26 September 2014

EC-M-45/NAT.19
26 September 2014
ENGLISH only

NETHERLANDS

**STATEMENT BY MR PIETER M. VAN DONKERSGOED
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS
TO THE OPCW AT THE FORTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

The Netherlands associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union. In addition, my delegation considers it important to express its views in a national capacity, as a member of this Council.

Like many previous speakers, the Netherlands is deeply concerned by the second report of the Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic and therefore is fully supportive of the convening of this meeting to discuss this report.

The content of the Fact-Finding Mission report contained, in document S/1212/2014, dated 29 September 2014, can adequately be described as shocking.

Shocking because the report confirms our fears that chemical weapons are being used in the Syrian Arab Republic; shocking because that use has been systematic and repeated, and can therefore not be considered as merely an incident; shocking because a year after the Syrian Arab Republic acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention, civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic continue to be victims of chemical weapons.

Like other speakers have noted, the evidence links the use of chlorine to helicopters, equipment available only to the Syrian Government.

The text of the Convention could not be clearer: the use of a (or any) toxic chemical as a weapon is prohibited. This Council, as guardian of the Convention, therefore must take action in the light of this breach of the Convention. Quick and firm action is required, even more so because there are clear indications as noted in the Mission's report that the use of chlorine is continuing.

The Fact-Finding Mission for that reason should continue its work. But that continued investigation by the Mission should not keep this Council from taking its responsibility by taking appropriate action at its next regular session. These clear breaches of the Convention should not remain without consequence and those responsible should be held accountable.

In closing, I request that this statement be issued as an official document of this Forty-Fifth Meeting of the Executive Council.

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