



## **Joint Statement by Canada, France, Germany, Qatar, Syria, Türkiye, United Kingdom, and United States**

The nations gathered here stand beside the new Syrian government as it confronts one of the darkest legacies of the Assad era. Today, Syria turns from a past tarnished by the former regime's use of Chemical Weapons against its own people, toward a future that is worthy of Syria's rich history and its people.

We honour the victims of the Assad Regime's atrocities, many of them children, whose suffering shocked the world and put its order to the test. Today, their memory and the will of the survivors guide our collective determination to protect Syria and the world from the scourge of Chemical Weapons.

Today, we launch our "Breath of Freedom Task Force". With Syria's leadership, our Task Force commits to identifying and destroying any remnants of the former regime's Chemical Weapons Programme. This will take time, and the challenges ahead are immense. Assad's programme was secretive, and so much is still unknown about its nature and extent. When identified, access to sites is frequently restricted by challenging operational conditions or obstructed due to mines and unexploded ordnances, yet our resolve is absolute. The Task Force brings together countries with varied experiences and capabilities, who will support different aspects of the Syrian-led operation. In particular, the Task Force aims to:

- 1- Enable all aspects of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' mission to discover, secure, and verifiably destroy any remnants of Chemical Weapons and related materials and infrastructure that may be found; and,

2- Solicit and provide contributions, consistent with all applicable laws, to build the national capacity of Syria's Government, to deliver training, equipment, and support execution of the required operations.

In doing so, we reaffirm the global norm enshrined in the Chemical Weapons Convention that must never be compromised; Chemical Weapons have no place in Syria, no place in the region, and no place in our world.

As with all of our work so far, this will be achieved in full cooperation and coordination with the (OPCW). We will continue to support the OPCW verification of Syrian-led Chemical Weapons destruction, in compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) alongside the OPCW's continuing and urgent task to identify the perpetrators of the Assad era Chemical Weapons attacks.

This Task Force, with its current structure, will drive forward progress, but it will not be successful without the support of other OPCW Member States. So we encourage other Member States to work with us to help deliver on our shared objective of a Syria free from Chemical Weapons.

At a time when the world desperately needs stories of unity and hope, we have chosen to write one together. The "Breath of Freedom Task Force" marks a new page for Syria, from a country that has provoked the concern and outrage of the international community, to a country demonstrating leadership and resolve. Our shared commitment is firm, our purpose is clear, and our message is unambiguous: In honour of the victims and in defense of humanity, this international norm will be upheld in Syria once more, and Syria will breathe freely again. Canada, France, Germany, Qatar, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States stand resolute and side-by-side with Syria in this mission.

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