



**OPCW**

**Conference of the States Parties**

Fourth Special Session  
26 and 27 June 2018

C-SS-4/NAT.17  
26 June 2018  
ARABIC and ENGLISH only

**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BASSAM AL-SABBAGH  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW  
AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES  
PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

The Chemical Weapons Convention is the legal framework agreed upon unanimously by the international community for dealing with this dangerous type of weapon of mass destruction, and our Organisation is the technical cornerstone ensuring the implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

However, since 2011, the United States of America has started implementing its new plan for the Middle East region, including regime change, through a destructive policy called “creative chaos”. This policy has succeeded in undermining the security and stability of a number of States in our region, but has failed to achieve its objectives in Syria, although it has caused the shedding of innocent Syrian blood, the destruction of infrastructure and the waste of large sums of money. Furthermore, the United States has shown its complete disregard for international norms, using all international bodies to advance that policy, withdrawing from them, unscrupulously, when they did not comply with its wishes, and even harshly criticising them later on, blaming others to cover up its most horrific violations all over the world.

Regrettably, this Organisation has been among the victims of these evil policies. Indeed, the failure of those designs on Syria led the United States of America to exploit the issue of chemical weapons and use terrorist proxies that have been trained, financed and provided with chemical weapons to stage incidents and stir up and inflame international public opinion against the Syrian Government, and to use this Organisation for its aims. Since 2014, our Organisation has been suffering from blatant politicisation and polarisation, causing paralysis at some stages. This has been the result of attempts to divert the Organisation from its technical mandate and to use it as a tool for advancing hostile projects and destructive policies.

In September 2013, the Syrian Arab Republic took a strategic decision to become a member of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Syria has since implemented its obligations to dispose of its chemical weapons programme and destroy all chemical weapons production facilities, and has cooperated fully and closely with the Technical Secretariat in implementing all of its obligations stemming from its accession to the Convention. Furthermore, Syria has stood up to thwart all attempts by some States to use alleged or staged chemical incidents in Syria for their own aims. While condemning



vehemently the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances, Syria did not waste time in extending its close and full cooperation to the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to establish a Fact-Finding Mission tasked with addressing those allegations. However, States sponsoring terrorism on Syrian territory have been able, since the first visit by the Fact-Finding Mission team, to divert it from its mandate by using their proxies on the ground to threaten the safety and security of the team and prevent them from conducting their work directly, thereby hindering their access to the alleged sites, and the taking of samples from those sites, and the conduct of interviews with witnesses. Instead, the investigations have been conducted far from the alleged sites, in a neighbouring country and through suspicious intermediaries closely related to armed terrorist groups, such as the so-called White Helmets. This has undermined the credibility and professionalism of the investigations and led the team to erroneous conclusions lacking any tangible evidence.

The Syrian Arab Republic, time and again, has expressed its grave concern over Western States using the reports of the Fact-Finding Mission to serve their political agendas, such as when those States have resorted to the United Nations Security Council to create the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), mandated with determining those responsible for cases of use determined by the Fact-Finding Mission team in its reports. In this respect, one can ask why such a mechanism has not been established here, since certain States consider it possible to establish it within this Organisation. In spite of the full cooperation extended by Syria and the diligent efforts put in by the Russian Federation to improve the working methods of the JIM, the latter has failed to conduct its work in a transparent and professional manner and to deliver credible findings. Ultimately, this led the United States of America to kill off that mechanism by voting against updating its working methods, and against making it more professional and objective.

Driven by despair, policy-makers in Washington have elected to act outside the legitimate framework of international law and, following a campaign of false allegations and without waiting for the results of the ongoing investigations, have resorted directly to unilateral aggression against Syrian territorial sovereignty in April 2017, then to a tripartite aggression with the participation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France in April 2018. In parallel, the United States tasked France with launching what they have dubbed the “Initiative against Impunity”, in a clear attempt to circumvent all relevant international bodies and with the aim of establishing a mechanism, biased par excellence, to serve their agendas. But when they realised that they were not able to garner sufficient support, they resorted to subverting the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This time, the United States has tasked the United Kingdom with convening this special session of the Conference, aimed at assigning the Director-General the mandate to establish a mechanism to attribute responsibility for the use of chemical weapons, through selective, piecemeal or erroneous interpretations of the provisions of the Convention, thereby circumventing in a very clear manner the mandate and responsibilities of the United Nations Security Council.

The draft decision that the United Kingdom has submitted before this session is clear evidence of the height of subversion and abuse. But, in spite of the amount of fear-mongering deception by the States behind this draft decision, and their having coated it with deceitful slogans and allegations, we must not be blinded by all these thinly veiled falsehoods. Rather, we need to expose the real objectives of this draft decision, namely to create a new, illegal, and dangerous mechanism, certain to reach conclusions serving the interests of those States.

The United States of America refuses to accept that its designs on Syria have failed. Instead, it continues to launch hysterical, aggressive campaigns against Syria and to exert political and economic pressure to impose its point of view. It has used all manner of sticks and carrots and deception to garner the necessary support for the draft decision tabled by the United Kingdom. It is even showing complete disregard for international legal norms and legitimate international institutions, for one single aim, namely to give legitimacy to yet further aggressions against Syria, and to make up a legal pretext that would justify its violation of international law. Other States too may be targeted. Therefore, this poses not only a threat to the security and safety of Syrian territory, but also to regional and international peace and security, since it would establish a dangerous precedent that would apply to any other country in the world.

States that have hastily called for this special session of the Conference and submitted a draft decision against a State Party to the Convention ought to focus their efforts on addressing the real threat to all States Parties, namely the ever-increasing activities of international terrorism, and terrorists' access to toxic chemicals to use as weapons. Those States ought to mobilise international efforts to address that threat and focus on the implementation of those provisions of the Convention that would ensure that support and supply lines for terrorist groups are cut, including through the prohibition of the transfer and possession of toxic chemicals.

We had hoped that the zeal of these States would be directed at achieving the universality of the Convention and making the Middle East region free of chemical weapons, through the elimination of the chemical weapons arsenal that Israel possesses, in addition to other weapons of mass destruction. In this respect, my delegation welcomes the State of Palestine, which has joined the OPCW.

Finally, the Syrian Arab Republic calls upon all States Parties to be extremely vigilant and responsible in the work atmosphere now prevailing in our Organisation. We appeal to all States to act in conscience, to show wisdom and courage, and to reject this destructive initiative by voting against it, thereby standing up to protect this Organisation, ensure its relevance in the future, and preserve its credibility.

I thank you and request that this statement be considered as an official document of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

- - - 0 - - -