

Mr. Nima Esteki, Association for the Defence of Chemical Injuries in the Fars Province, (SCWVSF), Iran, Presentation to 23st CWC Conference of States Parties (CSP) and RC-4, Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, The Hague, Netherlands, November 19th – December 30th 2018

Mister Chairman, distinguished delegates, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I will be speaking on behalf of all victims and civilians of the Islamic Republic of Iran who were horrifically injured by chemical weapons and still suffer from respiratory, sight and skin problems. I also will be speaking on behalf of the members of the victim's families, who are also struggling with the consequences of these lethal weapons.

I have a question for the respected members of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons: To-date, how successful have you been in prohibiting countries who are the main producers of chemical weapons and countries that use chemical weapons against mankind?

We, victims of chemical weapons who suffer the negative effects as long as we are alive, ask the international community and members of this organisation to officially condemn countries that had a role in the production, trade and use of chemical weapons against the defenceless people of Iran, to make them cooperate with the OPCW with regards to continued inspections of their chemical activities and chemical weapons arsenals and move towards the complete destruction of these weapons. Unfortunately today, instead of condemnation of the countries which played roles in the production and use of chemical weapons, unjust sanctions are imposed on Iran's medicine and fundamental items. Will the international community accept a victim of chemical weapons suffering the continuous pain through medicine sanctions?

As a non-governmental and non-political organisation, that defends the rights of the victims of chemical weapons, we are witnessing the pain and suffering of our dear affected citizens and even their death, once they succumb to the side effects of chemical weapons. This is a very grievous and unacceptable situation.

Mr. Idriss Jazairy, the UN Special Rapporteur on the unilateral coercive measures, believes: "International sanctions must not violate the rights of ordinary citizens. Health has been mentioned in the World Health Organisation statute and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a social right, while sanctioning medicine and fundamental items is considered a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "

More than 100,000 people were injured by the chemical weapons in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 60,000 of whom continually suffer from respiratory, sight, and skin problems and are still receiving medical treatment for their suffering.

Unfair sanctions on medicine and fundamental items have had negative effects on the health and treatment of the victims of chemical weapons and over the last few decades, a number of them have died from their injuries.

First and foremost, we call on the OPCW to consider offering medical assistance to victims of chemical weapons.

Establishing a medical treatment network for victims of chemical weapons made up of legal and real persons with the participation of governmental and non-governmental organisations for treatment of the victims is important and necessary. Considering the fact that victims of chemical weapons need constant medical care and establishing a special fund in the OPCW to assist the victims with their treatment is important and necessary.

We call for the accountability of the crimes committed against victims of chemical weapons in Iran and want the perpetrators of the crimes to be brought to justice. As a non-governmental and non-political organisation, we feel responsible for the health of all the people of the world and call on the OPCW to seriously fight against chemical and biological terrorism, especially in the Middle East, but of course worldwide too.

We call on the OPCW to prevent the countries with the biggest chemical weapon arsenals from supplying terrorist groups in the region with chemical weapons. We, the victims of chemical weapons in Iran, do not wish that what happened to us, should happen to anyone else in the world.

As the ambassadors of peace, friendship and advocates for security, we call for effective actions to be taken in support of chemical weapons victims in Iran and to give these people reassurance. We wish for a world free of chemical weapons and ever lasting peace.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I kindly request that this statement be included in the official RC-4 on-line proceedings.

*Association for the Defence of Chemical Injuries of Fars Province (SCWVSF)
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