

**The statement of the Society for Chemical Weapons Victims Support  
Fourth Review Conference of Chemical Weapons Convention**

**By: Mohamad Reza Sedighi Moghadam**

**On behalf of Seyyed Kamal Loh Mousavi**

Mr. Chairperson

Director-General

Excellencies

Having Chemical Weapons Convention and destruction of most of chemical weapons stockpiles based on this treaty is a lesson learnt from the painful experiences of past crimes, particularly international ignorance of Saddam Hussein's extensive aggression against the people of Iran in 1980s and his use of chemical weapons which was banned even then according to the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

Our Organization welcomes OPCW's approach in expanding civil society activities alongside governmental actions and appreciate its efforts in making the voices of victims of chemical weapons more heard. Use of chemical weapons against Iran has led to suffering of 100,000 people who were exposed and needed medical care. Three decades after the war, still more than 63,000 victims are suffering from chronic health consequences of chemical warfare.

Physical pain of the survivors is unbearable, but it is not all. We hear the news of passing away of one of our friends frequently. Constant need for medical care and chronic illnesses are everyday companions of victims' lives. Furthermore, psychological effects of exposure as well as financial difficulties of moving to new living environments and lifestyles required for victims' health should not be undermined.

Exposure to chemical weapons results in disabilities that severely limits everyday life and social activities of survivors. In Iran, programmes have been launched to reduce such difficulties, but these programs cannot cover all victims due to the heavy financial costs.

The need for a support network of victims of chemical weapons in health, legal and social services is strongly felt today. This network can contribute to building hospitals and rehabilitation centres, implementation of programmes for improving the quality of life of the survivors, undertaking possible legal measures for accountability of those involved in using chemical warfare and documenting the history of the past use of chemical weapons and life of the victims through constructive cooperation with the OPCW is required.

Mr. Chairperson,

Dear Colleagues,

As the representative of Association for Supporting Chemical Weapons Victims, I recommend the establishment of a special fund in OPCW budget to implement the aforementioned programmes in a five-year period. We also encourage the ratification of domestic regulations for accountability of individuals or companies who supported Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons and payment of financial compensation to the victims including the cost of their medical treatments.

Mr. Chairperson,

Dear Colleagues,

The World Health Organization's constitution states: "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition." Sanctions directly or indirectly affect the victims' access to their treatment and therefore are violation of this fundamental right. Sanctions imposed on Iran has highly limited the banking interactions required for providing medications for living victims of chemical weapons. As a result, we expect states parties and OPCW to actively condemn this approach and take actions.

Thank you for your attention, and I wish this statement be made part of the official RC-4 on-line proceedings.

### **Testimony of Mr. Ahmad Gholami**

This is Ahmad Gholami. I was 20 years old when I was victimized by poisonous gases in the Iraqi imposed war against Iran. From then on, I still suffer from chronic skin ailments, eye and respiratory disorders. I have had several airway surgeries. Due to shortage of breath, I had to place a stent in my airways in Germany last year.

My eyes underwent corneal transplantation surgeries three times; this made me unable to facilitate my family life, so my family is suffering from my pains as well.

Because of the wide-ranging sanctions against Iran, it has become increasingly difficult to access our medicines.