



**OPCW**

**Review Conference**

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ENGLISH and FRENCH only

**JOINT STATEMENT**

**DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PHILIPPE LALLIOT  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OPCW  
AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE  
OF THE STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW  
THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

This joint statement is issued on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Cook Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and Ukraine.

On the occasion of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Fourth Review Conference”), we, the States Parties, reiterate our strong commitment to work together for a world free of chemical weapons.

Since the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) entered into force 21 years ago, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has already achieved the verifiable destruction of most of the world's declared stockpile of chemical weapons. Moreover, the major contribution of the OPCW to international peace and security was acknowledged when the OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013. The OPCW is one of the cornerstones of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

However, we are facing a critical situation because of the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons, over the past five years by State and non-State actors. The re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons is the most alarming development we face today. We are determined to combat this common threat to our security.

We emphasise that any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable. We express the strong conviction that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons should be held accountable. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons can never be tolerated.



The re-emergence of use since the last Review Conference has inevitably posed challenges and heightened tensions. We cannot let this situation undermine the Convention. On the contrary, we must stand united, defend the Convention, and deter any further use of such weapons.

Over the past five years, the OPCW actively resisted the threats to the chemical weapons non-proliferation regime and reacted decisively to exceptional circumstances. The Organisation and many States Parties enabled the 2013-2015 international effort to remove and destroy Syria's declared chemical weapons stockpile. Again in 2016, the Organisation and many States Parties assisted Libya by successfully removing and destroying its remaining stockpile of chemical weapons precursors. The OPCW has also taken proactive actions to prevent re-emergence through the Executive Council's adoption in October 2017 of a crucial decision to counter the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors.

The OPCW took decisive actions to address the greatest threat to the Convention – the use of chemical weapons. The Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) established the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission for Syria, which has confirmed that chemical weapons have repeatedly been used in Syria from 2014 to 2018. The Secretariat supported the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, established by the United Nations Security Council to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The OPCW provided technical assistance to Iraq in support of its investigation of chemical weapons use by the so-called “Daesh” or “ISIL.” Similar assistance was offered to Malaysia in response to a chemical weapons attack in February 2017. Technical assistance was also provided to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to confirm the identity of the nerve agent used in Salisbury in March 2018.

In response to the widespread use of chemical weapons, the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”), convening in a special session, in June 2018, adopted an historic decision. The Conference expressed grave concern that chemical weapons have since 2012 been used in Iraq, Malaysia, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Conference condemned the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic and the so-called “Daesh” or “ISIL.” Further, it directed the Director-General to put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks in Syria and, more broadly, authorised the Director-General to provide attribution-related expertise to any State Party, upon request, investigating a possible chemical weapons use on its territory. Also, it invited the Director-General to submit options for further assistance that the Secretariat may provide to States Parties to enable them to implement their obligations under the Convention to enhance chemical security and to enable international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.

The world has changed and the OPCW must adapt to a new environment and to new threats and challenges. We commit, for the future, to strengthen the deterrence regime enshrined in the Convention to prevent the use of these weapons, by anyone, be it a State or a non-State actor, under any circumstances.

The Fourth Review Conference must, therefore, acknowledge the current critical situation deriving from the violations of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons. It must reflect, according to its mandate, not only the original missions of chemical disarmament and

demilitarisation but also new priorities and objectives of the Organisation to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and avoid the risk of their proliferation.

To this end, we are committed to:

- (a) Seek universality of the Convention: We need all States to be on board to achieve the Convention's objectives and contribute to global peace and security;
- (b) Further strengthen the implementation of the verification regime to help prepare national declarations and to enhance the verification of national declarations;
- (c) Keep the effectiveness of the national implementation measures under review so as to ensure at all times that the provisions of the Convention are implemented within our territories or in any other place under our respective jurisdictions;
- (d) -Enhance international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, as "Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI";
- (e) Develop targeted co-operation to help build national capabilities to ensure robust national Convention implementation in particular through the development/implementation of appropriate legislation, as well as readiness to respond to chemical weapons threats;
- (f) Make sure that the perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or those otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons are identified;
- (g) Pursue tailored approaches to identify the needs of States Parties regarding chemical safety and security and provide the most relevant responses through capacity building initiatives for them to be prepared to face any possible threat involving toxic chemicals;
- (h) Encourage measures to further strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to respond promptly to requests for assistance and protection against chemical weapons and to increase readiness to conduct investigations of alleged use of chemical weapons. We welcome the establishment of the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission in this regard;
- (i) Take into account, as needed, any relevant changes in science and technology to ensure the viability and effectiveness of the Convention. In this regard, the project of a Centre for Chemistry and Technology will play a key role;
- (j) Acknowledge the need to build up a designated laboratory network in particular within the regions which do not host any such a laboratory yet;
- (k) Improve identification of the most talented and experienced staff for recruitment by the OPCW with due regard to geographical distribution and gender balance;
- (l) Ensure continuity and the transfer of knowledge and expertise as a guardian of the credibility, independence and impartiality of the OPCW's work; and

- (m) Allow more flexibility to the Director-General for him to retain the best experts within the Secretariat in the interest of the OPCW.

The situation is serious: we call on all States Parties to mobilise and stand firm in defence of the Convention as an essential pillar of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We urge all State Parties to join in a dedicated effort to reinforce the Convention regime and to deter all use of chemical weapons.

What is at stake today is nothing less than our collective security, as well as the national security of each of our countries.

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