

THE AMBASSADOR OF ISRAEL
THE HAGUE



שגרירות ישראל
האג

Speech by The State of Israel

Given by H.E , Ambassador Naor Gil-On

At the Twenty-Forth Session of the conference of state parties

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The Hague

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellency Director General,
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset of the 24th CSP conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, please allow me to congratulate the Chairperson and vice-Chairpersons on their elections, I can assure you my delegation's cooperation with hope for a fruitful outcome.

Mr. Chairperson,
Since its establishment, the Chemical Weapons Convention achieved a great deal in creating norms and sets of values for the international community to comply with and obey. Based on lessons learned from history, it was clear that prohibition, compliance and verification are essential for it to succeed.

In this regard, the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is of the utmost importance. We welcome initiatives that strengthen existing related instruments, as the French initiative on the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons; we also commend the establishment of the attribution mechanism IIT under the CWC, to hold accountable the perpetrators of these horrible acts.

Unfortunately, in recent years we have witnessed an erosion of the absolute prohibition against the use of chemical weapons, joined by an erosion in compliance to treaties at large, Chemical Weapons Convention included, and an erosion in the norms and values – not surprisingly especially in the Middle East.

The continued use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, even after its accession to the CWC, is not only morally abhorrent, it is also a clear violation of the legal obligations the Syrian regime has undertaken towards the international community to forgo these weapons. There is no greater challenge to the CWC, and the norm contained therein, than a State Party using chemical weapons. Its falsified statements, its residual capabilities, including R&D, and its renewed chemical weapons program must be addressed and be fully dismantled. Any other course of action will allow the Syrian regime to continue its shameful pattern of behavior and to eventually rehabilitate its chemical weapons program.

Mr. Chairperson,

The last Fact Finding Mission (FFM) report is joined by numerous reports and statements made by the Organization of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Director General regarding gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the Syrian declaration. This is a source of concern that must be addressed clearly and firmly by the international community to prevent the further erosion of the absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons. We hope the new mechanism - the Investigation and

Identification Team (IIT) - will succeed in carrying out the task of attributing the chemical attacks to their actual perpetrators.

The use of chemical weapons by a non-state actor is a deeply concerning development especially in light of further ambitions of other Non State Actors to acquire and use these capabilities, also in the future. These cases continue to demonstrate the erosion of the chemical taboo and that terrorists are motivated to follow suit. It is vital that the international community step up its efforts to deal with this challenge effectively and curtail any chance for future use of chemical weapons by State and Non State Actors.

Mr. Chairperson,

Since 2013 until today, approximately 200 cases of the use of toxic chemicals and their precursors, as a weapon, were reported. These reports mostly refer to use by the Syrian regime, but also by other players in the region.

It undermines the credibility of the Convention and sends the wrong message to those who use chemical weapons. That includes different weaponized formats and designs, traditional and new, PBA's (Pharmaceutical Based Agents), once used as a chemical weapon, are included, especially in the Middle East. Evidently, the Middle East suffers from a culture of non-compliance, where the violations of the Chemical Convention offer obvious evidence of this culture.

Compliance and Verification are essential for confidence building and security. Hence, attribution of the use of these Chemical Weapons, and accountability, must go hand in hand with the convention. In addition, recurrent use of chemical weapons must be treated with the utmost respond of the international community.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel participated actively in the negotiations and signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993, as a sign of its support of the goals and purposes of this Treaty; and therefore, Israel shares the values and the norms the that the Treaty represents.

This signature joined Israel's accession to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, its adherence to export control regimes, including the Australian Group, as well as its traditional support for the United Nations General Assembly First Committee Resolution regarding the CWC.

As a signatory to the Convention, we hope that others in the region who did not do so thus far will at least join our status, as a message for their commitment to the norms and values it represents. We also call upon the international community to send a strong message to the violators of the Convention.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

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Mr. Chairperson,

In regards to the Palestinian Authority's statement,

First, Israel regrets the exploitation of this distinguished forum by some speakers for political purposes.

Second, Israel would like to place on record, that the Government of the State of Israel does not recognize the Palestinian Authority as a State. The Palestinian Authority does not satisfy the criteria for statehood under both general international law and the terms of bilateral Israeli-Palestinian agreements.

In this regard, the term "State" does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of "Palestine".

I would like to reiterate the position expressed by Israel's Ambassador to the UN on November 29th, 2012, in the context of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/19 as well as in the Security Council on January 23rd, 2013.

I would like to request that my statement be adopted and circulated as an official document of the 24th CSP Conference of the CWC, and be posted on the website.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.