



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Fourth Session
25 – 29 November 2019

C-24/NAT.24
29 November 2019
ENGLISH and RUSSIAN only

**JOINT STATEMENT
ON MEASURES TO COUNTER CHEMICAL TERRORISM**

This joint statement is issued on behalf of Angola, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Ghana, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the State of Palestine, Serbia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

We, the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (hereinafter “the Convention”), as members of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), express deep concern over the threats of chemical terrorism in the world, which are becoming especially evident in the Middle East.

We emphasise that the development, production, acquisition, possession, stockpiling, storage, and use of chemical weapons by terrorist organisations should be the subject of close attention on the part of the OPCW, as it constitutes a serious risk to the object and purpose of the Convention and to achieving a world free of chemical weapons.

We note that as possessor States approach the completion of the destruction of their chemical weapons, the global task of preventing their re-emergence and proliferation will become a priority. Within this context, both the full and effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention by every State Party as provided for in Article VII as well as the achievement of the universality of the Convention will take on the utmost importance.

We note with concern that terrorist organisations operating in the Middle East not only use toxic chemicals, but they also have their own technological and production capabilities used to synthesise chemical warfare agents. We also note that the growth of international terrorism adds a new dimension to the problems related to the ability of terrorist groups to access and use toxic chemicals. Chemical terrorism is becoming a reality that requires all of us to take decisive, consistent, and urgent measures.

We reaffirm the need to ensure that all States Parties to the Convention, within the framework of their national legislation, prevent both natural and legal persons from engaging in any activity prohibited under the Convention, specifically by adopting appropriate criminal legislation and putting into place an effective export control system.

We emphasise in particular the importance of the OPCW Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and its Sub-Group on Non-State Actors. We welcome the decision of the OPCW Executive Council that was adopted by consensus in October 2017 regarding the threats



posed by the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, and consider it our common achievement and a step in the right direction.

We request that the Director-General provide regular updates on information received by the Technical Secretariat from the States Parties and other reliable sources regarding the activities of terrorist groups concerning the acquisition, production, transfer, and preparations for use of chemical weapons, as well as actions taken in this regard. We underscore that the information on measures taken by the OPCW Technical Secretariat to establish a dialogue with other international organisations in order to establish an early warning network on existing risks and exchange best practices is also in high demand by the States Parties.

As principled and consistent supporters of the adoption of effective collective measures aimed at actively countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their components, and their means of delivery, we welcome the initiative co-sponsored by the Russian Federation and China to negotiate a convention on the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which should become an important additional tool for establishing a reliable barrier against terrorist threats.

--- 0 ---