

Statement by Ireland to the Executive Council

IN RESPONSE TO THE RELEASE OF THE FIRST REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION
AND IDENTIFICATION TEAM (IIT) OF THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (OPCW)

**Delivered by H.E. Kevin Kelly, Ambassador of Ireland and Permanent Representative to
the OPCW, on 20 April 2020**

Ireland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland welcomes the publication of the first report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), which attributes responsibility to the Syrian Air Force for chemical weapons use in Ltamenah, Syria on three occasions in March 2017. Ireland condemns these attacks in the strongest possible terms.

The international community is at a critical juncture in the fight to uphold the international norm against chemical weapons use. The findings of the IIT is an important step in efforts to end impunity for such crimes, and we commend the work of the IIT. It is now incumbent upon the international community to consider appropriate action based on this report to ensure accountability. It is imperative to secure justice for the victims of these horrendous attacks. It is utterly unacceptable that over a century after their first use, chemical weapons are still being used to inflict such cruel harm on combatants, civilians, including most devastatingly, on children and in areas of critical civilian infrastructure such as hospitals.

The recent increase in the use of chemical weapons has seriously threatened to undermine the universal prohibition on these weapons, as enshrined in the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Ireland has been clear and unequivocal in our condemnation of these attacks and we have long maintained that the integrity and strict application of the Convention must be fully guaranteed.

Ireland is fully committed to supporting efforts designed to uphold and strengthen the Convention and to end impunity for such grave violations of international law, including through our participation in International Partnership Against Impunity for the use of Chemical Weapons. We appeal to all States Parties to unite and intensify efforts to uphold the global norm against chemical weapons.