



JAPAN

Statement

by

**H.E. Ambassador HORINOUCI Hidehisa,
Permanent Representative of Japan to the OPCW**

**on the Release of the First Report of the Investigation and
Identification Team on the Perpetrators of the Use of Chemical
Weapons in Syria**

The Hague, 15 April 2020

Japan welcomes the first report on the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, which was released on April 8. This first release of its kind represents an important milestone of the work of the OPCW to attribute responsibility for chemical weapons attacks.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances cannot be tolerated and its perpetrators should be held accountable. In this regard, Japan supports the role of the IIT, which was established to identify those responsible for chemical weapons attacks in Syria pursuant to the decision at the Fourth Special Conference of States Parties in June 2018. Japan has confidence in the objectivity, impartiality and independence of the IIT and commends its professional work on the report under challenging circumstances.

It should be well noted that the IIT concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Syrian Air Force used chemical weapons in three incidents on March 24, 25 and 30, 2017. The use of chemical weapons violates the core purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). This issue should be appropriately considered at the Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties as well as other international forums.

With a view to preventing the recurrence of the use of chemical weapons and other toxic chemicals in Syria and other countries, Japan, a State Party to the CWC, is committed to assisting the implementation of the decision in June 2018 on setting up a mechanism to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons. Japan will continue to support the investigative work of the OPCW and the IIT for the incidents involving chemical weapons in order to deter their further use and thus strengthen the CWC.

Japan hopes that all the States Parties work closely to preserve the norm against the use of chemical weapons and realize a world free of chemical weapons.

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