

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ALIREZA KAZEMI
ABADI PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC
REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE OPCW ON THE RELEASE OF
THE FIRST REPORT OF THE OPCW INVESTIGATION AND
IDENTIFICATION TEAM (IIT) APRIL 8, 2020**

15 April, 2020

The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances. The Islamic Republic of Iran as one of the main victims of the chemical weapons in the contemporary era has always supported the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to achieve the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to ensure the implementation of its provisions.

It is unfortunate to note that as a result of blatant attempts by certain States Parties to deviate the mandate of the OPCW from its right track which was clearly directed and defined in the Convention, the Organization today is politicized more than ever. The establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), pursuant to the decision of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018), is an example of such attempts.

The afore-mentioned Decision has provided the Technical Secretariat with the responsibility of “attribution” of the use of chemical weapons which is undoubtedly beyond the aspirations and principal goals of the founding fathers of the Convention, inconsistent with the text of the Convention and contrary to the positions of considerable number of the States Parties. The non-consensual Decision which caused the establishment of the IIT was adopted under the pressure of certain States Parties seeking their politically-motivated objectives led to jumping at voting process which in conclusion had only the support of less than half of the Members of the Organization. The Islamic Republic of Iran assumes the inappropriate new mandate of the Technical Secretariat far from its legal obligations defined in the Convention which brings about functional deficiency of the Organization, makes the independence and technicality of the Organization at risk and turns it to be utilized as a political instrument for few States Parties to take advantage of this situation and repeat their aggressive and inhumane illegal unilateral coercive measures against the Syrian Arab Republic.

The first report of the IIT, released on 8 April 2020 relied heavily on the reports of the OPCW Fact Finding Missions (FFM) which itself was based on invalidated and unreliable open sources and interviews. Hence, the so-called findings of the IIT report were not a great surprise. But yet the repeated practice to rely on unfounded or dubious sources raises concerns. The Islamic Republic of Iran did not recognize the IIT and its attribution-related task and was not oblivious of the fact that its first report would be devoid of impartiality and contain non-professional and judiciary-like allegations based on inauthentic data and open sources.

Ltamenah, the place where the incidents took place in March 2017, was under the control of terrorist groups. While disregarding the principles and laws of state responsibility or not considering properly the uncertainties surrounding the situation in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic including the great possibility of the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups and sabotage by foreign intelligence services, the IIT has falsely attributed the responsibility to the Syrian Arab Republic. Given the fact that the investigation of the IIT was not based on a field study it was predictable that the investigation would include a great number of deficiencies. It is unacceptable that the IIT has conducted an inaccurate investigation but had the imprudence and audacity to have an unsubstantiated identification against the Syrian Arab Republic.

Once again the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates that giving the responsibility of “attribution” to the Technical Secretariat to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons is beyond Convention. It is crystal clear that some specific States Parties in order to achieve their political interests in the Middle East region in general and Syria in particular has made another game plan to pressurize the Syrian Arab Republic. This will lead to more complication of the current situation and the IIT report is presumably another step to exacerbate it.

The Islamic Republic of Iran reminds the Members of the Organization that the Syrian Arab Republic had constantly cooperated with the Technical Secretariat to fulfill its obligations as a State Party to the Convention and a lot of work has been done during this process. The cooperation between the both sides is still continuing and the only way to reach a conclusion to remove the ambiguities is the continued trend of cooperation between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic and avoiding accusations and false allegations against a State Party and a Member of the OPCW.