

TURKEY

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ŞABAN DIŞLI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS, ON THE RELEASE OF THE FIRST REPORT OF THE OPCW INVESTIGATION AND IDENTIFICATION TEAM ON THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN LTAMENAH/SYRIA IN MARCH 2017

The Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPWC), established with a mandate to identify those responsible for the chemical weapons attacks in Syria, concluded in its first report published on 8 April 2020, that the Syrian regime air force is the perpetrator of the three chemical weapons attacks that took place in Ltamenah on 24, 25 and 30 March 2017.

Turkey considers the first report of the OPWC Investigation and Identification Team as an important step towards ensuring that those responsible for the chemical weapons attacks in Syria are held accountable for their crimes.

Turkey condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons. Apart from being a flagrant breach of the CWC, the use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity and a war crime. It must not be left unpunished. The heinous attacks and atrocities carried out by the regime indiscriminately against its own citizens must be brought to an end.

The report, in addition to the reports of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism, provides further evidence that the Syrian regime is in non-compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Accountability is crucial to discourage and prevent use of chemical weapons in the future. To this end, the international community must take appropriate action in light of the report.

Having supported the resolution adopted in 2018 to mandate the OPCW with establishing responsibility with regard to the chemical weapons attacks in Syria, Turkey will continue to follow and support the steps to be taken by the international community, first and foremost the UN and the OPWC, for ensuring full accountability in Syria.

Turkey's active participation in the International Partnership Against Impunity of the use of chemical weapons will also continue with a view to keep this issue high on the agenda.

We, the States Parties to the CWC, have the duty to uphold the global ban against the use of chemical weapons. We owe it to the victims.