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**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR A. V. SHULGIN  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE OPCW  
AT THE NINETY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
AGENDA ITEM 6(F)**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished Delegates,

As the machinations related to the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) report on the incidents in Douma have come to light, it is fully clear that the activities of this special mission require serious reforms. We are convinced that remote investigations without visiting the site of the incidents must be stopped once and for all. Inspectors should be there themselves to collect samples, while strictly following the chain of custody procedures. And it is altogether unacceptable to allow any outside interference in the work of the FFM. It should also be determined to what extent and when the FFM can and should use external experts and engage third-party specialists. As we understand it, this special mission should operate first and foremost on the internal expertise of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”).

At the briefing on Syria that took place on 4 March, when discussions addressed the work of the FFM, and in the Director-General’s opening statement at the start of this session, it was noted that the Secretariat is still waiting for the Russian side to submit additional information about the chemical attack that took place in Aleppo on 24 November 2018.

We would inform the Executive Council (“the Council”) that we officially responded to the Secretariat in Note 1118, dated 11 June 2019, which stated that all samples collected from the site of the incident in the city of Aleppo in November 2018—fragments from munitions, soil particles, and swipes from household items—were transferred to the Syrian authorities for subsequent submission to the FFM.

We would like to once again confirm and state “on the record”: All of the information and material evidence that the Russian side had relating to the chemical incident was promptly transferred to the possession of the FFM via the National Authority of the Syrian Arab Republic. We have nothing left to submit. It is in the hands of the FFM now. We urge the special Mission to publish the results of its investigation as soon as possible.

Frankly, we have questions concerning the FFM management policy. What is the reason, under contrived pretexts, for the delay in the report’s publication? Nearly one and a half years



have passed since the incident in question, and there is still no report. We will not be surprised if someone gave instructions to act in the same way as was already done with the Douma report.

Recently, we have observed in the work of the FFM the surprising application of double standards. If its paperwork coincides with the incidents that were indicated by the opposition, then it issues results and publishes the reports. But when the FFM conducts an investigation into incidents for which information is provided by the Syrian authorities, then the conclusions are either “null and void”, i.e. nothing is identified, or the investigation is dragged out for months, and even years.

We would urge the FFM to act more consistently and efficiently. Your findings are awaited both in the OPCW and beyond. But they should be accurate and prepared, in line with the high standards of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

We request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Ninety-Third Session of the Council and published on the Organisation’s extranet and external website.

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